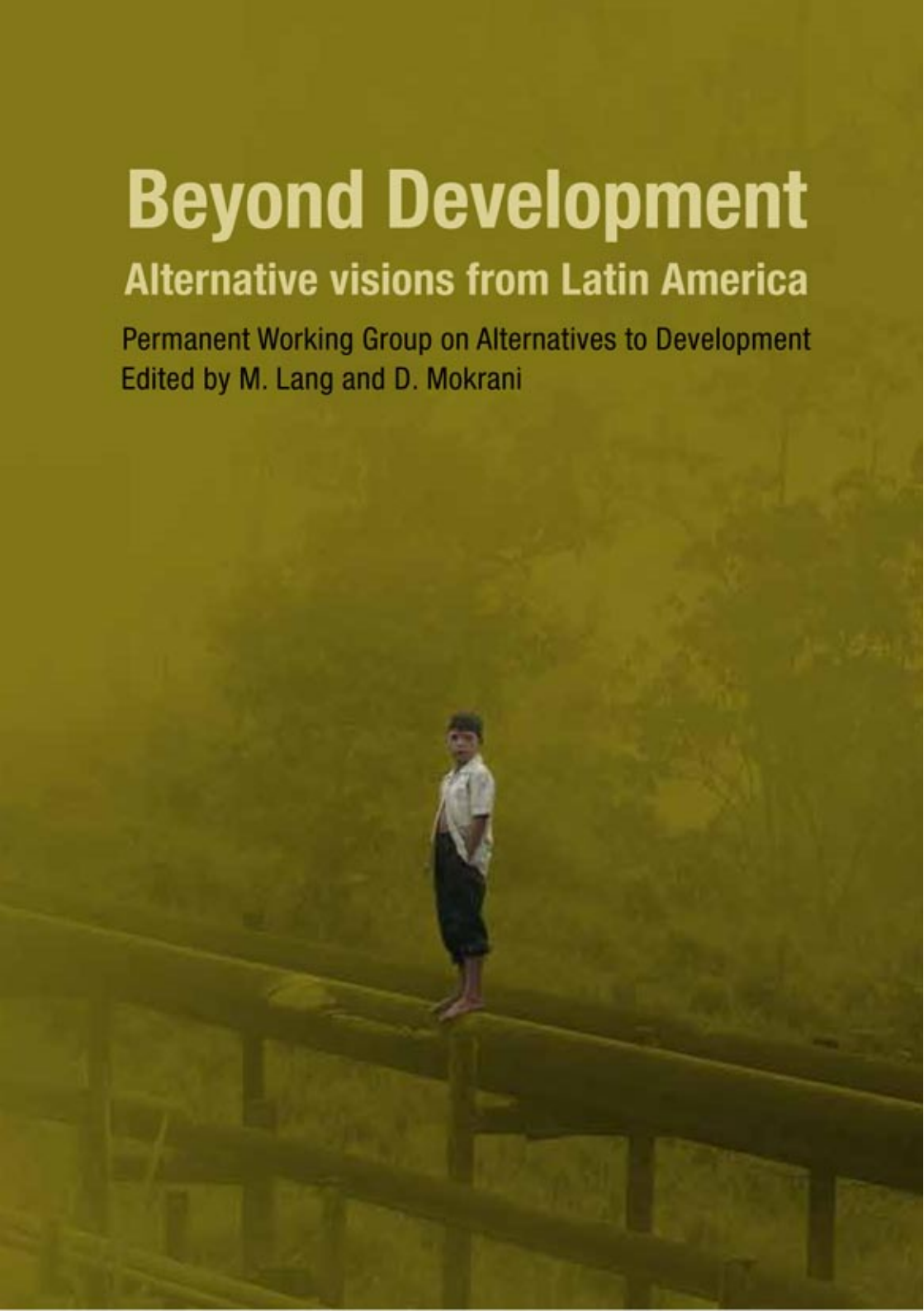


Beyond Development

Alternative visions from Latin America

Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development

Edited by M. Lang and D. Mokrani



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First translated edited edition:

Transnational Institute / Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. August 2013

Originally printed in Spanish 'Mas alla del desarrollo' by Fundación Rosa Luxemburg/Abya Yala Ediciones in November 2011.

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Cover photograph: Lou Dematteis

ISBN (paperback): 978-90-70563-24-0

August 2013

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Prologue

The Crisis of Civilisation and challenges for the left

Miriam Lang¹

The multi-faceted crisis sweeping the world has worsened in the last few years. Financial markets have managed to weaken even the strongest economies in the industrialised countries. The grabbing of agricultural land for financial speculation or agrofuel production is aggravating the rise in food prices and leading us into a food crisis. The technologies used to extract oil, gas and minerals from the most remote corners of the planet are becoming more and more expensive, risky and environmentally destructive: the sea bed is being drilled at a depth of several kilometres, sands are being stripped of their small percentage of tar to produce oil, chemicals are being pumped into rocks to release natural gas, gigantic craters are being dug to extract the mere 0.1% of copper that the soil contains. These practices are essential to maintain a specific way of life – the idea of success and happiness proposed by the global North for the whole of humanity, whose hegemony is currently unquestionable.

The consequences of this capitalist onslaught on the farthest reaches of the planet – which have hitherto remained outside the logic of endless accumulation – are being felt above all in the peripheral regions of the world. It is there that smallholder farmers pushed off their land – now destined for more “profitable” uses – are moving directly into poverty or destitution; and it is there that the rise in basic food prices translates immediately into hunger. It is there, too, that global warming is causing thousands of deaths due to drought, desertification, floods or storms. Although this book does not address the issue specifically, climate change invariably has grave social and economic consequences – aggravating other crises, creating new speculative markets, and thus generating an apparently interminable crisis feedback loop.

From the periphery, this multi-faceted crisis has been recognised as a “crisis of civilisation”. Social movements in the global South are not only resisting the ongoing onslaught of “accumulation by dispossession”, they are also voicing the urgency of looking for fundamental alternatives to the current world system. And urgent it is, because the pace of destruction of the planet under the mantra of economic growth is speeding up, as the financial markets demand profits in an increasingly short space of time.

Mainstream thinking, however, fails to take into account either the planet’s

physical limits – and consequently the limits of its capacity to absorb pollution and waste – or the inevitable finiteness of the natural assets that the capitalist system has at its disposal. It continues to offer us more expansion, more growth, and increasingly sophisticated technological solutions to natural disasters and the energy crisis. With the so-called ‘green economy’, the system has already identified the way to its next modernising leap forward: the commercialisation of nature itself and of its conservation, the sale of pollution rights, and investment in renewable energies or harm-mitigation technologies, where all this promises juicy profits for the futures markets. As ever in capitalism, each crisis is an opportunity: there will be losers – probably more of them than ever – but the system itself will regenerate, and thus will seek to assert its superiority over any alternative.

In this global scenario, the political constellations in Latin America are exceptional. In the Andean region alone, four out of five countries now have governments whose stated aim is to break away from the neoliberal model and put an end to the shameless plundering practised until recently by the old elites. Three countries – Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela – have drawn up new constitutions collectively. Their new governments were only able to win elections as a result of lengthy processes of social struggle, whose protagonists were neither the traditional left nor political parties, but social movements of smallholder farmers, women, city-dwellers and indigenous peoples, who managed to transcend their sectoral demands and put forward new proposals for the country as a whole. None of these progressive governments emerged from traditional parties; instead, they were backed by new or alternative political structures.

This new political class was the first in decades to genuinely concern itself with its country’s future, including education, poverty reduction and improving the quality of life of its people. It was also the first to propose new rules of the game for the transnational corporations that had been accustomed to systematically helping themselves to these countries’ natural assets. It proposed new visions of regional integration, more independent than the various neocolonial arrangements. It offered to build economic alternatives to the extractivist rationale that has prevailed for more than five centuries, according to which Latin America is merely the source of raw materials for the enrichment of the global North.

With the Constituent Assemblies in the three countries, these processes of change experienced their most democratic, most effervescent and most participatory moment. The task was nothing less than to found the country anew and – in the case of Ecuador and Bolivia – to transform it into a plurinational state, meaning the transformation of the post-colonial state to reflect the diversity of nationalities and peoples. However, neither the processes of drafting the new constitution,

nor the subsequent implementation of the new constitutional precepts, were able to escape from the enormous pressures resulting from the involvement of these countries in the current world system. This includes internal and external pressures in the economy, and others resulting from the weighty inheritance of states that are profoundly colonial and excluding in their design and their practices, as well as being highly skilled in appropriating transformative social energy to serve their own ends.

A few years down the line, the processes of change in Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela today are still characterised by a decisive break with the neoliberal era, but their risks and limitations are also evident. They are all undergoing serious internal conflicts which – in the opinion of some – may even put an end to them, at least in electoral terms.

What is at stake in these conflicts takes us directly to the “crisis of civilisation” scenario mentioned before. The new constitutional and legal precepts – collective and territorial rights, indigenous peoples’ right to prior consultation, the rights of Nature and respect for *Pachamama* – clash head on with the aggressive demand for raw materials in the world’s old and new hegemonic centres. The notable increase in social investment to improve education, health and infrastructure, and fight for social inclusion of the poorest, requires immediate funding which is obtained either by expanding the old extractivist model or by running up the external debt again.

Social conflicts such as those experienced in Ecuador as a result of the new Mining Law and Water Law of 2009, or the recent conflict in Bolivia around the proposal to build a major highway right through the middle of the TIPNIS national park and ancestral indigenous territory, exemplify the profound contradictions hampering change. These contradictions carve out divisions at the heart of the progressive governments themselves. Far from being homogeneous blocs, these governments are battlegrounds between factions with different interests and allies who are fighting for a variety of national projects. Thus, the governments themselves end up violating the same Constitutions that only recently represented their greatest political success,² and coming into confrontation, on a fairly serious scale, with significant numbers of their own grassroots supporters who brought them to power, not just by means of their vote but through their accumulated historical struggles.

Today, it can be said that within most of the progressive governments, to differing degrees, the factions that were committed to a profound transformation of the social and economic model in their countries are now in the minority, while

those coming to the fore are seeking a much more pragmatic form of change and are more in favour of a simple modernisation of capitalism.

Nevertheless, as Boaventura de Sousa Santos rightly says, as a result of the constitutional processes in these countries:

“We now have concepts and ideas that we didn’t have ten years ago and that can’t be underrated, such as the concept of *Buen Vivir* (‘Living Well’), the concept of *Pachamama*, the rights of nature, as well as the legalisation of indigenous peoples’ communal lands. (...) The idea that property is not just state property or individual capitalist property and that there are other forms of property is a great novelty. (...) In Bolivia there’s the idea that we have three forms of democracy: representative democracy, participatory democracy and community democracy, which each have their own rationales and must be coordinated. We have new means to wage an ideological battle.”³

In addition to this is the fact that Bolivia and Ecuador have been declared Plurinational States in their respective Constitutions, thus opening up a significant possibility of legitimately building decolonised societies and institutions that reflect this diversity in their structures, their production of knowledge and their practices.

On this basis, in addition to criticising and resisting the predatory onslaught of today’s capitalism, the left has the task of developing new proposals and visions, challenging the thinking that still longs to join a life of boundless consumerism, and breaking its hegemony. The task is to initiate new debates about what concepts as vital as happiness or quality of life might mean from another perspective, and to transform another world into something imaginable.

The Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development

It was with the purpose of contributing to this task that the Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development was set up in the Andean region at the start of 2010. The working group is coordinated from the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation’s regional office in Quito, and brings together women and men from eight countries in Latin America and Europe, although its analyses focus on Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela. It seeks to link intellectual production from various academic disciplines and schools of thought – ecology, feminism, anti-

capitalist economics, socialism, indigenous and subaltern western thinking – which question the very concept of development and seek to build alternatives to the current hegemonic development model.

This working group represents an effort to practice an ecology of knowledge, based on the confluence of concrete experiences – not just the experiences of activists in various spheres of civil society, but also those of working in the institutions of the inherited state, the ancestral knowledge of indigenous cultures that have subsisted outside the hegemonic system, and the critical thinking of intellectuals from different disciplines.

This book is a first result of the group's work. Its debates build on a basic agreement: that the range of the changes and political strategies we need surpasses the limits of alternatives proposed within the hegemonic concept of development. In this sense, the group's name, "alternatives to development," indicates a political position with regard to this concept which, historically, has usually been perceived in Latin American countries as something positive.

Symbolically, development is linked to a promise of well-being, happiness and a better quality of life. The members of the working group, however, believe that development inevitably ties us to a certain way of thinking – one that is western, capitalist and colonial. This is because it seeks to get the excluded to follow a path marked out in advance by the global North, in order to achieve their inclusion in the hegemonic way of life.

Historically, after the Second World War, and as part of a new pattern of North-South relations which replaced the old colonial relationship, the world began to be divided into developed and underdeveloped countries. According to Michel Foucault's theory and the analysis of Arturo Escobar,⁴ development is a power device which reorganised the world, giving new legitimacy to the international division of labour in the capitalist context, by means of an immense set of discourses and practices. Development was transformed into a public policy objective. Budgets were allocated and a multiplicity of institutions set up to promote development at the local, national and international level. In the universities, countless courses sprang up to train specialists in development, which might be rural, sustainable, international, etc. In Northern countries, what used to be economic policies to deal with the colonies were re-worded in the terms of "international development cooperation."

Development also ties us to a technocratic, quantitativist, economic toolkit that has permeated public policies all over the world, and to environmentally

destructive practices that have taken us to the current limits of the planet. Another effect of the device is that it perpetuates the devaluing of the multiple ways of life, social relationships and knowledge systems that exist in the South, which are classified as “backward.” Consequently, the introduction of the category of underdevelopment also forged “underdeveloped” subjectivities in the global South.

Both the capitalist economic model and the 20th century’s great alternative project were rooted in notions of development. The “real-socialist” governments in Eastern Europe, in common with the majority of thinkers on the left in Latin America, concentrated on criticising imperialism and capitalism as such, but they tacitly accepted the concept of development as the path to “progress” for the people. They did not analyse it as one of the key devices for cementing and expanding capitalism and its colony-producing logic, which equates well-being solely with people’s capacity to consume.

However, this later changed: starting in the 1970s, important critiques of the concept of development have been formulated, and in recent years, with the debate on the concept of *Buen Vivir* (a term in Spanish that can be translated as “living well,” but with a distinctive meaning in the Latin American and particularly indigenous context), a current of thinking is emerging outside of the developmentalist, modernist, economistic and linear framework. Eduardo Gudynas outlines this for us in his essay “Debates on development and alternatives to it in Latin America: a brief heterodox guide,” in this book. A second chapter, “Development critiques and alternatives: a feminist perspective,” complements this analysis from a feminist perspective.

In parallel with these theoretical and academic critiques, there have been a series of local forms of resistance to developmentalist thinking, which have led to the building of alternative practices in different contexts: life plans, agroecological production and marketing networks, exchange networks, alternative forms of neighbourhood organisation and mobilisation in cities, etc. These experiences are an important basis for any prospect of actual transition, and some of them are represented in the Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development, which seeks to explore the learning arising from them in more depth.

Finally, in the last few years, social protest movements in Latin America have undergone an “ecoterritorial shift” and reconfigured themselves around the defence of territory and natural resources. This is analysed by Maristella Svampa in her chapter, “Resource extractivism and alternatives: Latin American perspectives on development.”

A key issue in the Permanent Working Group's debates is the so-called "Latin American paradox," which refers to the fact that Latin America's progressive governments, who seek to present themselves as revolutionary, are endorsing and promoting extractivism – large-scale mining and the oil and gas industry in particular – as the basic development model for their economies. The group argues that, in the current context, it is essential to talk about agribusiness and agrofuels as well, as these promote an extractivist rationale by consolidating the natural resources export model, increasing the amount of land under agriculture and accelerating the tendency to practice monocropping.

Another of the characteristics of the extractivist model in the region is that its uncritical implementation is leading to the consolidation of economies that once again focus on the production of primary commodities - based on enclave economies - with scant local or national linkages and a dominant presence of transnational companies with few tax responsibilities, despite the nationalisation initiatives that have been advanced. As Alberto Acosta points out in his chapter, "Extractivism and neoextractivism: two sides of the same curse," this is an activity in which the value of the products obtained does not include their social and environmental costs. Instead, these costs are externalised and borne by a society without democratic rights in the transnational corporate world. Acosta analyses the close link that exists, for Latin America, between development aims and extractivism, as well as the political and social consequences of this link.

Going deeper into the debate about the Latin American paradox, Edgardo Lander and Ulrich Brand analyse the role that the state can play in processes of change. These processes in Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela are all characterised by restoring the state's regulatory and management role, but this does not necessarily lead to the inherited development model being overcome. Having governments that enjoy a high degree of popular legitimacy does not mean that the state has changed its colonial mindset. The group's debates repeatedly suggest the need to differentiate between today's public administrations in the three countries, and the projects to transform the state and move towards a post-development construction of society. What type of transformations would be desirable and possible in the framework of the Plurinational State and its perspectives? Is it really within the state that these transformations can be taken forward? Can mining, rentier, extractivist states really be the instruments or agents of a process of change? How diverse are the state apparatuses? Which of those apparatuses support processes of change and which hamper them?

Because the state plays such a key role in the new governments' discourse on

change, it is crucial to analyse the disputes that are taking place there, and what interests are imposing themselves within it.

The final section of the book seeks to mark out pathways of transition toward the construction of alternatives, taking as the utopian horizon the concept of *buen vivir* or *vivir bien*, examined in this book by Raúl Prada from Bolivia. This concept, in its sense of a critique of development, emerges as a sphere of transformation under construction that would lead us to other civilisatory perspectives in which new ways of life take shape and which aim to break the bounds of today's rationalism, questioning the ideological foundations of a linear history of progress and development. *Buen Vivir* arises from actions in which the individual is always part of the community, and is directly related to the political projects of decolonisation and de-patriarchalisation (dismantling patriarchy). Along these lines, the group has insisted on the need to think of the range of possibilities of *Buen Vivir* from the perspective of concrete experiences, from the multiplicity of contexts and the diversity of identities, situations and references. The text by Elisa Vega is an example of this, both because of her personal experience as an indigenous woman, and from her experience of formulating public policies in the Office for De-patriarchalisation, part of the Vice-Ministry of Decolonisation in Bolivia.

Finally, in the framework of the sphere of desired transformations, Eduardo Gudynas traces a path of possible transitions in his second essay, "Transitions to post-extractivism: directions, options, areas of action." He proposes a strategy of gradually moving away from the extractivist model that would imply following a path in stages from the current phase of *predatory extractivism*, passing through an intermediate phase that he calls *sensible extractivist activities*, in order to arrive at a final phase of *indispensable extractivist activities*.

This book is merely a first contribution to the building of alternatives to development – a path we share with an increasing number of social actors in Latin America who are aware of the need to look for ways out of the crisis of civilisation. One of the most important challenges being debated in the Permanent Working Group, which will be addressed in future publications, is how to build the practice of *Buen Vivir* in urban areas, as this is where the majority of the population lives and, at the same time, the bastion of the hegemonic way of life.

This task of building proposals, of looking for pathways, is particularly challenging for a left whose strength has historically been criticism, which tends to define itself from a negative standpoint, by division and demarcation. At this juncture, however, we need to be uniting our efforts, looking for strengths

rather than weaknesses in the other, in order to think what has hitherto seemed unthinkable.

Notes

1. Miriam Lang is the director of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation's Andean Region Office. She has a PhD in Sociology from the Free University of Berlin, with a specialisation in Gender Studies, and a Masters in Latin American Studies. Her experience includes working with a wide range of women's and indigenous people's organisations in Latin America.
2. For example, several former members of Ecuador's Constituent Assembly say that the Mining Law approved in 2009 violates the 2008 Constitution, while the Constitutional Court ruled in 2010 that it was constitutional but only under certain conditions, and ordered consultations to be carried out before the enactment of legislation.
3. Interview with Boaventura de Sousa Santos in "El cuento de la economía verde" (América Latina en Movimiento, September-October 2011, Quito, Ecuador).
4. See Foucault's work on power devices, as well as Arturo Escobar's work *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

Debates on development and its alternatives in Latin America: a brief heterodox guide

Eduardo Gudynas¹

More than thirty years ago, the Brazilian economist Celso Furtado warned that development was a myth that focused on “abstract objectives such as investment, exports and growth.” These same goals are heard today in Latin America from the most varied political camps, making it clear that the question of development is still an open one. Furtado added that economic development, understood as the idea that “the poor may one day enjoy the same lifestyles as those who are rich today” is “simply unrealisable” (Furtado, 1975). This idea has been used, Furtado goes on to say, “to mobilise the peoples of the periphery and convince them to accept enormous sacrifices, to legitimise the destruction of ancient cultures, to explain and make people understand the need to destroy the environment, and to justify forms of dependence that reinforce the predatory nature of the system of production.” This dimension of the problem of development persists at the start of the 21st century.

These and other warnings show that the concept of development, its means and its ends, has been under discussion in Latin America for some time. This essay aims to contribute to that discussion, and reviews some of the main schools of thought in which the problem of development and alternatives to it have been addressed. The aim is not to analyse all the positions exhaustively, but to examine those that seem to have been the most influential in Latin America, especially when they involve the exploration of alternatives. It is also a heterodox review, as it delves into the ideological underpinnings of development.

Constructing the idea of development

The usual meanings of the word “development” point to advances and progress in the economic and social sphere. Thus, among several meanings, the Oxford dictionary defines development as growing larger, fuller or more mature, making something active or visible, or as a process such as urbanisation. The Royal Spanish Academy dictionary presents development as an economic term, understood as the “progressive evolution of an economy toward higher standards of living,” while when it is used to refer to people it is defined as progress, well-being, modernisation, and economic, social, cultural or political growth. The word comes from other fields, and was often used in biology, for example, to refer to the stages of growth and maturity of a living being. In the social sciences

and politics, development alludes to a wide range of academic and practical matters; there are even agencies that include the word in their name (like the Inter-American Development Bank - IDB).

The conventional meaning of development, and the so-called “development economics” in particular, gained currency immediately after the Second World War. Ideas were outlined, backed by economic theory, and presented as practical responses to challenges such as poverty and wealth distribution. A division was established between developed countries and underdeveloped nations (including Latin America). The speech made by President Harry Truman on 20 January 1949, in which he said that the “underdeveloped” countries of the South should follow in the footsteps of the industrialised nations, is often cited as a prime example of how this model was established (Esteve, 1992). Thus, the idea of development became tied to economic growth and, consequently, the issue of human well-being was left in a subordinate position, since it was felt that inequality and poverty would be solved essentially by economic means. These ideas in turn harked back to the work of thinkers such as Michal Kalecki, John Maynard Keynes and Nicholas Kaldor, who defended the vision of progress. Since the attachment to progress and modernity was already evident in Latin America since the 19th century, development ideas were easily slotted in place to represent a supposed economic and social evolution.

By the mid-20th century, development concepts had become almost indistinguishable from those of economic growth, and the two terms were used interchangeably in more than one key work (Lewis, 1976, for example). Growth was said to take place in a series of stages, as described by Rostow (1961), whereby the backward countries ought to be inspired by the advanced economies and follow their example. For these authors, the key issue was economic growth rather than income distribution, and this type of thinking led to a hardening of the insistence on resorting to indicators such as Gross Domestic Product, turning it into a target in itself.

Thus, by the mid-20th century, the idea of development that had become consolidated was one of a linear process of essentially economic evolution, brought about by making use of natural resources, guided by different versions of economic efficiency and profitability, and aimed at emulating the western lifestyle (Bustelo, 1998; Unceta, 2009).

Early warnings and the dependency critique

Shortly after these ideas about development became widespread, the first critiques started to appear. In the setting of the United Nations, “The United Nations Development Decade: Proposals for Action” (1962) insisted on separating “development” from “growth” and the qualitative from the quantitative aspects, broadening the concept to include social and cultural matters rather than solely economic ones.

In the academic setting, several critical studies were produced between 1965 and 1969. E.J. Mishan published his classic analysis that drew attention to the “spillover effects” of economic growth, such as the increase in urbanisation, migration and the number of vehicles on the road (Mishan, 1983). Then came other warnings, such as those of Galbraith (1992) on affluence and Hirsch’s (1976) acknowledgement of the social limits to growth.

These first alerts reached Latin America, although the region’s attention was focused more on the debates initiated by Raúl Prebisch. His position, known as structuralism, placed emphasis on the heterogeneous structure of Latin America’s economies, in which more advanced sectors coexisted alongside others that were backward and subsistence-based. These economies specialised in exporting just a few primary commodities, although they had some modern enclaves. This had given rise to asymmetrical relations between a centre, occupied by the industrialised countries, and a periphery comprised of the developing countries (Rodríguez, 2006). This theory was very influential and explains, for example, the substitution strategies that sought to replace imports by means of domestic industrial production. It also introduced a much-needed international view of development

In the years that followed, further steps were taken with what became known as dependency theory. In this case, the starting point was the insight that underdevelopment is not a phase that precedes development, but rather its consequence and, to a great extent, the result of colonialism and imperialism. Capitalism, including the asymmetries in international trade, was the explanation for this unequal situation, and in fact it acted as a brake on progress. Dependency theory branched out into several variations (Bustelo, 1998), depending on how international conditionalities or the role of local historical-political contexts were interpreted (exemplified, among others, by Gunder Frank, 1970; Furtado, 1964; Cardoso and Faletto, 1969). While conventional development economics did not adequately take into account historical situations or power relations, dependency theory brought them into the foreground.

Although all these heterodox positions strongly criticized the onward march of development, they nonetheless repeated some of its basic ideas, such as the importance of economic growth as the expression of material progress. In general, they assigned a major role to industrialisation and called for greater efficiency in the exploitation of natural resources. The debates centred on questions such as how the supposed benefits were to be distributed, the asymmetries in international relations between countries, ownership of the means of production, etc. What was not up for discussion were the ideas of “advancement”, “backwardness”, “modernisation” or “progress”, or the need to take advantage of Latin America’s ecological wealth to feed that economic growth. This is why alternative development proposals kept economic progress at their core, and the debates focused on the best means to achieve such progress.

Ecology and the limits to growth

At more or less the same time as the debates about dependency were going on, environmental warnings began to be sounded, growing louder with the presentation of the 1972 report “*The Limits to Growth*” (Meadows et al., 1972), commissioned by the Club of Rome think tank from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This was not an evaluation of the state of the environment. Instead, its objective was to analyse global growth trends (world population, industrialisation, food production and the exploitation of natural resources).

The report questioned the key idea of development as perpetual growth. By modelling the trends, it found that “the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years,” and “the most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity” (ibid. 1972). The report was almost aseptic. It did not go into geopolitical matters but did make it quite clear that the trends in terms of population increase, accelerating industrialisation and pollution, and resource depletion, would come up against the planet’s limits. Perpetual economic growth was impossible.

At the time, these conclusions had a huge impact. One of the pillars of conventional development economics was under assault, and the report was therefore attacked from all sides, both left and right. It was variously accused of being neo-Malthusian, of denying the role of science and technology in generating alternatives to exhausted resources or dealing with the impacts of their depletion, and of being a simple manifestation of bourgeois or imperialist developmentalism.

Many Latin American intellectuals on the left felt challenged by “*The Limits to Growth*” report. In their view, it was attacking aspects that they considered to be positive, such as modernisation, the use of Latin America’s ecological wealth, and the very idea of growth.

Several of them organised a response, which was presented as an alternative model. *Catastrophe or New Society? A Latin American World Model*, coordinated from the Bariloche Foundation under the leadership of Amílcar O. Herrera, was published in Spanish in 1975. It is a forward-looking and prescriptive model, which maintains that the problems “are not physical but sociopolitical, and based on the unequal distribution of power, both internationally and within countries.” As a solution, it proposes “a fundamentally socialist society, based on equality and the full participation of all human beings in society’s decisions,” in which the consumption of material goods and economic growth would be regulated to make them compatible with the environment (Herrera, 1975).²

This model offers some advances, such as rejecting the development pattern pursued by the rich countries, although it leaves environmental preservation until a later stage, once an acceptable standard of living has been achieved for all. It also proposes some questionable alternatives, however, such as the widespread use of nuclear energy or giving vast areas of wilderness over to agriculture, without considering the serious impact this would have on biodiversity. The report defends economic growth by other means, and believes that technological solutions can be found to deal with its negative impacts.

The case of this alternative Latin American model should be borne in mind, because some elements of this perspective reappeared years later in the policies of certain progressive governments.

Deconstruction, nuances and diversification

Parallel with the debates on the ecological limits of economic growth, other critical approaches attempted to reformulate the economic and social aspects of development. One text that can be highlighted in this set of approaches is the “Cocoyoc Declaration,” led by Barbara Ward (UNEP/UNCTAD, 1974), which insists that there is a diversity of routes to development, and that its purpose is to improve wealth distribution and ensure that basic needs are met. Along the same lines, the proposal for “another development” (1975), put forward by Sweden’s Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, insisted on separating development from growth, arguing that the aim was to eradicate poverty and ensure that

needs are met. Additional attributes of this “other development” were said to be endogeneity (it is defined within each society) and self-reliance. Discussions like these, which were non-conformist to start with, were later accepted and fed into the launch of the Human Development Index in 1990. In its first version, this took its inspiration from Amartya Sen’s work on “capabilities,” where well-being should focus particularly on people’s potential and ability to do something.

These positions were influential in Latin America, and subsequently built upon. The most important contribution was the concept of “human scale development,” popularised by the Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef. This is based on three key propositions: development should focus on people rather than objects, the means to satisfy needs can be identified, and poverty is a plural concept that depends on unmet needs (Max-Neef et al., 1993).

Other analysts in the 1980s chose to rethink development from the point of view of self-reliance, which implies drawing on local capabilities and resources, following Johan Galtung (1985). With this notion of self-reliance, positive results should be taken advantage of locally, and the transfer of negative externalities should be prevented. Some of these aspects reappear under the term “endogenous development,” although this school of thought has had only a limited influence in Latin America (seen today, for example, in the take-up of small-scale farming practices by the COMPAS Network). The label has also been applied generically by the government of Hugo Chávez, and in the promotion of local food markets, for example.

Finally, it is necessary to bear in mind that since the end of the 1990s the questions posed by the field of ecological economics have gained currency. This is a broad and diverse school of thought, from where successive critiques have been launched at the obsession with economic growth. The economist Herman Daly was an important protagonist in these debates, and many of his texts circulated in Spanish (Daly and Cobb, 1993).

The emergence and diversification of sustainable development

As the 1970s debate on the environment and development continued to evolve, the first versions of the concept of “sustainable development” appeared at the beginning of the 1980s.

The term “sustainable” came from population biology, and is understood as the possibility of extracting or harvesting renewable resources provided that this is

done without exceeding their renewal and reproduction rates. Such extraction should also be directly aimed at meeting human needs and ensuring quality of life – goals that differ from simple growth. An approach of this sort appeared in 1980 in the first “World Conservation Strategy” (IUCN, UNEP and WWF, 1981). This report maintains that it is not possible to include the environmental dimension in the conceptual framework of conventional ‘development’, and it is therefore necessary to redefine the essence of the concept.

A next step was taken with the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), convened by the United Nations. Its final report, “Our Common Future”, offers what is possibly the most quoted definition of sustainable development. Although it is almost always cited as a commitment to future generations, the complete text is longer and more complex (WCED, 1988), and should be analysed.

In the first place, in common with some other alternative proposals made at the time, it calls for ‘development’ to be aimed at meeting human needs, and extends this to a commitment to future generations. Secondly, it admits the existence of limits, and thus comes closer to the line of thinking started by the Club of Rome report, but then goes on to differentiate between those that are rigid (the limits inherent in ecosystems, for example), and others that are flexible because they depend on human beings themselves (in the case of technologies or the organisation of society). Finally, the definition closes with a conciliatory U-turn: sustainable development must be aimed at economic growth. Thus, the old contradistinction between growth and conservation, the environment and the economy, disappears. It is once again argued that development implies economic growth, and the conservation of natural resources becomes a necessary condition for achieving it. What were previously opposites now turn out to be mutually dependent.

The way in which sustainability is conceptualised in this report is polysemic: various meanings are offered which, if taken on their own, lead to very different development stances. This is why it has been argued that the report’s definition is contradictory in its own terms, but it is not an oxymoron in the strict sense, since the important thing is how the components connect together in the definition as a whole. There is an internal logic in the WCED, beginning with its particular understanding of the limits, and the components can be linked together. The same logic would be evinced a few years later with the Latin American version of this same report, “Our Own Agenda” (CDMAALC, 1990).

In any case, this reduction of sustainability to economic factors was resisted on

several fronts. The second “World Conservation Strategy,” for example, produced in 1991, addressed the limitations of the Brundtland report unambiguously. It warns that “sustainable growth” is a “contradiction in terms: nothing physical can grow indefinitely.” In response, this report offers a new definition of sustainability which is shorter and has a more precise ecological meaning – “improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems” – and advances substantively on other fronts, particularly in its call for changes in ethics (IUCN, UNEP and WWF, 1991).

Beyond this debate, the multiple meanings of sustainable development allowed it to be used in many different ways, from publicity campaigns to denunciations of capitalism. So successful was it that the word “sustainability” broke away from its roots in ecology and became tinged with a developmentalist gloss. Nowadays, we see it being used in bizarre ways, such as “social sustainability” or “sustained economic growth.”

Retreats and resistances

At the end of the 1980s, the collapse of “real socialism” in Eastern Europe led to the options previously spoken of as alternatives becoming discredited. At the same time, neoliberal and neoconservative policies were starting to become consolidated in Latin America. These are the years when market reforms, the Washington Consensus and the drive to privatise came to prominence, and the range of possible alternatives shrank accordingly. These ideas circulated throughout the continent, with the support of local elites and the adherence of academic institutions. The discussion about development was becoming meaningless, as it was assumed that the market would more or less spontaneously generate development; planning and intervention were seen as pointless as well as dangerous.

The impact of neoliberalism was so strong that even heterodox approaches had to adjust and adapt to it. One example was the proposal for Productive Transformation with Equity (PTE) put forward by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) at the start of the 1990s. PTE is part of the neostructuralism which, based on a review of Prebisch’s ideas, defends the role of the state and rejects hardline neoliberalism. It calls for flexibility in fiscal and monetary policies, sees competitiveness as a systemic process, reiterates the importance of industrialisation, and pursues involvement in export markets.

But a more careful examination of PTE reveals that it nevertheless still focuses on promoting growth. Although it resists neoliberal fundamentalism, it also supports

the expansion of the market into social and environmental spheres (defending Natural Capital and Social Capital). Furthermore, it is a position supportive of globalisation (under the proposal of “open regionalism”), as it ignores or minimises the importance of the social and political contexts of development (thus breaking with one of the key messages of dependency theory). It is above all a technocratic stance rather than a development alternative, and supports regulated and globalised growth.

In those same years, however, other positions managed to maintain alternative viewpoints. Three cases that differ from each other but all reflect that vitality should be mentioned. We will start with the critique of development from a feminist perspective.³ In the Latin American setting, different contributions have focused on acknowledging the importance of the role played by women in national economies, but not all of them involved a critical review of development. The standpoints that questioned the male-centred bias, on the other hand, revealed the contributions made by women that had been left invisible, particularly the care economy and other aspects of the non-commercial economy (Carrasco, 2006). In the case of ecofeminism, these led to a radical questioning of development (see those inspired by Merchant, 1989).

The regulation school, promoted initially by French economists, achieved some influence in Latin America, with the academic works and activism of Alain Lipietz (1997), for example. This approach “seeks to integrate analysis of political economy with analysis of civil society and/or State to show how they interact to normalize the capital relation and govern the conflictual and crisis-mediated course of capital accumulation”, according to one of its proponents.⁴

Starting in the late 1990s, debates on the “dematerialisation” of development began to gain receptivity in Latin America. The term is used in the sense of substantially reducing the consumption of materials and energy, and redirecting economies to meet human needs. The best-known models, such as the so-called “Factor 10” or the “Sustainable Europe” proposals by the Wuppertal Climate Institute in Germany, encouraged the work of civil society organisations and some academics.⁵ Several of these elements have been taken up again in the current debates about post-extractivism in the Andean countries.

Turn to the left and contradictions

Since 1999, a political retreat from the neoliberal market reforms has taken place in Latin America. The political expression of this has been the coming to power

of governments that define themselves as left-wing or progressive.⁶ On the one hand, this shift resulted from various processes including harsh criticisms and reactions against neoliberal strategies, and, on the other, a broadening out of the debates on development.

Thus, the wave of neoliberal reforms was halted and various regulations and controls were introduced. Different processes to strengthen the state were initiated, including a return to state-owned enterprises, and more energetic, more extensive plans to combat poverty were implemented. The context of the debate on development changed substantially.

The group of progressive governments is very diverse, however, and different degrees of emphasis can therefore be found in the measures they have introduced, ranging from the tight control of currency exchange and commodity trading implemented in Venezuela, to the more economically orthodox policies taken forward in Brazil or Uruguay.

In Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, criticism of capitalism in the broad sense intensified, and proposals for building a “21st century socialism” emerged. The best-known theorists of 21st century socialism may include A. Borón (2008), H. Dieterich (1996) and J.C. Monedero (2008). Each in their own way set out very detailed criticisms of capitalism in general and neoliberalism in particular. All aim at regulating or limiting the role of capital, and assign substantial roles to the state. But beyond these criticisms, their approaches suffer from various limitations, as substantive discussions of issues such as the environment or interculturalism and the inclusion of indigenous peoples are absent.

In other countries, by contrast, the situation is different. In Argentina, for example, a type of “national-popular” development is gradually taking shape. This repeats the call for growth and exports, though with a major leading role for the state, which is understood to be at the service of the people. In the case of Brazil, “*novo desenvolvimento*” (new developmentalism) is more moderate still: it proposes a greater role for the state, but clarifies that this must not hamper the workings of the market; it rejects neoliberalism, but also sets itself apart from what it calls “the old populist left;” and finally, in all sincerity, it declares itself to be liberal (Bresser Pereira, 2007).

These theoretical approaches are very diverse in both countries, but in the context of our analysis here what should be underlined is that they do not question the rationality of development as growth, the role of exports or investment, or intervention to make use of Nature. Likewise, social questions - such as poverty -

are dealt with, but there is no intercultural approach. In general, what is earnestly discussed is the means to bring about the desired progress, the role of the state in this (whether by regulation or by direct involvement through state enterprises, for example), and how to distribute the surplus revenue. This descends into functional strategies and a certain type of populism, albeit re-conceptualised in a positive and mobilising sense, where relations with the business community vary (widespread support in Brazil, but conditional support in Argentina).

When it comes to the actual practices of the progressive governments, and their plans of action, the situation becomes still more complicated. Some have stuck to macroeconomic orthodoxy (the Lula da Silva and Tabaré Vázquez administrations, for example), and others are attempting larger-scale interventions, as in the case of Venezuela. But all of them defend economic growth as synonymous with development, and believe that it will be achieved by increasing exports and maximizing investment. These are precisely the key components of the “myth” of development highlighted in Celso Furtado’s warning. The same idea of development that was circulating in the 1960s and 1970s has reappeared in new guise.

This explains the progressive governments’ strong support for the extractive industries, including mining or oil and gas, as these are the means to achieve this export-led “growth.” This has given rise to a progressive neoextractivism (Gudynas, 2009b), which does differ significantly from the previous conservative government strategies - based on the primacy of transnational corporations and the subordination of the state -but nevertheless perpetuates the appropriation of Nature on a massive scale, the enclave economies and subordinated involvement in global markets. The progressive governments award the state a major role in these sectors, either through national enterprises or through higher taxes and royalties; and they present the collection of this revenue as an essential means to finance their social welfare and poverty reduction plans. Thus, progressive extractivism forges a new type of link, which promotes and legitimises mining or oil industry projects as necessary to sustain welfare benefits or cash payments to the poorest sectors of society.

The extractivist drive is so intense that the Correa administration, for example, is looking to launch opencast mega-mining in Ecuador, while in Uruguay, a country traditionally based on agriculture and livestock farming, President Mujica is arguing for the start of iron ore mega-mining as one of his main goals.

In particular, however, all these governments are in denial about the social and environmental impacts of extractivism. Since there are no effective responses,

the protests due to social and environmental impacts are intensifying. One recent example is the protest by indigenous people against the building of a road through the middle of the Isoboro Sécure Indigenous Territory and National Park (TIPNIS) in Bolivia. This was brushed off by the Evo Morales government, which argued that mining and the oil industry need to be promoted so that social welfare benefits can be funded.⁷

Under neoextractivism, the debates about development have been significantly reconfigured. While in the past the enclave economies were associated with trade dependency and transnationalisation, they are now defended as export success-stories; while in previous years there were calls to abandon extractivism and promote national industrialisation, today the record highs in raw materials exports are celebrated. Subordination to transnational companies and globalisation in the area of trade and, with it, world governance as a whole, has ceased to be an object of criticism and is now accepted. Although extractivism veers away from social justice because of its high social and environmental impacts, the governments of the left are attempting to return to it through wealth distribution measures, especially benefit payments. But essentially this is an economic justice that is very manipulative, and looks a lot like charity and benevolence.

Environmental impacts are minimised or denied, and attempts are made to damp down citizen protests. Again and again, we hear the myth of the region replete with immense wealth – without environmental limits – that must not be wasted, but rather taken advantage of intensively and efficiently.⁸

This leads to a curious situation, where the progressive development “alternative” is undoubtedly a shift away from free-market reductionism, but is also conventional with regard to many of the classical development ideas. To some extent, with its appeal to national development, it is similar to the traditional plans of the 1960s, though without the emphasis on national industries and import substitution. The measures to combat poverty are more energetic, but the system is open to imports of consumer goods, and the conventional procedures for the exploitation and commercialisation of natural resources are maintained. These and other factors mean that it is no longer possible to question either the investment goals or the export targets, and the only thing that can be discussed is how the state’s surplus revenue is to be spent. The Uruguayan president, José Mujica, expresses this clearly: “We need investment from abroad;” there should be no controversy about this because foreign capital is indispensable, and “later, when we have the benefits of that investment, the taxes it pays and the profits, we can discuss whether we are spending them well or badly – yes, of course we can discuss that.”⁹

This is a style of development that accepts the conditions of today's capitalism, whereby the state has to reduce or compensate for some of its negative facets. This is a "benevolent capitalism" that aims above all to tackle poverty and inequality through corrections and compensation (Gudynas, 2010a).

This situation is starting to show cracks, as the social and environmental impacts of these strategies pile up and the effectiveness of the economic compensation is wearing thin. This is redoubling the importance of debates about the essence of development, and explains the recent attention to more independent and critical views of the progressive governments' performance.

A persistent debate, intermittent dialogue and co-option

The examples offered here show that development debates, criticisms and alternatives have a long history, and Latin Americans have often been closely involved in them. The debates can be roughly divided into two groups: on one side, the discussions internal to the disciplines that focus on development, and on the other, the criticisms from the outside. The former include, for example, the debates between neoclassicists and Marxists, or between those who defended the market and those who called for state involvement to channel development. Many of the harshest criticisms, though, have come from outside – from disciplines or actors who are not development economists, as in the case of the warnings on the social and environmental "limits" of development.

In any case, these debates tended to take place in stagnant compartments; the development economists were not much inclined to listen to other disciplines. In contrast, the sociologists, anthropologists, environmentalists, etc., redoubled their interest in development matters, and were joined by different civil society organisations. The debates proliferated for a time, reaching a high level of intensity, but then declined again, only to reappear in other terms years later.

At the same time, the promises of development have generally not been fulfilled. Government projects seldom bore fruit, and the plans of institutions such as the World Bank or the IDB were not successful either; it was common for all of them to experience setbacks and produce social and environmental impacts. Hundreds of cases, studies and denunciations of this problem have accumulated, making it clear that what has prevailed in these decades is "maldevelopment" (in the sense described by Tortosa, 2011).

Thus, development is still a dream that is longed for but also resisted: an idea that

gets deployed, is then criticised and questioned, adapts itself, reconfigures in a new version that is presented as better than before, and once again gets mired in crisis shortly afterwards.

The death of development has been announced repeatedly since the 1980s. In the influential *Development Dictionary*, Wolfgang Sachs (1992) declared that the age of development was coming to an end and it was time to issue its death certificate; Gustavo Esteva (1992) went further, calling for the whole idea to be abandoned. Throughout the 1990s, it seemed that this was on the point of happening, not just because of the criticisms coming from the left, but also because the strong anti-neoliberal stance was making the whole issue of development seem almost irrelevant.

But the idea of development is very resistant. Just as broad sectors of civil society were criticizing it, there were others demanding access to development, or calling for more development. Each new developmentalist vision – with neoextractivism being the most recent – serves to keep that dream alive.

The ideology of progress

This remarkable endurance of the idea of development has been interpreted in various ways, with some likening it to a myth or a religion (Rist, 2006). In this essay, in contrast, I argue that, at least on the basis of the evidence in Latin America, it is more appropriate to refer to the idea of ideology. In fact, current development ideas may even be seen as the contemporary expression of the ideology of progress.

The concept of ideology is understood here in a relational sense as providing a basis for organising the beliefs, subjectivities and values of individuals, and thus producing and reproducing a certain social order in its multiple dimensions, from the individual to the institutional (Eagleton, 1991). This ideological basis explains the irrational and emotional attachment to the idea of development, with warnings or contradictions constantly ignored or brushed off.

The idea of progress has been present for centuries, and can be found behind almost all the examples presented above (Nisbet, 1981; Burns, 1990). In Latin America this is particularly evident in the environmental sphere. Diverse schools of thought, from the dependency theorists and the Marxists of the 1960s and the neoliberals of the 1980s, to the recent progressives, have rejected the existence of ecological limits to perpetual growth, minimized environmental impacts or

believed that they can be compensated for economically, and see their mandate as to foster progress.

When it is recognised that development has an ideological basis, it becomes clear that the formulation of alternatives must put this up for discussion. Conventional tools such as economic analysis can only operate on the surface, and find it enormously difficult to drill down into the ideological substrata. It is therefore necessary to deploy another type of critique.

The post-development critique

Thinking about the essence of development - including its ideological basis - crystallised at the end of the 1980s, in the approach known as “post-development.” Several Latin American scholars played an important role in shaping this approach, but among the most important were Gustavo Esteva from Mexico (1992) and Arturo Escobar from Colombia (1992, 2005).

This school of thought understood that development had spread until it became a way of thinking and feeling. Its approach is post-structuralist in a Foucauldian sense; in other words, it questions a discourse, including the organised ideas and concepts, but also the institutional structures and practices. Therefore, post-development does not offer ideas for the next version of development; instead, the prefix “post” is used in a way that follows the French post-structuralists (especially Foucault).¹⁰ Neither does it bear any relation to the economic structuralism of Raúl Prebisch, nor to Latin American neostructuralism.

This radical critique serves to examine the ideological foundations of development, but it is not obliged to propose “another development.” Instead, it enables questions to be posed where other schools of thought are not able to, and thus opens the door to new types of alternatives. This approach enabled a wide range of questions to be discussed, such as development goals, aid programmes, development planning, the institutional structures that underpin it (from university departments to the World Bank’s development assistance programmes), the role of experts and specialists, the production of arguments and forms of knowledge labelled as valid and objective, and the mechanisms used to exclude other knowledge systems and sensibilities (Rahnema, 1997).

This means that it is necessary to distinguish between “development alternatives” and “alternatives to development.” The former refers to the different options for rectifying, repairing or modifying contemporary development, whereby its

conceptual foundations – such as perpetual growth or the appropriation of Nature – are accepted, and the discussion focuses on the best means to take the process forward. With “alternatives to development,” in contrast, the aim is to produce conceptual frameworks that are not based on those ideological foundations. This implies exploring social, economic and political orders different to what we have been calling development.

When post-development’s deconstruction is applied, very strong tensions arise with ideas that are usually taken for granted as valid or part of the “common sense” of development. This means that there will be resistance to accepting post-development’s questioning in all its depth, and therefore in some cases it will be used in its “light” variety (such as making use of the prefix “post” to refer to a future version of development).

Neither is it a minor matter that post-development makes it possible to take forward a critique of fundamental principles found not only in liberal and conservative traditions but also in socialist (especially Marxist) ones. This is an important aspect in today’s Latin American context, especially because we currently have several progressive governments, supported by broad sectors of society, that are continuing to reproduce the ideology of progress. Classical socialist tradition agrees with some of post-development’s criticisms of capitalism, but diverges from it in other areas, since it continues to believe in things such as the linearity of history or the manipulation of Nature. It is true that certain revisions have been made in this field, but some of them introduce such substantial changes (as in the case of some ecosocialisms) that it is necessary to ask whether the end result can continue to be called socialism.

There are similarities between post-development and the school of thought known as “degrowth”, in those cases where the latter is presented as a political slogan to denounce development (Latouche, 2009). But the impact of degrowth in Latin America is debatable.

Post-development does, however, turn out to have strong similarities with the critiques put forward by some indigenous peoples, since their rationalities are not embedded in the ideology of progress. These forms of knowledge in turn emerge as ideal sources for building alternatives to development.

Thanks to this type of debate, it has been made clear that the development alternatives being tried out are insufficient to solve today’s social and environmental problems on either a local or a global scale. Attempts to find instrumentalist solutions and make adjustments within the ideology of progress

are considered insufficient, because they do not solve the underlying problems and are merely partial, short-term corrective measures of doubtful effectiveness. Therefore, in the Latin American context, the alternatives must necessarily be “alternatives to development.”

The questioning of development as a critique of Modernity

Having marked out the field of post-development, it is possible to take an additional step. In fact, criticisms of development imply delving into the ideology of development, and this in turn makes it obligatory to address the project of Modernity. It is from there that the idea of progress emerged, and this in turn has taken shape in development. Therefore, a pre-requisite for the exploration of any alternative is to address the project of Modernity.

Here, we adopt a broad definition of the “modern” condition, which starts from the understanding that there is a model that needs to be universalised (thus dividing cultures into modern and non-modern), and that this is represented by European culture. It is a school of thought that adheres to a Cartesian knowledge system (whereby what is true/false can be determined and other forms of knowledge are excluded); its ethical stance restricts value to the human sphere, emphasises different forms of utilitarianism, sees history as a temporally linear process – of progress from past conditions of backwardness to a better future – and stresses the duality that separates society from Nature.¹¹

The elements that form the backbone of Modernity are present in all ideas of development, including the Iberian strands that were also expounded and built up in Latin America. The thinking that characterised positivism and the philosophy of Herbert Spencer or Auguste Comte, among others, was grafted onto the top-down and authoritarian Iberian branch (Burns, 1990). These amalgams had very dramatic effects in Latin America, especially in the 19th century, as the idea of progress and Eurocentric culture reinforced the inherited colonial drive to appropriate vast areas of land to extract their resources, together with the domination of indigenous peoples. At that time, the task of progress was to “civilise” both the “savages” and the wilderness. These ideas are repeated even today, when heads of government as different as Rafael Correa and Alan García describe indigenous people in a similar way, as “backward” and “a hindrance to development.”

This Modernity was conceived both in continental Europe and in the Americas, and was introduced in our continent under the conditions of colonialism. This

problem has been examined by the theories of coloniality of power and coloniality of knowledge, which describe how certain ideas are imposed about what constitutes society, history, knowledge and, concomitantly, development. This is a process anchored in power relations, through which ways of understanding the world are disseminated and structured. These are defended not just as superior, but as the only ones that are valid, while others are excluded.¹² In this process, the ideas of progress merged completely naturally with conventional economic thinking, which then determined all Latin American perspectives.

Thus, to question development or the ideology of progress implies a critique of Modernity itself (Escobar, 2005). Alternatives to development in their turn must also be alternatives to western Modernity. One way forward along this path is to take up marginal or subordinate schools of thought within the western tradition itself. In the Latin American context, it is necessary to mention two of these: radical biocentric environmentalism and critical feminism. The first one recognises particular values in Nature itself, thus breaking with the modern stance that considers Nature as merely a set of objects at the service of human beings. Among its main proponents are the work of the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss (1985). The second one refers to feminist postures that defends an ethical alternative, as in the case of the care economy. Lastly, but not least, the contribution of indigenous peoples is critical.

The examples presented above correspond to cosmovisions that are different to Eurocentric worldviews, and where concepts such as progress or development do not exist. The diversity of these other forms of knowledge is huge, and it is not possible to review them all here, but it is necessary to bear them in mind.

A provisional classification

Having completed a journey that started from current debates about development, then moved on to the ideology of progress and from there to Modernity, it is now possible to arrive at a proposed classification of the Latin American debates. The criterion for dividing them up is heterodox, and is based on applying a critical perspective of post-development (and superimposing others, such as degrowth and decolonisation, for the purposes of this review).

In accordance with this criterion, on one side we find the alternatives that accept the basic premises of development as the manifestation of progress, although these include very different ideas about how that progress should be achieved. These would be the “development alternatives.” On the other side are the proposals

that try to break with the commonly accepted ideas of development as growth or progress, and thus argue for “alternatives to development.” Table 1 summarises this classification.

Table 1: Provisional classification of development alternatives and alternatives to development

Reference is made to the main schools of thought as outstanding examples

A) Alternatives within the ideology of progress and modernity	
Classical instrumentalist alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairing negative effects (e.g. social-democratic reformism, the “third way”), national-popular development, new developmentalism, progressive neoextractivism
Alternatives that focus on economic structures and processes and the role of capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialist alternatives, early structuralism, Marxist and neomarxist approaches, dependency theory, neostructuralism, various exponents of 21st century socialism
Alternatives that focus on the social dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social limits to growth, decoupling development from economics, emphasis on employment and poverty • Endogenous development, human development, human scale development • Other economies (domestic, informal, smallholder, indigenous), liberal multiculturalism
Alternatives that react to environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecodevelopment, weak sustainability and some of strong sustainability

B) Alternatives that get beyond progress and modernity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conviviality • Super-strong sustainability, biocentric approaches, deep ecology • Feminist critique, the care economy • Dematerialisation of the economy, degrowth (partly) • Interculturalism, pluralism, relational ontologies, expanded forms of citizenship • “Buen Vivir” (some proposals)

Prepared by the author.

The first large set of “development alternatives” reflect the debates taking place between the main schools of contemporary thought, especially liberalism,

conservatism and socialism. The alternatives, in this case, focus on questions such as the role of the state in development, ways to intervene (or not) in the market, ideas on justice, ways to tackle poverty, etc. These are not minor debates, but the point we wish to underline here is that all of them in one way or another take for granted that development is an essentially linear process, a form of progress achieved by means of material accumulation. In other words, all of them remain within the project of Modernity.

The second set corresponds to the “alternatives to development.” Included here are some of the first attempts along these lines, one of the most important of which was Ivan Illich’s thinking from Mexico in the 1970s, exemplified in the proposal for “conviviality”.¹³ Then there are the radical environmentalist stances that do not accept the permanent growth aspired to by neoclassical economics and defend the values intrinsic to Nature. These include the so-called super-strong sustainability,¹⁴ biocentrism¹⁵ and deep ecology, in the meaning outlined by Næss (1989).¹⁶ These components are argued for by some social movements, and were included in Ecuador’s new constitution, for example, under the heading of the rights of Nature.

Other important contributions came from feminism which, among other things, questioned the patriarchal order in society and warned that development strategies were reproducing and consolidating its asymmetries and hierarchies (Saunders, 2002). Some of the proposals for dematerialising the economy (reducing its levels of consumption of materials and energy) also fall into this category when they are accompanied by changes in consumption patterns and lifestyles. This is a more diverse set of proposals and includes some of the contributions made by the degrowth movement, the environmental justice movement, etc. (Sachs and Santarius, 2007).

Note that these positions distance themselves from the project of Modernity to differing degrees (moderately in the case of degrowth and dematerialisation; more clearly in the case of biocentrism). In any case they still have aspects in common, such as arguing for another type of ethics that is neither instrumentalist nor utilitarian, for example.

Finally, other proposals start by adopting some of the positions and cosmovisions of indigenous peoples. This is not possible from a classical multiculturalist standpoint, since the decolonial warnings mentioned above must be addressed, and therefore an intercultural stance is called for.

These different approaches have led to the recognition that Modernity expresses

a particular type of ontology – a way of being in and understanding the world – that clearly separates society from Nature and subordinates the latter in a hierarchy that allows it to be manipulated and destroyed. Therefore, the most recent schools of thought maintain that it is necessary to move away from Eurocentric ontology to be able to build other alternatives. At the moment, the interest here is in taking up what have come to be known as “relational ontologies,” where the duality that characterises Modernity does not exist, and elements of what is conventionally called Nature – such as agency, moral status and political expression – are explored. Social elements in turn come to be located within the field of what the western knowledge system terms the environment (Blaser and de la Cadena, 2009). Relational ontologies of this sort are found among several indigenous peoples in Latin America, and explain the reasons why it is not possible to follow ideas analogous to progress based on usurping Nature.

These and other contributions have recently been organised and coordinated under the name of “Buen Vivir” (a Spanish word that refers to a good life based on a social and ecological expanded vision), as an alternative to the idea of development. This is a very vital school of thought, which has the advantage of abandoning the use of the word development, and offers enormous potential for the future (Acosta, 2008; Gudynas, 2011b). It moves away from the classical views of development as perpetual economic growth, linear progress, and anthropocentric, to focus on people’s well-being in a broad sense that also includes their emotions and beliefs. The break with anthropocentrism makes it possible to recognise values intrinsic to the environment, do away with the society/Nature duality and reconfigure communities of political and moral agents.

“Buen Vivir” is an expression that owes a great deal to traditional forms of knowledge, especially Andean ones. Its best-known points of reference are the *sumak kawsay* of the Ecuadorian Kichwa and the *suma qamaña* of the Bolivian Aymara. But it is not limited to these, and similar worldviews are found among other indigenous peoples, while some were configured only recently. It also draws on the contributions made by the critical and non-conformist traditions on the margins of Modernity, such as biocentric environmentalism and feminism.

The thing is that *Buen Vivir* can be reinterpreted as a political “platform” which is arrived at from different traditions and a diversity of specific positions; where the substantive critique of development as ideology is shared and alternatives to it are explored. Thus, *Buen Vivir* is a set of attempts to build other social and economic orders that break free of the bounds imposed by Modernity.

A provisional assessment

A provisional assessment of the debates about development is highly positive. The question of development is once again at the centre of many discussions; it is reappearing in academia and in social movements, especially those in countries with progressive governments which have recovered their critical independence. Links are being made between academics and activists to address these questions, and the contribution made by indigenous knowledge is nourishing an intense process of renewal.¹⁷

The discussion about alternatives is not something that is taking place on the sidelines – instead it is moving centre stage; an example is the exploration of post-extractivism, particularly in Ecuador and Peru. It is true that conventional development continues to be present, moribund in some cases, being revitalised in others, but many debates are no longer focusing on whether or not an alternative horizon is valid. Instead, that need is accepted, and the question is to determine whether the changes will take the form of development alternatives, or alternatives to development.

The issues being discussed here include age-old problems such as the role of the state or the market, together with other, newer questions such as relational ontologies or expanded forms of citizenship. Even traditional questions such as the roles of the state or the market are now being addressed from new viewpoints. This is leading, for example, to an acknowledgement of the diversity of markets present in the region which are based on other rationales such as reciprocity or barter.

A clear trend is emerging whereby any alternative has to understand that development cannot be limited to economic growth, and that goals focusing on the quality of life and the protection of Nature are becoming key. Well-being is not tied to a material or individual plane; instead it includes the collective and spiritual dimension as well as the ecological dimension.

The alternatives require profound changes in our relationship with Nature. The near future will be one of scarcity and austerity, and quality of life must therefore be ensured within much narrower options for making use of Nature's resources. The protection of biodiversity is now justified from another ethical perspective, as it is recognised to have rights of its own. The alternatives in this direction are biocentric and based upon doing away with the society/Nature duality characteristic of European Modernity.

Intense debates are going on in the field of ethics, as several alternatives challenge

conventional forms of valuation that assign value to something based on how it can be used or traded (i.e., its price). This implies, firstly, a necessary renovation of the economy and, secondly, accepting that there are other ways of assigning value that go beyond such utilitarianism, including recognising the values (and, therefore, the rights) intrinsic to Nature.

At the same time, and in different ways, the alternatives renounce the pretension of western science and technology to solve all problems and explain all situations. Manipulative and utilitarian rationalities are being abandoned, and uncertainty and risk are being acknowledged.

The debate about alternatives has always paid much attention to political actors, their dynamics and institutional structures. Today's transformed debates are generating new ways of addressing these questions, ranging from the leading role assigned to previously subordinate actors (smallholder farmers, indigenous people, the urban poor, women, etc.), to the necessary redefinition of concepts such as citizenship and justice.

These and other factors are placing the restoration of other knowledge systems, particularly those of Latin America's indigenous peoples, at the centre of attention. The alternatives, whatever they may be, cannot emerge from a cultural monologue; instead, an intercultural exchange must necessarily take place. Likewise, a gender perspective must be included, and this cannot be thought of as merely a pragmatic concession.

These attributes are what makes the idea of conventional development based on utilitarianism – the manipulation, usurping and separation of Nature – meaningless. One way or another, all of the alternatives break with the ideology of progress, and thus take us to terrains beyond Modernity. This transition is undoubtedly not simple, and neither does it mean breaking with elements from the past that are valuable, but it shows what direction the changes need to take. The case of *Buen Vivir* exemplifies the vitality and potential of these initiatives.

From this perspective, the traditional political categories such as liberalism, conservatism and socialism are insufficient to bring about alternatives to development. In other words, the new changes must be both post-capitalist and post-socialist, as they make a clean break with the ideology of progress.

Notes

1. Researcher at the Centro Latino Americano de Ecología Social (CLAES), Montevideo, Uruguay (www.ambiental.net); MSc in social ecology.
2. It is worth pointing out here that the ideas of Celso Furtado, mentioned in the introduction, were also a critique of the environmental limits to growth.
3. The feminist argument is analysed in more detail in the chapter “Development Critiques and Alternatives: A Feminist Perspective;” in this book.
4. Bob Jessop (1994), in Hollingsworth, Schmitte, Streeck, *Governing Capitalist Economies*, (Oxford, OUP)
5. Examples of this were the Sustainable Southern Cone programme, which brought together several NGOs from the Southern Cone, and the Sustainability 2025 programme promoted by CLAES, which laid out strategies based on the strong and super-strong sustainability options, to be implemented by 2025.
6. This group includes the governments of Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in Argentina, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Tabaré Vázquez and José Mujica in Uruguay, and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Some would include the past administrations of Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet in Chile in this group and, with greater reservations, the Fernando Lugo government in Paraguay. Finally, the new Ollanta Humala administration in Peru will surely be included in this group.
7. Vice-President Álvaro García Linera rejected the indigenous peoples’ demands because they would lead to the hydrocarbons industry grinding to a halt. He accused them of “seeking to prevent the payment of the Dignity Pension to 600,000 older people who receive 200 bolivianos every month, as well as the Juancito Pinto benefit that goes to 1.8 million schoolchildren, since both programmes are funded from our exports of natural gas.” This is tantamount to blackmail, implying that all extractivism must be accepted as justified since it serves to tackle poverty. Statements in *Página Siete*, 20 September 2011, La Paz.
8. An example of this is President Rafael Correa’s call for Ecuadorians not to be “beggars sitting on top of a sack of gold,” alluding to the argument that it would be foolish or irresponsible not to take advantage of that wealth. This is the discourse he uses to promote opencast mining. Statements in *El Universo*, 16 January 2009, Quito.
9. *El Observador*, 12 February 2010, Montevideo.
10. From the Foucauldian point of view, the category of ideology merges with that of discourse, in the broad sense that is allocated to it, and operates within a power complex.

11. This conceptualisation is a working definition for the purposes of this essay. It is acknowledged that many different meanings have been assigned to the term “modernity” (del Río, 1997), and that it may take different specific forms in different countries.

12. The main theorists in this school of thought include Aníbal Quijano from Peru (2000) and Walter D. Mignolo from Argentina (2007); see also the excellent review by Restrepo and Rojas (2010).

13. Conviviality is understood to be the opposite of industrial productivity. Industrial relations are a conditioned reflex, the individual’s stereotyped response to the messages broadcast by another user who he/she will never meet except through an artificial medium he/she will never understand. Convivial relations, in contrast, are those engaged in by people who participate in creating social life. Shifting from productivity to conviviality means replacing technical values with ethical values, material values with non-material values (Illich, 2006).

14. The strand of sustainable development characterised by rejecting the reductionism of the concept of natural capital, and using the category of patrimony in its place. It maintains that there are multiple ways of valuing the environment, it accepts the values intrinsic to nature, and its approach is participatory, among other aspects.

15. A stance defended by deep ecology based on Nature’s own values and life as a value in itself.

16. A school of thought and environmental activism put forward by A. Næss (1989).

17. One example is the setting up of the Latin American Critical Development Studies Alliance. See <<http://www.otrodesarrollo.com>>.

Development Critiques and Alternatives: A Feminist Perspective

Margarita Aguinaga¹, Miriam Lang², Dunia Mokrani³, Alejandra Santillana⁴

Feminism thinking today must be emancipatory. It must be rooted in the diversity and potential of life and have a holistic perspective, looking at the whole picture. To reach its goal of becoming an emerging revolutionary movement, it must analyse the various dimensions of power in connection with each other, and hence any feminist critique of development will have an integrative approach. This contribution to the feminist debates about development brings together various dimensions, including the environment, economics, the productive model, colonialism and patriarchy.

Taking a historical perspective, this chapter looks at the various contributions feminism has made to development. The authors feel that it is paramount to propose a form of analysis which is different from the classical academic and economic development discourse, since feminism arose precisely as a political challenge to the effects of an androcentric discourse, traditionally presented as scientific and universal, but which has systematically undermined other knowledge and has gained domination in a number of areas –including women's bodies and speech, the mainstream arguments of medicine and psychoanalysis, as well as philosophy and anthropology (Dorlin, 2009).

If feminism is seen as knowledge, similar to a genealogy, a proposal to transform life with a comprehensive perspective, it is possible to engage with both academia, political discourses and women's individual and collective struggles to transform an unequal and unfair economic, social and political system. But above all, it enables us to draw on ideas arising from the wider Latin American debates. Currently, following the recent constitutional processes, Latin Americans have proposed *Buen Vivir* (a term in Spanish that can be translated as “living well,” but with a distinctive meaning in the Latin American and particularly indigenous context) as a goal which diverges from the paradigm of development. Feminism is helping to build this, articulating the processes of decolonisation and dismantling patriarchy.

The 1970s: Women in development

Feminist critiques of the concept of development emerged in the 1970s, about twenty years after the new global North-South hierarchy was launched by the

United States president, Harry Truman⁵. Following the 1968 uprisings, the 1970s produced the “Second Wave” of the feminist movement, not only in the industrialised countries but also to a great extent in Latin America. This included left-wing counter-cultural feminism as much as liberal feminism.

A seminal contribution to the discourse on gender and development was formulated by the Danish economist Ester Boserup in 1970. In her book *Woman's Role in Economic Development* she criticised development as being a system that excluded women, and proposed a break with a series of dogmas established in development discourse and policies. She used some empirical research in Africa to question the outcomes of post-1945 development programmes, showing that they had serious implications for women's participation and well-being. Until the 1970s, women had only been included in development policies as passive beneficiaries, or mothers and housewives, while training, technology and finance were geared to men. The Western model became widespread through development programmes and focused on the home as a standard recipient unit and particularly on men as breadwinners with a salaried job. Women were dependants, in charge of the home. The model ignored the fact that in many cultures women worked in agriculture and food production (for example) and that there were different, or much more flexible, sexual divisions of labour. It also ignored the fact that the home, or the household, was a mesh of power relations that did not necessarily convert the aid given to male breadwinners into profit for “dependants” of either sex.

The work of Boserup and her contemporaries was successful, leading to the first World Conference on Women in Mexico on July 2, 1975, at which the United Nations declared the next decade the “Decade of Women” and institutionalised women's perspective as part of development⁶. This was intended to be not so much a criticism of the idea of development itself as a way of reversing the exclusion of women from the array of development-related resources. It would also mean that women's productive and reproductive work, which makes a significant contribution to national economies (Safa, 1995), would cease to be disregarded.

With the introduction of the concept of “Women in Development” (WID), large numbers of NGOs emerged, geared to helping women access funds earmarked for development, and be included as programme beneficiaries, which in future would have a “women component”. This concept also argued that women, because they are socialised as carers which involves a greater sense of responsibility to others, would be better resource administrators, better savers, and they were even considered a “so-far unexploited resource for greater efficiency in development”

(Jackson, 1992: 89). This for example led to a series of programmes especially for women, such as microcredit, and to certain recognition of women's work in the productive economy. The "Women in Development" focus nevertheless did not question the consensus between liberal political ideologies and neoclassical economics, carved into the paradigm of modernisation that had characterised development policies during those years.

Another current of thought, "Women and Development" (WAD) emerged in the second half of the 1970s as a response to the constraints of modernism. This has its roots in Marxist feminism and the theory of dependence, which see the development of the North as the fruit of the exploitation of the South⁷.

The authors of this chapter are critical of both concepts, and make it clear that women have always been an integral part of development in their societies – not only since 1970– and that their work, at home and elsewhere, has always helped sustain societies, and that this integration of women merely helped sustain international structures of inequality.

The WAD approach is more analytical than the WID concept, but does not make concrete proposals for development policies, unlike the WID. The WAD focus hardly analyses gender relations within social classes and pays little attention to gender subordination (which is true of Marxism in general), putting greater emphasis on unequal class structures and oppressive international structures. It stresses productive work at the expense of women's reproductive work. Like WID, WAD focused on income generation for women, without considering what this meant for them in terms of 'double-day' work. As a result, this feminist theory about development, just like the androcentric theories of dependence, modernity and the political economy, saw caring work as part of the "private" domain, which does not produce value and hence is beyond the purposes of development (Rathgeber, 1990).

The 1980s: Gender in Development and Socialist Feminism

The 1980s witnessed the Third Wave of feminist movements. As Amelia Valcárcel (2008) has said, it is when in theory the category of "gender" came to the fore of globalisation debates.

Even into the 1980s, women in Latin American countries who did have access to the social benefits consolidated by the continent's partial industrialisation did so through subsidies given to a man as the "breadwinner". Women were not

considered subjects of direct social security, nor as economic subjects, nor as full citizens. Families or partners were only seen through the male breadwinner, while women were for the most part in charge of reproducing the life of the family. Men were in the domain of production and salaried work while women were in the domain of reproduction. This gap began to close in the 1980s, with the approach known as “Gender and Development” (GAD).

This new current of thought has its roots in socialist feminism and in the post-structuralist critique. Socialist feminists challenged capitalism and patriarchy at the same time, and succeeded in closing the flawed debate about the “secondary contradiction” within the Left. They identified the socially-constructed division between productive and reproductive work as the basis of the oppression of women, and laid the foundations for left-wing feminist economics (see Rowbotham, 1973, and later works by the same author).

GAD is a constructivist approach which starts from a comprehensive perspective. It looks at the whole of the political, economic and social organisation of society. GAD does not place “women” at the centre of its analysis, but questions the assumption that “women” are a homogeneous social category. It stresses that both genders are social constructs, beyond biological sex, and that women are shaped not only by gender, but by other categories of domination, such as their ethnic and cultural origin, their sexual orientation and age. It posits the need to research these power relations in all social spheres and to make women’s empowerment policies cross-cutting.

The GAD focus criticises the hegemonic logic that economic change alone will empower women. From that perspective it criticises the social policies of microcredit which is given above all to poor women without questioning the domination they suffer (frequently at the hands of their husbands), the lack of proper infrastructure, or any chance of social redistribution which would enable them to be successful in their micro-business.

On the contrary, it encourages women to get into debt and promotes a collective responsibility which is often imposed on them. GAD emphasises gender roles and relations in what has been called the “gender system”, and advocates structural change. It argues strongly that gender-differentiated policies are needed to reduce poverty. Its objective is equality; it makes the double workload women face visible and does not use the household as the exclusive unit of analysis for development-related sciences. It also opens the doors to contributions from men who are committed to equality, unlike earlier feminist perspectives.

Both the socialist feminist perspective of the 1980s and the GAD approach reject the dichotomy between the public and private spheres, and focus their attention on the oppression of women in the family or home, which is the basis of marital relations. Both see women as agents of change, rather than recipients of development, and emphasise the need for women to be organised and build up more effective political representation. It was then that feminists began to join up the gender, race and class forms of oppression in their analyses and link them to a critique of development (Maguire, 1984; Sen y Grown, 1988).

Practical needs and strategic needs

At that time, the feminist academic Caroline Moser (1986, 1993) helped develop a differentiated gender planning model for development programmes and projects which distinguish between women's practical and strategic needs. This was widely circulated. Practical needs include access to basic services, food etc.; while strategic needs are those that question the subordination in the gender system depending on the specific social context. They may include demands for equal pay for equal work, or against gender violence, or proposing that women may freely decide over their sexuality and the number of children they have. Moser's model has the advantage of obtaining more complex data to describe a specific context where programmes are planned.

This focus was officially adopted by major international organisations like the United Nations and the World Bank, and is currently part of the hegemonic canon for development planning. In practice however, it has not achieved the objectives proposed. Moser's model is technocratic, something intrinsic to development policies, which aim to address complex and diverse problems by using a "toolbox" that is supposedly universally applicable, but which in fact is a colonial transfer of a multitude of Western epistemological preconceptions to the concrete contexts of the South.

Neoliberal policies and the feminisation of poverty

Under neoliberalism, women became visible as subjects in development but they were not recognised by social policies. They took over the social policies which neoliberal governments had abandoned. Deregulation through structural adjustment policies, a condition imposed on Latin America in the years of the foreign debt crisis, hit women hardest. It was women who had to create jobs for

themselves and move into the labour market in unequal conditions, where they suffered wage discrimination. At the same time, in the export-based economies, feeding the family – traditionally a woman's job – became an increasingly complex task. Despite the assumption that women were “included in development”, the patriarchal modification within the household and in the public domain adopted another form, starting a new cycle of poverty for women and the feminisation of poverty, anchored in subsistence economies.

Alternatives in the South

At the second World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, the network of women from the South, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), challenged the assumption that the problem was simply that women did not participate enough in an otherwise “benevolent” process of development and growth. The movement rejected the narrow definition of progress as being economic growth and contended that consumerism and indebtedness are key factors in the crises that have aggravated the living standards of women in the South. It also criticised the over-exploitation of women through being “integrated into development” and used to offset the public spending cuts demanded by the North as part of structural adjustment.

These women redefined development as “the socially responsible management and use of resources, the elimination of gender subordination and social inequality and the organisational restructuring that can bring these about” (Sen and Grown, 1987). They insisted that economic development should be considered a tool for achieving human development and not vice versa and criticised development policies as a form of continuing colonialism, pointing out the systematic deprecation of traditional institutions and attitudes in “under-developed” countries.

The socialist feminist movement of the 1980s questioned women's waged work, which had always been lower-paid than that of men and which the WID strategy aimed to increase. These feminists demanded equal work for equal pay and analysed the labour conditions of women in the feminised sectors like the *maquila* assembly plants. They showed that when certain jobs were feminised, usually when increasing numbers of women entered the labour market, they were considered less important because they were “women's work”, and hence of lower status and paid less. School teaching is a good example of this in much of Latin America: women began to work as teachers in the sector from the 1950s on.

Post-colonial feminist movements

Since the 1990s, in what became known as post-colonial feminism, some feminists in the South have strongly criticised both essentialist feminism - which maintains that women have some innate or spiritual superiority - and the attempts of hegemonic feminism and an ethnocentric trend anchored in the North to homogenise the concept of “Third World women” as one group of development beneficiaries. Post-colonial feminists were much influenced by deconstruction and the black, Chicana and lesbian feminists in the United States of the 1980s, who were the first to insist on differentiation.

The Indian feminist Chandra Talpade Mohanty, for example, states that to use one homogeneous category of “women” that appeals to sorority, reduces women ahistorically to a condition of gender identity, ignoring other factors which have determined their identity such as class and ethnic origin. Mohanty argues that if we think of “Third World” women as oppressed, we make “First World” women subjects of a history in which Third World women would have the status of objects. This is no more than a form of colonising and appropriating the diversity of women in different social classes and ethnic groups. Ethnocentric universalist feminism tends to judge the religious, family, legal and economic structures of the cultures of the South, taking Western standards as the reference point and defining these structures as “under-developed” or “developing”. This makes it seem that the only development possible is that of the “First World”, thereby hiding all experiences of resistance, considering them marginal (Portolés, 2004). Mohanty on the other hand proposes transcultural feminism based on feminist solidarity that is neither colonialist, imperialist, nor racist (1997). The recognition of cultures becomes a source of transformation, arising from the recognition of differences.

Gayatri Spivak, the Bengali post-colonial feminist theorist, sees development as the neocolonial successor of the civilising mission of imperialism. She criticises a world neoliberal economic system which in the name of development - even sustainable development - stops at nothing in order to penetrate the most fragile national economies, jeopardising any chance of social distribution. Spivak points out that developing countries are united not only by the common link of extensive environmental destruction, but also by the complicity between those who hold local power - and try to carry out “development” - and the forces of global capital. Spivak advocates ‘strategic essentialism’ over and above the current differences between women, to forge alliances around concrete struggles such as the fight against control over reproduction. She says: “The responsibility for the exhaustion of world resources is concentrated on the demographic explosion

of the South and hence on the poor women of the South” (1999). Controlling reproduction in the poor countries provides development with a justification for “aid” and draws attention away from the excesses of consumerism in the North. For Spivak, globalisation is manifest in population control (demanded by the “rationalisation” of sexuality), and in post-Fordist work in the home which, although a pre-capitalist remnant, goes hand-in-hand with industrial capitalism (Portolés, 2004).

The holistic perspective proposed here must include – within a general critique of development – a critique of reproductive heterosexuality as a form of the reproductive and productive social organisation of colonial and patriarchal systems of domination – .

Ecofeminism

Another important debate in the various feminist movements which is critical of development – particularly for discerning the way towards alternatives to development – is ecofeminism. This contends that there are important historical, cultural and symbolic parallels between the oppression and exploitation of women and of nature. In patriarchal arguments, the dichotomy between women and men often corresponds to that of nature and civilisation, emotion and reason, and even tradition and modernity; the first half of the combination is always deprecated.

Ecofeminism arose as a counter-culture in the 1970s. It condemned the degrading association that the patriarchy establishes between women and nature. It also criticises the left-wing movements for not taking this into account and questions the paradigm of progress of “real socialism” and movements within the communist parties.

One of the trends in ecofeminism is essentialism. It is based on the assumption that there is a feminine essence that places women closer to nature than men. Women appear to be a kind of hope for humanity and the conservation of nature on the basis of the supposition that because of their very essence, women are more likely to protect living beings and have an ethic of care, which originates in the maternal instinct.

Another trend of ecofeminism however rejects this kind of essentialism and its literature is richer and more complex. Writers like Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies and Bina Agarwal define the origin of women’s greater compatibility with nature

in the social and historical construction of gender, which is specific to each culture. For them, gender environmental awareness is born of the divisions of labour and specific social roles established in historical gender and class systems, and in the political and economic power relations associated with them – when women's household and community tasks include, for example, getting firewood and water or tending orchards (Paulson, 1998). They contend that “development” is in fact a Western colonisation strategy, rooted in domination over women and nature. In the words of Vandana Shiva:

Although the last five decades have been characterised by a badly-directed development and the export of a Western and unsustainable industrial paradigm in the name of development, recent trends are geared towards an environmental apartheid in which, through the global policy established by the ‘Holy Trinity’, Western multinational companies, backed by the governments of economically powerful countries, try to conserve the economic power of the North and the wasteful life of the rich. In order to do so, they export the environmental costs to the Third World. (2001:1)

For the German ecofeminist Maria Mies, a woman's body has become the third colony, additional to colonised states and subjected nature. This argument condemns colonial processes and patriarchal forms of domination, and leads to a position critical of development, bringing together complex forms of decolonisation and dismantling of patriarchal relations.

This view looks to alternatives to development that appeal to women's environmental awareness. It cannot be separated from a parallel critique of the sexual division of labour which (re)produces power and wealth based on the positions of gender, race and class. This is fundamental, given that the discourses on *Buen Vivir*, in cultural essentialism, often ascribe to indigenous women the role of guardians of their culture, who continue to wear their traditional dress while men use western styles to migrate to the cities. This is not matched, however, with the political commitment to criticise relations within the cultures that produce gender inequality.

Maria Mies analyses the economic sciences, including Marxism, and argues that to a great extent they conceal the preconditions that make wage labour possible but do not figure explicitly in the capitalist model of accumulation: caring, women's reproduction, the work of small farmers that guarantee subsistence or that local basic needs are met (often left to women with men absent as migrant workers).

They also hide nature itself as the supplier of natural resources. Although these conditions provide support without which capitalist accumulation could not exist, they are invisible in hegemonic discourse and economic policies, and considered “free”. Mies contends that this fails to recognise the social and environmental costs of development, which through indicators such as the gross domestic product only takes into consideration work that contributes directly to generating capital gain, and establishes no link at all with human well-being.

Mies reaches the conclusion that sustainability is incompatible with a growth-based economic system, which leads her to question the primacy of economics in strategies for achieving well-being. She proposes an alternative model, for which the preservation of life is the central objective. Reproductive activities would be shared by men and women, and include the stakeholders excluded by the capitalist discourse, such as nature. Mies emphasises the importance of common goods and solidarity between communities and community decision-taking to safeguard the collective interest. She suggests overcoming the antagonism between labour and nature, and giving priority to local and regional economies instead of global markets, to recover the direct correlation between production and consumption (Mies, 1998).

Ivone Gebara is a Brazilian ecofeminist with a feminist theological insight. She holds that the fundamental criticism of development is that it is a hegemonic discourse for modernity. Gebara argues that modernity introduces two fundamental practices: the torture of witches and the establishment of the scientific method, in a context where women are defined in the domestic domain as subordinate to marital relations and to the family and where, at the same time, nature becomes dominated by the masculine scientific spirit. For Gebara, the oppressed - women and nature – were in the discourses of the dominating strategies of politics, philosophy and theology of modern Western thought from the advent of capitalism. Ecofeminism hence involves proposing that the destiny of the oppressed is intimately linked to the destiny of the Earth: “Every appeal to social justice implies eco-justice” (quoted in Pobierzyn, 2002).

Feminist ecology also has another face, one which proposes questioning the situation of women in the environment, and which was promoted by international cooperation agencies from the mid-1990s. Development received further criticism, because women live in conditions of oppression. They are exposed to an excessive workload regarding environmental care which is barely recognised; they are generally seen to be “in charge” of caring for nature, not to mention the difficulties they face (over-exploitation and subordination) for taking an active part in decisions for managing environmental resources (Nieves Rico, 1998).

Feminist economics and the economics of care

Feminist economics establishes critiques and theory about the concept of nature, the form of capitalist production and the sphere of reproduction, and how this is related to production. Feminist economists first deconstruct some of the myths of the hegemonic economic sciences: instead of supporting the hypothesis that the market works neutrally and creates well-being for all men and women indiscriminately, they ask what values are being created in economics and for whom. Second, they criticise market-centred economic sciences, arguing that economic activity does not take place only in the market, but rather exists in a mixture of the private market, state benefits, non-profit activities, informal sectors and the household (Knobloch, 2010).

Like Maria Mies, they start with the assumption that unpaid work in the home generates economic value by maintaining the labour force of the members of the household. Feminist economics not only aims to make this economic value visible within national accounting methods, but also to raise awareness about the over-exploitation of women, who, while having recently begun to participate more in paid work, are still in charge of housework. As time-use surveys show, even in the industrialised societies of the North, the total amount of unpaid work in a national economy is greater than the total amount of paid work (Winkler, 2010). In Latin America, the state provides minimal care services, which worsens over-exploitation and gives it a marked class bias, since only those who are able to pay can afford private care (Rodríguez, 2005). Feminist economists hence aim to build equality in the private domain, and in the distribution of the burden of labour in the home and elsewhere.

Even today, neither the GDP nor public budgets show the value and productivity of care. This debate is indirectly related to the concept of development, as it lays bare the blindness of macro policies and hegemonic micro-economics, from classical economics until today. It also doubts whether with these precepts - growth-centred development strategies, the integration of women in the market and the fight against poverty - are able to generate well-being. It does not accept the position international development cooperation has assigned to women at the centre of their “economic development” strategies. To quote Annemarie Sancar, the biological stereotyping of women and the emphasis on their “special abilities” still shape development programmes today: “It is clear today that it was not women’s rights that were decisive here, but rather the neoliberal economies’ desire for growth. Women were found to be good at business and at driving growth, following the World Bank’s concept of smart economics” (Sancar, 2010).”

The economics of care identify the need for the care of children, the sick, those with special abilities and the elderly, as one of the most important of human needs for living a full life with dignity. Yet this has been completely ignored by the political discourse and economic reductionism of development. The debate on the economics of care builds bridges towards *Buen Vivir* as a goal of transformation. The feminist economist Ulrike Knobloch (2010) proposes an ethic of economics which goes further than the criterion of efficiency, and questions the sense of each economic activity geared to *Buen Vivir*: what are the fundamental objectives of economics? According to Knobloch, economics can only be a means to a higher end. This is a philosophical question, way beyond economic sciences. These work with the simplistic assumption that the market satisfies the preferences of economic subjects, Knobloch argues that it cannot be automatically assumed that the market provides children and men and women with what they really need if they are to have a full life. She also questions the goal of a 'fair coexistence'. For whom do our economic practices generate values? What principles must be observed to guarantee a fair coexistence? A gender-sensitive economic ethic must also go beyond the androcentric perspective focused on wage labour to shed light on how modern economics are based on gender inequality. Instead of an asexual *homo economicus*, it should contemplate men and women in their respective contexts and living conditions.

The economics of care criticises the privatisation and individualisation of social services under neoliberalism and demands a public policy for care. This need not "necessarily imply that the state must be the sole provider of the care services needed for social reproduction, but that it should design a comprehensive system with the various providers in order to guarantee a collective solution to society's demand for care" (Rodríguez Enríquez, 2005: 29). It proposes that the work of care should be at the centre of political strategies, which should also foster community action. It demands that time-use be made democratic, so that women also can enjoy leisure. Here, the German socialist feminist Frigga Haug proposes what she describes as a "time economy". In her "utopia for women to achieve a good life for all men and women", which is located in the North, Haug suggests distributing time in life between paid work, reproduction, culture and political participation. She proposes drastically cutting time in paid work to four hours a day, to guarantee the necessary productivity, democratising access to work in a context of an employment crisis. She suggests balancing the time gained between care work, personal interests and developing new ideas about what a good life means – summarised as "culture" – and finally participation in politics, understood as social creation from the bottom up (Haug, 2009).

The discussions arising from the economics of care, conceived as the theory and practice of the sustainability of life, provide an opportunity to question individual competence as the driving force of economics by advancing in ways that create links of solidarity. They also present the mercantilisation of care as the main problem, with its consequences of the production and reproduction of new and old inequalities in global and national economies. The discussion joins the debate about *Buen Vivir*, with the challenge of making mutually supportive, fairer and egalitarian social models of organisation (Salazar et al., 2010).

This debate also suggests that poverty reduction should tackle the social need for care as a matter of public policy, to prevent the care crisis – which goes hand-in-hand with the crisis in capitalism – from further damaging the quality of life of many women, driving them into poverty. Vital human needs, instead of economic growth and profit, should be central to social transformation, which makes necessary a revolution in care and a profound reformulation of political action by left-wing movements.

Feminism and Latin America's progressive, neodevelopment governments

Progressive governments have emerged in Latin America which dissociated themselves from neoliberal policies, above all by redistributing wealth. Their appearance has highlighted a tension in feminism between two currents of thought, which has existed since the 1970s.

The first demands that women have unrestricted access to the promise of development with a feminist economics, and which generally questions the patriarchy in the system. The new progressive governments and their state institutions gave great opportunities to this movement for promoting policies geared to increasing women's income and thereby their consumption as stakeholders in the development model.

The second current is more left-wing. It questions the policy of giving money to poor women, seeing this as paternalist and 'assistentialist', and describes it as reinforcing patriarchy. It questions the development model based on the extractive industries and agribusiness, and sees feminism as the driving force behind the comprehensive transformation of society. The solidarity economy, food sovereignty and the defence of the land are at the centre of this current of thought, which looks at feminism from below, from the position of the poor and the community. Both of these currents can be found co-existing within many

women's organisations, and create dissension about the deeper meaning of the struggle against the patriarchy.

Andean, 'popular' and community feminism

As has been noted, over the last few decades Latin American countries have witnessed a series of neoliberal reforms, which strengthened extractive activities and the international division of labour to the detriment of the impoverished majority. It was poor women - the indigenous, mestizo, black and peasant women - who bore the brunt of a greater burden of domestic and productive work (unrecognised, insecure, the product of brutal impoverishment and conflicts arising from the state's withdrawal from the strategic areas of investment and the guarantee of social and economic rights); but under the dominant neoliberal mercantilisation, they also suffered the fragmentation of their demands, and with them, their identities. New roles rained down on them imposed by development and cooperation, they were "maternalised" and became uncertain clients of privatised services.

During those years, however, Latin America also witnessed organised resistance movements, with indigenous organisations and peoples playing a central part in a two-fold process: a resistance to neoliberalism; and a quest for the state to recover its role in redistribution, guaranteeing social, economic and cultural rights and standing up to imperialism. They also fought for the state to become plurinational. This meant questioning the very structure of the state as incomplete, post-colonial and oligarchic, a product of the constraints of the colonial pact made when the independent republics arose. It was this context, particularly in Ecuador and Bolivia, which saw the growth of a feminist movement which over the years has become known as "community and popular feminism".⁸

This chapter will not show the differences between the contexts or the feminist organisations in both countries, but will mention some points they have in common. First, they see themselves and their activities as part of the resistance, demonstrations, uprisings and construction of the poor, the indigenous, the peasant farmers and workers of Latin America since the struggle for independence, and even back to the Conquest and the Spanish colonial occupation over five hundred years ago. These feminist movements abjure the notion that feminism has been brought from the North and is a movement of white women in developed countries.

Second, these movements have overcome the apparent contradiction between

'difference' and 'equality' feminism. They question both the post-modern fragmentation of the struggles for identity and the isolation of particularity, and the patriarchal stage of equality and inclusion. They envisage a new kind of universality, in which sexual, racial and contextual diversity is recognised with all its colonial and class connotations and its relations with nature, but their politics involve building recognition, dialogue and the collective construction of transformation. However, they also see equality as a product of dismantling patriarchal relations, anchored in the construction of plurinational states. The core reference of equality is no longer the paradigm of individual rights, but the transformation of society as a whole.

Third, they see a complex connection between decolonisation, fighting patriarchalism, defeating capitalism and the construction of a new relationship with nature. It is a complex concept which rethinks ideas like community, the public domain and repertoires of action. These feminist movements present the community as an unnatural but historical construction, a place of political and emotional encounter. Their aim to establish a plurinational state facilitates dialogue between women because it provides a chance to reflect on the political community that will, ideally, follow the national state.

Finally, Andean feminism is no longer mainly for middle-class, professional and mestizo women. It provides an arena – at times troubled – for lower-income women who identify themselves as feminists, and who redefine feminism from their own contexts, experiences and cultural production in their daily lives; a view in which nature - the *Pachamama* - is central both to encounter and to mobilisation.

These are peasant, indigenous and black women who support the discourse about the importance of nature and the political, economic and cultural relationship from other standpoints and with other meanings from those originally put forward by ecofeminism. At the World People's Conference on Climate Change in Tiquipaya, Cochabamba in April 2010, the community feminists declared:

We understand the *Pachamama*, the *Mapu*, as a whole, beyond visible nature, beyond the planets, which contains life, the relations established between living beings, their energy, their needs and their wishes. We condemn the understanding of the *Pachamama* as the Mother Earth as reductionist and chauvinist, as it only refers to fertility in order to keep women and the *Pachamama* at its patriarchal whim.

“Mother Earth” is a concept which has been used for a number of years and that this People’s Conference on Climate Change aims to consolidate with the aim of reducing the *Pachamama* – as we women are reduced – to the function of a productive and reproductive uterus at the service of the patriarchy. The *Pachamama* is understood as something which can be dominated and manipulated at the service of “development” and consumption, and not as the cosmos of which humanity is just a small part.

The cosmos: this is not the “Father Cosmos”. The cosmos is part of the *Pachamama*. We do not accept their being “married”, that the *Pachamama* is obliged to marry. At this conference we have heard unprecedented things, for example that there is a “Father Cosmos” who exists independently of the *Pachamama* and we have seen that the protagonism of women and the *Pachamama* are not tolerated, nor is it accepted that she or we decide our own destiny. When people speak of “Father Cosmos” they are trying to minimise and subordinate the *Pachamama* to a masculine and heterosexual head of family. But she, the *Pachamama*, is a whole and does not belong to us. Women and men are hers.⁹

Conclusion

It is clear that women and feminist movements have debated ‘development’ from the widest variety of positions. The development system incorporated some of their demands, mainly those of liberal feminists. A legion of entities were created to take charge of women’s development, but women still have a secondary role in them, be they international or national. Development policies today have a series of indicators to show the situation of women, such as gender-sensitive budgeting. In comparison, the question of patriarchal power relations within the family - which condition all access women have to other political or economic spheres - has barely been addressed, above all in public policy. Hard-line economic sciences continue to ignore the gender dimension and the productivity of care, and continue to use GDP as the primary indicator.

A number of the feminist movements described here have joined the debate about the question of *Buen Vivir* as an alternative to development, from a variety of positions. They also debate the issue of a plurinational state, through the struggles to transform the post-colonial state, with the emancipatory perspective

of decolonisation and undoing patriarchal relations. While ecofeminists criticise the devaluation entailed by what is considered “natural” and “feminine”, for economists of care, time-use is central to “*Buen Vivir*”, and they have a different perspective on redistribution and happiness – one which is applicable in both urban and rural areas, both in the North and the South. They all work with a perspective of the ‘crisis of civilisation’, which can only be resolved by tackling the different dimensions of domination identified by feminist theory: class, race, gender and relationship with nature. Their proposals for economics to be dethroned as the master discipline of the capitalist world and governed by another ethic that responds to human needs are a bridge to other discourses critical of development.

This chapter has shown how the various currents of feminism have moved from questioning the development paradigm in itself to proposing development alternatives, a move that is drawing strength from the discourse and practice arising from the changes set in motion in Latin America. With the advent of progressive governments in the Andean region, feminism has focused on strengthening the state and the implementation of social and redistribution policies. It is also rethinking and updating the critique of development: the tension between social justice and overcoming inequality, post-extractivism and nature as a subject of rights. Women in the region are building new practices of organisation and struggle – known as popular and community feminism - based on ideas different from those of Latin American feminism of previous decades in which liberal, middle-class women had the greater say. Over the last thirty years, feminist political and theory production in the South has been crucial to the formation of new trends and proposals for all of humanity.

After several decades in which feminist thinking was mainly formulated in the North, it is the feminist movements of the South that are reviving and refreshing the debates linking patriarchy, the crisis of civilisation, the prevailing production and development models, and alternatives to this paradigm. Today, women in the South are productive and reproductive workers and subjects who are sustaining humanity and establishing different links with the planet.

These same peasant women, indigenous women, black women and women of the shanty towns who swell the ranks of popular feminism in the South are the women whom the official development paradigm perceives solely as programme recipients, as inferiors. Today, with their experience of the social solidarity (or community) economy, in the face of the destruction of their habitat by “development” mega-projects, they are using their collective voice to demand that their societies take a different direction. They reject any gender or cultural

essentialism and are demanding their rights as women within the indigenous or original justice systems.

These new feminist movements in the Andean region are not the product of progressive governments, but have grown out of the contradictions of particular changes, as a response to the current multiple crises, which these women experience in their own lives. They are facing the contradiction between the politics of producing an economic surplus for an equal distribution of resources and the immediate political goal of ceasing extractive activities, which produce most of the surplus, but also destroy the environment. This is the context for their discussion of the meaning of *Buen Vivir*, an expression too often expropriated by government programmes or corporate initiatives.

These women speak of the relationship of knowledge, the symbolic relationship of respect, wisdom and the meaning of community property and of the *Pachamama*. They condemn the extractive model of development not only as economic and a means of making use of nature, but as a model which is profoundly racist, patriarchal and classist; and one which, unless these dimensions of power are addressed, will be impossible to dismantle.

Notes

1. Margarita Aguinaga Barragán is an Ecuadorean sociologist and feminist and is active in the Ecuador Women's Assembly (AMPDE). She is a researcher at the Institute of Ecuadorean Studies (IEE) and is a member of the Standing Committee on Alternatives to Development.
2. Miriam Lang is the director of the Andean Regional Office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. She has a doctorate in sociology from the Free University of Berlin, with a specialisation in Gender Studies and a master's degree in Latin American Studies. She has wide experience working with women's and indigenous people's organisations in Latin America.
3. Dunia Mokrani Chávez, politologist and lecturer at the San Andrés University (CIDES-UMSA) in philosophy and political science. She is active in the Samka Sawuri (Dream Weavers) women's collective and is project coordinator for Bolivia at the Andean Regional Office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.
4. Alejandra Santillana has a master's degree in sociology from the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) and is a militant of the Ecuadorean Women's Assembly (AMPDE). She is project coordinator for Ecuador at the Andean Regional Office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

5. The development plan introduced by Truman in 1945 included an economic recovery plan for Europe and the reduction of trade barriers in developing countries. The plan sought, through major private investment, to increase industrial activity in the South as a fundamental measure for “improving the standard of living” in the poor countries.
6. The conference paved the way for the creation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).
7. For an explanation of development as an ideology of modernism, see the chapter “Debates on Development and its Alternatives in Latin America: a brief heterodox guide” by Eduardo Gudynas, in this book.
8. The authors will consider these new feminist movements by looking at the experience and political militancy of feminist organisations in both countries: in Ecuador, the women’s movement Luna Creciente, and the Ecuador Women’s Assembly; in Bolivia, Mujeres Creando.
9. Declaration of the Community Feminists at the World People’s Conference on Climate Change (Tiquipaya, Cochabamba, April 2010).

Extractivism and neoextractivism: two sides of the same curse

Alberto Acosta¹

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” asked Alice.

“That depends a great deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where –” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

Caught in the trap of the curse of plenty

Although it seems hard to believe at first, on the basis of recent evidence and many accumulated experiences it is possible to state that poverty in many countries around the world is related to the existence of significant natural resources wealth. The countries that are rich in natural resources, and whose economy is based primarily on extracting and exporting those resources, find it more difficult to develop. In particular, those that have an abundance of one or just a few primary commodities seem to be condemned to underdevelopment. The situation becomes even more complicated for those economies that are dependent on oil and minerals for their income.

These countries appear to be trapped in a perverse state of affairs known in the specialist literature as “the paradox of plenty” or “the resource curse.” In this context, there are even some who have accepted this curse as the (almost) inevitable fate of tropical countries: the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB),² in several of its annual reports and technical studies, has argued that “development is determined by geography: the countries that are richest in natural resources and closest to the equator are condemned to be more backward and poor. (...) This suggests a tropical fatalism, whereby nations near the equator seem destined to be poor. (...) In the IDB’s judgement, the richer a country is in natural resources, the slower it will develop and the greater its internal inequalities will be” (Gudynas, 2009c).

It would seem that the only option is to resign ourselves to this geographical and environmental determinism. But the IDB does offer a way out. As Gudynas sums it up in his analysis of the IDB’s proposals, this way out “is the market and even greater emphasis on the [neoliberal] reforms.”

From this point of view, the problems and conflicts that arise from extractivism would be solved with proper “governance” of how natural resources are used. The ways to achieve this are orthodox and conservative economic policies, increasing civil society participation in the oversight of extractive industry projects, more social investment in the areas where extractivism takes place to reduce social protests, and transparent information about the income obtained by the extractive enterprises, local governments and central government. Environmental destruction is accepted as the inevitable cost of achieving development. Since this is not questioned, these approaches are weakly analytical, lacking in historical analysis and unconnected to the underlying problems.

There is no doubt that audacity, with a large dose of ignorance and well-programmed amnesia in society, goes hand in hand with arrogance.

It is worth saying right from the start that this double curse of natural resources and ideology is not inevitable and can be overcome.

What do we understand by extractivism?

Extractivism is a mode of accumulation that started to be established on a massive scale 500 years ago.³ The world economy – the capitalist system – began to be structured with the conquest and colonisation of the Americas, Africa and Asia. This extractivist mode of accumulation has been determined ever since by the demands of the metropolitan centres of nascent capitalism. Some regions specialised in the extraction and production of raw materials – primary commodities – while others took on the role of producing manufactured goods. The former export Nature, the latter import it.

In an attempt to arrive at a comprehensible definition, we will use the term extractivism to refer to those activities which remove large quantities of natural resources that are not processed (or processed only to a limited degree), especially for export. Extractivism is not limited to minerals or oil. Extractivism is also present in farming, forestry and even fishing.⁴

Today, the question of “renewable” natural resources must be approached in the light of recent developments and trends. Because of the huge scale of extraction, many “renewable” resources, such as forests or soil fertility, are becoming non-renewable. This is because the resource is depleted when the rate of extraction is much higher than the rate at which the environment is able to renew the resource. Thus, at the current pace of extraction, the problems of non-renewable

natural resources may equally affect all resources, renewable or not.

In practice, extractivism has been a mechanism of colonial and neocolonial plunder and appropriation. This extractivism, which has appeared in different guises over time, was forged in the exploitation of the raw materials essential for the industrial development and prosperity of the global North. And this took place regardless of the sustainability of the extractivist projects or even the exhaustion of the resources. This is compounded by the fact that most of what is produced by the extractive industries is not for consumption in the domestic market but basically destined for export. Despite the scale of this economic activity, it generates very few benefits for the country concerned. Likewise, most of the goods, inputs and specialist services required for the extractive industries to operate rarely come from national companies. And in the countries whose economies are based on extractivism it seems that there has not been much interest in the way the income obtained is used.

Extractivism has been a constant in the economic, social and political life of many countries in the global South. Thus, with differing degrees of intensity, every country in Latin America is affected by these practices. Dependency on the metropolitan centres via the extraction and export of raw materials has remained practically unaltered to this day. Some countries have managed to change a few relevant aspects of traditional extractivism by bringing about increased state intervention in these activities, but that is all. Therefore, beyond a few differences of greater or lesser importance, the extractivist mode of accumulation seems to be at the heart of the production policies of both neoliberal and progressive governments.⁵

Some of extractivism's ills

The starting point for looking at this issue⁶ is, to a great extent, the way in which these resources are extracted and used, as well as how their fruits are distributed. Of course, there are other elements that cannot be corrected. There are certain extractivist activities, such as large-scale ore mining for example, that can never be made "sustainable" because their very essence is destructive. Furthermore, a process is sustainable when it can be maintained over time, without outside assistance and without creating a scarcity of the resource in question.⁷ To argue the contrary – although some do, from a blind faith in technological advances – is to propagate a discourse that distorts the facts.⁸

The region's history tells us that this extractivist process has led to widespread

poverty, caused recurrent economic crises, and consolidated “rent-seeking” mentalities. All this aggravates the weakness and scarcity of the region’s democratic institutions, encourages corruption, breaks up societies and local communities, and seriously damages the environment. And this is complicated still further by the commonplace practices of patronage and clientelism, which hamper the construction of citizenship.

The truth is that the abundance of natural resources that characterises primary commodity export economies – especially if the commodities in question are minerals or oil – tends to distort the structure of the economy and the allocation of production factors: income is redistributed regressively and wealth is concentrated in just a few hands. This situation is aggravated by a series of endogenous “disease-like” processes that go with the abundance of these natural resources.

We will start with “Dutch disease,”⁹ a process that infects a country that exports raw materials when their high price or the discovery of new deposits triggers an export boom. The distortion in the economy is revealed in the relative price structure. Investment flows into the sectors benefiting from the bonanza, including the non-tradable goods sector (non-tradable on the international market) – the construction sector, for example. At the same time, there is a swift fall in the production of those tradable goods that are not benefiting from the export boom, because they can be imported, and in fact it becomes cheaper to import them because the national currency has increased in value. After the boom, as a consequence of the lack of flexibility for amending prices and wages, the adjustment process turns out to be very complicated and painful – another manifestation of this disease.

Specialisation in the export of primary commodities in the long term has also turned out to have negative consequences, as a result of the tendency for the terms of trade to deteriorate. This process acts in favour of the industrial goods that are imported and against the primary goods that are exported. Among other factors, this is because the latter are characterised by low income elasticity as they can be replaced by synthetic substitutes, because they do not hold a monopoly (they are commodities, meaning that the logic of the world market is what mainly operates to determine their price), because their level of technology and innovative development is low, and because manufactured products contain increasingly fewer raw materials. This last statement does not fail to acknowledge the massive increase in the extraction and export of primary commodities in absolute terms, caused, for example, by the spiralling increase in demand in countries such as China and India.

In addition, the high profit margin, due to the substantial ricardian rents¹⁰ involved, encourages over-production when world market prices are high. Even in times of crisis there is still a temptation to increase the rates of extraction. Excess supply, in the attempt to compensate for the fall in price, leads to a reduction in the value of the product on the world market, and this ends up benefiting the industrialised countries.¹¹ This process results in what is known as “inmiserizing growth” (Bhagwati, 1958).

All this explains why countries with extractivist economies have been unable to benefit fully from the gains arising from global economic growth and technological progress. This is aggravated still further because the countries that extract primary resources usually do not process them. We even find such aberrant situations as countries exporting crude oil and importing petroleum products because they have not developed sufficient refining capacity. To cap it all, a large proportion of these costly imported refined products are destined for electricity generation, even when other sources of renewable energy – such as hydro, solar or geothermal – are readily available, as in the case of Ecuador.

Another feature of these extractivist economies is the structural heterogeneity of their productive apparatus. In other words, highly productive production systems coexist alongside others that are backward and subsistence-based. This is compounded by the lack of connections in their economic structures, as shown by the fact that exports are concentrated in just a few primary commodities, the absence of a suitably dense horizontal diversification in industry, almost non-existent complementarity between sectors, and practically nil vertical integration.

This type of extractivist economy, with a high demand for capital and technology, often functions with an enclave logic: in other words, without a proposal for integrating the primary export activities with the rest of the economy and society. Consequently, the productive apparatus remains vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the global market.

These conditions lead to a dead end. It is impossible to believe that all the countries producing similar primary commodities – and there are many of them – can grow and expect the international demand to be sufficient and sustained enough to guarantee that growth for any length of time.

The worrying thing is that the countries exporting primary commodities, which should have built up similar experiences over time, have usually been incapable of coordinating the management of quantities and prices. The exception that proves the rule – though with all the constraints and contradictions that can be

identified in the way it works – is the experience of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The volatility that characterises the prices of raw materials on the world market means that an economy based on the export of primary commodities will suffer recurrent balance of payments and fiscal deficit problems. This creates a dependence on the financial markets and exposes national economic and socio-political activities to erratic fluctuations. All this is aggravated when world prices suddenly fall and the consequent balance of payments crisis is made worse by the flight en masse of the speculative capital that flowed into these economies during the fleeting boom. In this situation, their mass exit is soon followed by equally flighty local capital, thus aggravating the balance of payments squeeze.

The primary export boom also attracts the ever-alert international banks, which lend large sums of money as though this were a sustainable process; of course, this finance has always been welcomed with open arms by the governments and large companies who also believe in permanent splendour. In these circumstances, the overproduction of primary resources is impelled even more strongly, with the corresponding sectoral economic distortions. But, above all, as historical experience shows, the future of the economy is mortgaged when the time inevitably comes to service the weighty external debt resulting from the huge loans accepted during the usually brief euphoria caused by the export boom.¹²

The abundance of external finance, fed by the influx of cash from oil exports, leads to a consumerist boom that may last as long as the bonanza does, and is a psychological matter of no little importance in political terms. This increase in the consumption of goods is confused with an improvement in the quality of life. In such circumstances, the consumerist logic – which is neither environmentally nor socially sustainable – may give the government the legitimacy to continue to push back the frontiers of extractivism.

This generally leads to resources being wasted. National products tend to be replaced by imports, and this is often encouraged by the over-valuation of the currency. Unless the proper steps are taken to avoid it, even an increase in public investment and expenditure may provide an incentive to increase imports rather than boosting national production. In short, it is difficult to use the plentiful funds available appropriately.

The experience of the region's oil and mining economies shows us that these extractivist activities, as mentioned before, do not generate the dynamic linkages

that are so necessary to achieve coherent economic development, and what is going on today confirms this. The essential integrating and synergetic linkages – forward, backward and to the final demand (fiscal and consumer) – are not guaranteed. And this does nothing to facilitate or ensure technology transfer and the creation of externalities that benefit other branches of the country's economy.

This gives rise to an additional classical characteristic of these primary product exporting economies, ever since colonial times, which is that they are enclaves: the oil sector or the mining sector, as well as many export-oriented farming, forestry or fishing activities, are usually isolated from the rest of the economy. Nuclear energy¹³ and the production of biofuels must also be included in this category (Houtart, 2011).

The huge differential or ricardian rents produced by these activities lead to excess profits that distort resource allocation in the country. As a result of the revenue from the export of primary goods, the concentration and centralisation of income and wealth – together with political power – in just a few hands is consolidated and deepened. The accumulation of these rents is overwhelmingly concentrated in a small number of economic groups, many of which neither find nor create incentives to invest in the domestic economy. They prefer to encourage the consumption of imported goods. They often take their profits out of the country, and many run their businesses through companies registered in the places known as tax havens.

As a consequence of this, the companies that control the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources, operated on an enclave basis due to their location and form of exploitation, can become powerful corporations within relatively weak national states.

The major beneficiaries of these activities are the transnational enterprises, which are lauded for their “commendable” decision to take the risk of exploring and exploiting the resources in question. No mention is made of how these activities lead to a further “de-nationalisation” of the economy, partly because of the quantity of finance necessary to get to the point where the resources can be exploited, partly due to the absence of a strong national business community and, no less importantly, because of government unwillingness to forge strategic partnerships with state enterprises of their own or even with the national private sector. Furthermore, some of these transnational corporations have unfortunately taken advantage of their contribution to the balance of trade to influence the balance of power in the country, constantly threatening governments that dare to go against the tide.

Foreign companies have often enjoyed – and in many cases continue to enjoy – a favourable regulatory framework and, on not a few occasions, their own directors or lawyers hold key posts in government. They are also backed by powerful law firms and often have the support of the media, and can thus act directly to ensure that policies or changes to the law are advantageous to them. This situation – which is encouraged by organisations such as the IDB and its big brothers, the World Bank¹⁴ and the International Monetary Fund – has occurred time and again in the oil and mining sectors in Latin America.

These highly transnationalised arrangements have given rise to an extremely complex process: the “deterritorialisation” of the state. The state takes a relatively hands-off attitude to the oil or mining enclaves, leaving the responsibility for addressing social demands, for example, in the hands of the companies. This means that management of the regions in question is disorganised and unplanned; in practice, these regions are often left outside the remit of national laws altogether. All this exacerbates a situation of widespread violence, growing poverty and exclusion, leading ultimately to short-sighted and clumsy responses by a police state that does not meet its social and economic obligations.

The weak capacity to create employment and the unequal distribution of income and wealth lead to an impasse with no apparent way out: the marginal sectors whose capital productivity is higher than that of the modern ones, are unable to accumulate wealth because they do not have the means to invest; and the modern sectors, where labour productivity is higher, do not invest because there are no domestic markets that would guarantee them attractive profits. This in turn worsens the shortage of technical resources, skilled labour, infrastructure and reserve currency, which discourages investors, and so it goes on.

Added to this is the quite obvious fact (which is unfortunately also necessary, and not just for technological reasons) that, in contrast to other branches of the economy, mining and the oil industry generate little direct and indirect employment – although the jobs they do create are often well paid. These are capital- and import-intensive industries. They hire highly skilled workers and managers (who are often foreign). The inputs and technology they use are almost exclusively imported. The consequence of these practices is that the “internal rate of return” of the primary export sector (equivalent to the added value that stays in the country) is derisory.

In these oil and mining enclave economies, political structures and dynamics are characterised by “rent-seeking” practices; the greed and authoritarianism that

drive decision-making lead to a disproportionate increase in public spending and discretionary revenue distribution, as we will analyse later on.

Due to these conditions and the technological characteristics of the oil and mining sectors, they do not generate direct employment on a large scale. This would also explain the contradiction of countries rich in raw materials where, in practice, the vast majority of the population lives in poverty.

In addition, the communities in whose territories or neighbourhoods these extractivist activities take place have always suffered the effects of a series of social and environmental problems arising from this type of resource exploitation. The destitution of large sectors of the population would therefore seem to go hand in hand with the presence of huge quantities of natural resources (with high differential rents). This mode of accumulation does not require a domestic market and does not even need it, since it operates with falling salaries. There is not enough social pressure to oblige these industries to reinvest in productivity increases. Rent-seeking determines productive activity and, of course, the rest of social relations. As a corollary of this, these extractive industries – oil or mining – encourage clientelist social relations, which benefit the interests of the transnational companies themselves but impede the implementation of appropriate national and local development plans.

Extractivist economies of this type cause serious and irreversible damage to the natural environment. Studies of mining or the oil industry around the world have found evidence of the innumerable ways in which Nature is damaged and irreversibly destroyed. The human tragedies are equally uncountable, and the cultural assets of many peoples have been destroyed. Neither is the situation any better in the area of the economy. The countries whose exports depend essentially on mineral or oil resources are economically backward, and their environmental problems grow in tandem with the expansion of the extractivist activities.

Let us focus our attention for a moment on mining. Modern industrial mining involves extracting the largest possible quantity of mineral resources in a very short time. The deposits of these minerals built up over very long, tectonic-scale periods of time. Today, the deposits with a high concentration of minerals are becoming exhausted. The high world market prices, however, mean that mining can still be profitable even in deposits where the mineral content is low. To make these deposits productive, it is necessary to practice large-scale industrial mining, involving the use of large quantities of chemicals that are sometimes highly toxic (cyanide, sulphuric acid and others) and vast amounts of water, as well as the accumulation of enormous quantities of waste.

The gigantic scale of these operations causes huge environmental impacts. The harmful effects not only arise in the exploration and exploitation phases, when gigantic holes are dug in Mother Earth or when toxic chemicals are used to process the minerals extracted, but also when the material dug up is moved around, affecting large swathes of territory.

Since it accumulates over many years, mining waste can leak out and pollute the environment, particularly with heavy metals or acid rock drainage. This latter phenomenon, which can carry on for dozens and dozens of years, occurs when rainwater, or even air, comes into contact with the rocks that have been moved from underground to the surface and piled up on slag heaps or in the mine's waste pit or dyke. There is usually a high risk that the sulphurised minerals will be oxidized by rainwater or damp air, and this ends up causing a high level of acidification of the water running over these rocks. In Ecuador, many mining deposits are particularly exposed to this problem because they have sulphurous rocks which are known to cause acid drainage.

This type of pollution is particularly devastating for water. On numerous occasions, the water ends up being unusable for human consumption or for agriculture. The contamination of water sources also causes a host of public health problems, including degenerative and skin diseases, among others. And all this does not even begin to take into account the serious social impacts caused by these mega extractive industries.

The different extractive activities have a long and well-known history of pillage all over the world. Today, however, as the exhaustion of natural resources becomes evident, especially in the industrialised countries, there is a growing pressure on the under-developed countries to hand over their mineral or oil deposits. Even the increasing defence of the environment in the societies considered developed is creating pressure on the impoverished countries to open up their territory to satisfy the world economy's demand for minerals.

It is necessary to remember that the transnational companies and their government accomplices usually only highlight the "enormous" quantities of mineral and oil reserves they have found, turned into monetary value. With these figures, which are usually greatly exaggerated, they seek to influence public opinion in support of mining. However, this view is incomplete. The figures should also take into account the so-called hidden social and environmental costs, including, for example, the economic cost of pollution. These are economic losses that do not usually appear in extractive projects and are transferred to society; remember the social and environmental devastation in Ecuador's north-east Amazon region,

which later led to a lawsuit against the Chevron-Texaco company. What also ought to be included in the list of costs are the so-called “perverse subsidies” in the form of the cut-price energy, free or cheap water, and even transport infrastructure given to the extractive industries (Gudynas, 2011c). Have such cost assessments been presented? No. Probably because acknowledging these costs would significantly reduce the profitability of these companies and reveal the meagre benefits that accrue to the state.

These extractivist activities also create serious social tensions in the regions where the extraction of the natural resources takes place, as there are usually very few local people who are able to get a job in the mining and oil companies. The economic and social impacts create divisions in communities, leading to fights between them and within families, domestic violence, the violation of community and human rights, an increase in crime and violence, land trafficking, etc.

Over decades, the extractivist mode of accumulation in the region’s primary export economies has created high levels of underemployment, unemployment and poverty, while the distribution of income and wealth is becoming even more unequal. This shuts off the opportunities for expanding the domestic market because not enough jobs or income are being created (there is no “trickle-down effect,” nor will there ever be). Nevertheless, there is continuing pressure to orient the economy more and more toward the export market because “there is no-one to sell to in the domestic market,” as the defenders of this model never tire of arguing.

This “export mono-mentality” inhibits the creativity of the national business community and reduces incentives for it. The borderline-pathological “pro-export mentality,” based on the famous slogan “export or die,” is also present at the heart of government and even in broad sectors of society; as a result, the huge capacities and potential available inside the country are wasted.

Neextractivism: a contemporary version of extractivism

Ever since they were founded, Latin America’s primary export republics have failed to establish a development model that would enable them to escape from the traps of poverty and authoritarianism. This is the great paradox: these are countries very rich in natural resources, and they may even be receiving significant quantities of cash revenue, but they have not managed to lay the foundations for their own development and they continue to be poor. And they are poor because they are rich in natural resources, because they have prioritised the extraction

of this natural wealth for the world market and sidelined other forms of value creation based more on human effort than on the merciless exploitation of Nature.

In recent years, several of the region's countries with progressive governments have become aware of some of the ills described above and have made some important changes to certain elements of the extractivist model. Beyond the official discourses and plans, however, there is no clear sign that they are genuinely seeking to overcome this mode of accumulation. By making these efforts they hope to be able to address many of the long-postponed social demands and, of course, consolidate themselves in power by resorting to clientelistic and even authoritarian practices.

As Eduardo Gudynas (2009b and 2010c) points out, "the importance of the extractive industries persists as a key cornerstone of development policies" under the progressive governments in South America. Gudynas goes on to say that although South America's progressive governments are "creating a new type of extractivism, both in terms of some of its components and in the combination of old and new attributes," there are no substantive changes in the current structure of accumulation. Thus, neoextractivism maintains "involvement in the international market in a subordinate position that serves the globalisation" of transnational capitalism. It not merely maintains but increases "the fragmentation of territories, with relegated areas and extractive enclaves linked to global markets." The social and environmental impacts of the extractive industries remain unaltered, and "in some cases have even got worse." Staying with Gudynas, "beyond the ownership of the resources, the rules and operations of productive processes that focus on competitiveness, efficiency, maximising profits and externalising impacts are the same as before." One of the noteworthy aspects is "the state's increased presence and more active role, with both direct and indirect actions." What this nationalist stance is mainly trying to achieve is greater state access to and control of natural resources and the benefits that their extraction produces. From this point of view, the control of natural resources by transnational corporations is what is criticised, rather than the extraction itself. Some damage to the environment and even some serious social impacts are accepted as the price to be paid for the benefits that are obtained for the population as a whole. To achieve this, "the state collects (or tries to collect) a higher proportion of the surplus generated by the extractive industries." Furthermore, "some of this revenue is used to finance significant and massive social programmes, thus ensuring new sources of social legitimacy." And extractivism is thus seen as indispensable for combating poverty and promoting development.

There is no doubt, Gudynas concludes, "neoextractivism is part of South

America's own contemporary version of developmentalism, whereby the myth of progress and development is maintained under a new cultural and political hybridity" (Gudynas 2009b and 2010c).

While greater state control of these extractivist activities is important, it is not sufficient. The real control of national exports still lies with the rich countries, even when the extractivist activities do not always receive significant amounts of foreign investment. Perversely, many state-owned enterprises in the primary export economies (with the consent of their respective governments, of course) seem programmed to react exclusively to triggers coming from abroad. At home, their actions abide by a rationale similar to that of the transnationals: destruction of the environment and a lack of respect for society are not absent from their practices. In short, the evolution of these primary export economies is characterised by the fact that their production is subordinated to and motivated by external demand. When all is said and done, neoextractivism maintains and reproduces key elements of the extractivism that dates back to colonial times.

Thanks to oil or mining, or rather to the vast revenues produced by exporting these resources, progressive governments often assume that they are enacting the people's will and try to speed up the leap forward to the longed-for modernity. In the words of Fernando Coronil (2002), what flourishes in economies of this type is a "magical state" with the ability to deploy the "culture of the miracle."¹⁵ This is precisely what we have been seeing in Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia in recent years.

In these countries, the state has recovered its strength. Instead of the minimalist state of the neoliberal era, attempts are being made – quite justifiably – to rebuild and expand the state's presence and actions. But, for the time being, these countries are showing no serious sign of wanting to introduce profound structural changes. The structures and fundamental features of production and exports remain unaltered. Under these conditions, the powerful business sectors, despite being attacked by the "revolutionary discourses," have not ceased to rake in vast profits by taking advantage of this renewed extractivism.

In these countries with progressive governments which have installed neoextractivist arrangements, the traditionally excluded sectors of the population have so far at least experienced a relative improvement in their situation thanks to the better distribution of the growing income from oil and mining. What has not taken place, however, is a radical redistribution of income and wealth. This situation can be explained by how relatively easy it is to reap profits from Nature's

generosity, without getting into socially and politically complex redistribution processes.

As in the past, the lion's share of the benefits of this economic orientation goes to the rich countries, the importers of Nature, which profit still further by processing and selling it in the form of finished products. Meanwhile, the countries that export primary commodities only receive a tiny percentage of the revenue from mining or oil, but they are the ones who have to bear the burden of the environmental and social costs.

In the absence of suitable institutional structures to deal with the environmental, social and political costs involved in the conflicts around these extractivist activities, even the economic cost of controlling potential protests by deploying the security forces is far from negligible. In addition to this, we need to consider the effect of this almost inevitable social instability on other productive activities in the extractive industries' areas of influence, as, for example, when mining ends up driving smallholder farmers away from the affected area.

The effects of these conflicts and this violence also have an impact on local governments. They may be attracted by the siren song of the companies involved in large-scale extractivism and their central government accomplices, which may offer them some financial contributions. Nevertheless, in the end, societies will have to bear the costs of this complex and conflictive relationship between communities, companies and the state. Local development plans will be placed at risk, because mining or oil extractivism will take precedence over any other activity. In the end, the plans drawn up in a participatory way and with informed consent by the local community will be torn to shreds. The environmental liabilities will be the most painful and costly inheritance of the extractivist activities, because these liabilities are not usually assumed by the companies exploiting the resources.

Clearly, if the economic costs of the social, environmental and production-related impacts of the extraction of oil or minerals are calculated, many of the economic benefits of these activities vanish.¹⁶ But, as we mentioned before, these full costs are not calculated by the various progressive governments because of their blind faith in the benefits of these primary export industries.

In short, many of traditional extractivism's greatest and most serious ills are maintained in neoextractivism.

Authoritarianism and the dispute over the profits from Nature

This curse of abundant natural resources often comes with the curse of authoritarianism attached. The exploitation of non-renewable natural resources on a massive scale in these countries has led to the emergence of paternalist states, whose influencing capacity is tied to their political capacity to negotiate a greater or lesser share of the rents from mining or the oil industry. These are states that have added a monopoly on political violence to the monopoly on natural wealth (Coronil, 2002).

Although it may seem paradoxical, a state of this type, which often delegates a substantial part of its social obligations to the oil or mining companies (this is starting to change in the countries with progressive governments), abandons vast regions in development terms. And under these conditions of *detritorialisation*, when companies take over the tasks that should fall to the state, the latter consolidates itself as a police state that represses the victims of the system while refusing to meet its social and economic obligations. Even the judicial system ends up enmeshed in the interests and pressures of the private or state-owned extractive enterprises.

In these enclave economies, the political structures and dynamics that have taken shape are not only authoritarian, but greedy. During the boom years in particular, this greed takes the form of an often disproportionate increase in public spending and, above all, a discretionary distribution of public funds. This type of political practice is also explained by governments' determination to remain in power and/or by their intention to speed up a series of structural reforms which, from their own particular perspective, seem essential for transforming society.

The increase in public spending and investment is also the result of the growing conflict over distribution that breaks out between the most disparate powerful groups. This situation, which becomes most visible in boom times, has been clearly described by Jürgen Schuldt (2005), who says that "it is thus a dynamic, limitless power-play that arises endogenously from the boom. And public spending – which is discretionary – increases more than the revenue attributable to the economic boom (pro-cyclical fiscal policy)."

This "greed effect" leads to a desperate pursuit – and even abusive appropriation – of a significant proportion of the surplus generated in the primary export sector. In the absence of a broad national agreement on how to manage these natural resources, and without solid democratic institutions (which can only be built with widespread and sustained citizen participation¹⁷), various uncooperative

powerful groups appear on the scene, desperate to grab a slice of the mining or oil rents.

Thus, those embroiled in this dispute over natural resource rents are, above all, the transnational corporations directly or indirectly involved in these activities, and their allies: international banks, broad business and financial sectors, even the armed forces, some local governments co-opted by the lucrative rents, and some politically influential sectors of society. Trade union groups linked to this type of extractivist activity, known as the “labour aristocracy,”¹⁸ likewise obtain significant benefits. And, as it is easy to understand, this struggle over the distribution of rents, which may be more or less conflict-ridden, provokes new political tensions.

All this helps to weaken democratic governance, as it ends up establishing or facilitating the perpetuity of authoritarian governments and greedy and clientelistic enterprises which are equally prone to authoritarian practices. Indeed, these countries do not offer the best examples of democracy – rather the opposite. In addition, the often wasteful use of the revenue obtained and the absence of stable policies ends up weakening existing institutional structures or impeding their construction.

Latin America has accumulated ample experience in this area. Several of the region’s countries have governments that display clearly authoritarian features as a result of this primary export mode of accumulation, particularly when it is based on a small number of natural mineral resources.

This complex reality also exists in other parts of the world, particularly in oil- or mineral-exporting countries.¹⁹ Norway would be the exception that proves the rule. The difference between Norway and the cases described earlier lies in the fact that oil industry operations there began and expanded when solid democratic political and economic institutions were already in place, and the level of social inequality was very low in comparison to the oil- or mining-based economies in the impoverished world. In other words, Norway incorporated the oil industry into its society and economy *when it was already a developed country*.

We cannot conclude our reflections without mentioning another feature of these countries trapped by the curse of plenty: violence, which seems to go hand in hand with a model that damages democracy. This violence may be practised by the state itself, even with governments considered progressive, as they criminalise popular protest against the extractivist activities with the sole purpose of keeping them going.

The violence unleashed by the extractivist enterprises themselves, often with government backing, has taken the form of varying degrees of repression. The list of these repressive and even genocidal actions is long and only too well known in Latin America.²⁰ There have also been civil wars,²¹ open wars between countries, and imperial aggression on the part of certain powers determined to guarantee their supply of natural resources – especially oil and gas – by force if necessary.²²

These conflicts, which take place in an atmosphere of constant instability, carry economic costs for a series of reasons. We might think, for example, of the distorting effects caused by the absence of solid institutions: the undervaluing of exports or the overvaluing of imports by the mining or oil companies to reduce the amount of taxes and royalties they pay; the unpredictable and sometimes sudden reductions in production by the transnational enterprises to force their profits higher; the growing presence and interference of intermediaries of all kinds who make production more difficult and transactions more costly. Eventually, problems of this type – which are not the only ones on what could be an endless list of aberrations and distortions – may even cause a reduction in investment in the sector, at least by the most serious companies.

Furthermore, such a high dependence on Nature's generosity sidelines productive innovation and even marketing initiatives, and consolidates oligopolic, patrimonialist and rent-seeking practices. And as we well know, these practices, together with the extractivist enterprises' growing interference in government, strengthen small but powerful oligarchical groups.

In addition, spending more public money on clientelist activities reduces the latent pressure for greater democratisation. This is a sort of "fiscal pacification" (Schuldt, 2005), aimed at damping down social protest. The government's large revenues enable it to prevent the formation of opposition or independent groups or powerful factions that would be able to demand political and other rights (human rights, justice, shared government, etc), by displacing them from power. The government can even allocate large sums of money to the reinforcement of its internal controls, including the repression of opponents.

A situation of relatively abundant financial resources may allow for an expansive economic policy, complemented by external indebtedness. The constant search for more money to finance the economy leads to foreign borrowing.²³ Here, once again, we see the greed effect, manifested in the desire of banks – especially international ones, whether private or multilateral – to participate in the bonanza of copious income; these banks are therefore jointly responsible for the resulting external indebtedness.²⁴ Recently, China has been awarding an increasing

number of loans to several underdeveloped countries, especially in Africa and Latin America, with the aim of gaining control of mineral or oil deposits or large areas of land for agriculture, as well as building major works of infrastructure.

As a consequence of the vast revenues from the exploitation of natural resources and the ease of foreign borrowing, governments tend to relax their tax structures and practices. They often reduce the tax burden to a minimum and may even stop collecting tax altogether, especially income tax. (Apart from that, the curse of neoliberal ideology also discourages any increase in the tax burden.)²⁵

On this point it is worth highlighting the efforts made by some progressive governments, such as those in Ecuador and Bolivia, to improve tax collection, including introducing more progressive and fair tax systems.

In any case, as Jürgen Schuldt (2005) points out, lax management of public finances gets citizens into bad habits. Worse, “what this means is that the public does not demand transparency, justice, representation and efficiency in spending from the government.” The maintenance of costly and inequitable subsidies, on fuel for example, can be explained by these bad habits, although they are mistakenly seen as an “achievement by the people.”

The demand for democratic representation in the state, Schuldt reminds us, usually arose as a consequence of tax increases – in Britain more than 400 years ago and in France at the beginning of the 19th century, for example. The mindset of rent-seeking and clientelism is quite the opposite of citizenship, and may even hamper and impede its construction.

The governments of these primary export economies not only have quite enough funds – especially in the boom times – to carry out the necessary public works; they can also afford to deploy measures and actions aimed at co-opting the people, in order to ensure a sufficient level of governance to enable them to introduce the reforms and changes that they consider to be necessary. Clientelism suffocates the consolidation of citizenship. Worse still, when these clientelist practices encourage individualism, with social policies that focus on the individual – such as those introduced under neoliberal governments that have been continued under progressive governments – they may even manage to defuse collective proposals and action. This ends up having a negative effect on civil society organisations and, more serious still, on the sense of community.²⁶

These actions often lead to authoritarian and messianic forms of government which, in the best case scenario, may hide behind what Guillermo O'Donnell

termed “delegative democracies,” or what are known today as plebiscite democracies.

Furthermore, hyperpresidentialist governments of this type (whether neoliberal or progressive), which address social demands in a clientelist fashion, are a breeding ground for new forms of socio-political conflict. This is because the structural causes of poverty and exclusion do not get addressed. Some of the surplus revenue from oil or mining is redistributed, but there is no in-depth income and wealth redistribution process. Equally, the significant environmental and social impacts of these large-scale extractivist activities, which are likewise unequally distributed, lead to an increase in ungovernability which in turn calls for new authoritarian responses.

Following Anthony Bebbington’s recommendation, though without meaning to suggest that this will resolve the intrinsic unsustainability of the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources, an idea of sustainability should be democratically constructed – at least for the transition. The limits to development should be linked to civil society itself and its participation, rather than being circumscribed to models where the most powerful players – the transnationals and the state, often in that order – are those who decide. Thus, the use of natural resources would be put up for discussion and this would be a way out of the anti-democratic atmosphere that surrounds extractivism itself.

In short, the dependence on non-renewable natural resources often consolidates autocratic – even authoritarian – governments due to the following factors:

- State institutions too weak to enforce laws and unable to control government actions.
- Absence of rules and transparency, which encourages discretionality in the use of public funds and common goods.
- Conflict over the distribution of rents among powerful groups which, by consolidating rent-seeking and patrimonialism, reduces investment and rates of economic growth in the long term.
- Short-termist government policies that are not well planned.
- The illusion of easy and abundant wealth coming from the large-scale exploitation and export of natural resources, which becomes part of the DNA of broad sectors of society and governments.

From senile developmentalism to post-extractivism

Whether in bad faith or from ignorance, an exotic idea may occur to someone: if the primary export economy generates underdevelopment in perpetuity, the solution would be to stop exploiting natural resources. Obviously, this is a fallacy. The resource curse is not a fatal destiny but a choice. The challenge lies in finding a strategy that will enable “living well” to be constructed by taking advantage of non-renewable natural resources, turning them into “a blessing” (Stiglitz, 2006).

Thus, the task is to choose a different path that will move us away from the resource curse and from the curse of orthodox views that keep us subordinated to transnational power. One of the most complex tasks is therefore to design and implement a strategy that will lead to a post-extractivist economy.

This new economy will not come about overnight. It is also difficult to imagine the possibility of a sudden shut-down of the oil fields or mines that are operating at the moment. But this transition will never be a reality if extractivist activities continue to expand and if there are no specific alternatives for gradually cutting them back by means of a properly planned process of change. Of course, this transition will not be easy in a capitalist world that is unthinkable without extractive industries like oil, mining and forestry. Building this transition is today’s vital task, and it will require all the capacities for critical thinking, inventiveness and creativity in society and its organisations. Efforts to move toward post-extractivism in the global South should go hand in hand with economic degrowth²⁷ or, at least, stationary growth in the global North. This is an issue of growing concern in many industrialised countries.

The way out of an extractivist economy, which will have to carry on with some activities of this type for a time, must take into account a key point: the planned degrowth of extractivism. This option would promote sustainable activities, which may take place in the sphere of manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, and especially knowledge. Nature must definitely not be damaged any further. The success of strategies of this type in ushering in a social, economic, cultural and ecological transition will depend on how coherent they are and, above all, the level of social support they have.

The idea is to consign dependent, unsustainable extractivist economies – those that are based on the export of primary commodities, excessively oriented to the export market, unindustrialised, with high levels of poverty and exclusion, concentrating income and wealth in the hands of the few, and destroying and polluting the environment – to the past. The aim is to build sustainable economies,

meaning diversified economies with a range of products and markets that are industrialised and service-oriented, with the capacity to create good quality employment, equitable, and respectful of cultures and Nature. On this point it is advisable to take forward a re-encounter with indigenous worldviews in which human beings not only coexist in harmony with Nature but form part of it.

To be able to launch this transition, which will necessarily be plural, it is essential to put in place new and vigorous state institutions and a new way of organising the economy, as well as having a strategic idea of how to participate in the world market. This therefore requires regulatory arrangements and organisations, as well as properly established mechanisms that will enable these transitions to be taken forward.²⁸

What we are looking at, then, is a new type of productive specialisation to enable countries to be internally sustainable, based on a broad consensus between different interests. To achieve this, it is necessary to strengthen the domestic market and the productive apparatus within the country, as well as designing transition strategies for production that will lead to the extractive industries becoming increasingly less important to the economy.

The re-encounter with Nature is another of the priority points on the agenda, and this means doing away with models and practices centred on the exploitation and appropriation of Nature. We should bear in mind that all humanity is obliged to preserve the integrity of the natural processes that guarantee flows of energy and materials in the biosphere. This implies maintaining the planet's biodiversity. To achieve this civilising transformation, the decommercialisation of Nature would seem to be essential. Economic objectives must be subordinate to the laws that determine how natural systems operate, without losing sight of respect for human dignity and the need to improve the quality of life of people and communities.

This makes it obligatory to maintain (avoid destroying) those territories that possess a wealth of environmental and social values, where the highest levels of biodiversity are concentrated: the Yasuní-ITT Initiative in Ecuador is a global example.²⁹ It also leads to establishing the concept of strong sustainability (economic capital must not wholly replace "natural capital"), as a new paradigm for how to organise society. And it also implies replacing conventional macroeconomic calculations with new indicators and indices of sustainability.

Likewise, it requires widespread and genuine social participation to confront the challenge of large-scale extractivism. This necessarily implies taking forward a profound and radical redistribution of the revenue from mining and the oil

industry, as well as other income and assets present in an economy. Inequalities³⁰ must be done away with, since they are the basis for all sorts of authoritarianisms in every sphere of human life.

It is essential to start by halting the continued expansion and intensification of an extractivist economic model, meaning one based on the export of primary commodities. Attempting to develop by prioritising this primary-export mode of accumulation, which overvalues profits from Nature and undervalues human effort, systematically destroys the environment and has serious negative effects on social and community structures, gives priority to the export market and neglects the domestic market, fosters wealth concentration and sidelines equality, has not been the path to development for any country. Therefore, neither will it be the path to building a post-developmental option such as living well, *buen vivir* or *sumak kawsay*.³¹

Conceptually at least, living well emerges as an option that moves beyond development “alternatives” and seeks to offer an “alternative to development” – in short, an option that is radically different to all development ideas. It even dispenses with the concept of progress in its productivist version. Therefore, living well offers an opportunity to construct another society characterised by human coexistence, in diversity and in harmony with Nature, based on the recognition of the range of cultural values that exist in each country and the world as a whole. The vital element in this proposal, which may even be rolled out globally, lies in taking a great revolutionary step forward that will encourage us to make the transition from anthropocentric visions to socio-biocentric ones, with all the concomitant political, economic and social consequences.

By taking the route of “senile developmentalism” (Martínez Alier, 2008), maintaining or – worse – intensifying extractivism, we will definitely not find the way out of this complex dilemma of societies rich in natural resources that are at the same time impoverished.

Notes

1. Ecuadorean economist. Lecturer and researcher at the Latin American Social Sciences Faculty (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales - FLACSO), based in Ecuador. Former Minister of Energy and Mines. Former member and president of the Constituent Assembly. Note: In this chapter, the author draws on and summarises several of his previous works.
2. Several scholars have built up this “tropical fate” theory, from different perspectives. We can mention Michael Gavin, Michel L. Ross, Jeffrey Sachs, Ricardo Hausmann, Roberto Rigobon and Ivar Kolstad, among others.
3. Despite having such a long history as a mode of accumulation, the word “extractivism” does not appear in the dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language.
4. It is a mistake to assume that extractivism only exists when mineral or hydrocarbons resources are exploited. There are many experiences of equally extractivist practices in logging or monocrop agriculture. On the case of coffee in Colombia, for example, see Oeindrila Dube and Juan Fernando Vargas (2006).
5. Raúl Zibechi (2011) sees a second phase of neoliberalism in the extractivism of these progressive governments.
6. See the valuable contribution made by Schuldt (2005). See also Schuldt and Acosta (2006), and Acosta (2009).
7. Sustainable development is a process that enables current needs to be met without compromising the chances of future generations. To practise the concept of living well, it is necessary to go much further than sustainable development, and accept that Nature is a holder of rights.
8. One contribution suggesting ways to dismantle the myths of transnational mega-mining is the work produced in Argentina by Colectivo Voces de Alerta (2011).
9. The term “Dutch disease” was coined in the 1970s in – as its name suggests – the Netherlands, where the discovery of natural gas deposits led to a huge increase in the country’s foreign exchange reserves. This caused the value of the Dutch currency, the florin, to appreciate, damaging the competitiveness of the country’s manufacturing exports.
10. It should be recalled that ricardian rents are those derived from the exploitation of Nature rather than business activity, in contrast to profits that result from the effort and

creativity (“productivity”) of the workforce.

11. At the start of the first major global crisis of the 21st century, when the prices of oil and minerals fell, there was a marked tendency in many countries to increase the quantity produced and offer compensation to companies for the reduction in their revenue.

12. The list of texts on these processes of indebtedness and crisis is long, but it would be sufficient to look at Ugarteche (1986), Vilate (1986), Calcagno (1988), Marichal (1988) or Acosta (1994).

13. Nuclear energy does not imply an escape from the extractivist model. Firstly, the raw material – uranium – must be obtained, and secondly, this energy is used to maintain and increase the same extractive activities. This is what usually happens with the building of large hydroelectric dams and, of course, the industries that use fossil fuels.

14. The World Bank promoted large-scale mining as a source of revenue during the neoliberal era, and still maintains that the extraction of natural resources on a massive scale is positive. See Sinnott, Nash and de la Torre (2010).

15. This author discusses events in Venezuela starting from the government of General Juan Vicente Gómez and prior to the government of Colonel Hugo Chávez Frías.

16. On the oil industry’s liabilities see, for example, the work of Fander Falconí (2004).

17. This does not mean exclusively individual/liberal citizenship because, from the standpoint of collective rights, forms of collective citizenship or community citizenship can be accommodated. Equally, the rights of Nature require and also give rise to another type of citizenship, which is constructed in the individual, the collective, and also the environmental sphere. This type of citizenship is plural, because it depends on histories and environments, and takes up the criteria of environmental justice which go beyond the traditional idea of justice. Eduardo Gudynas (2009) calls these forms of citizenship “ecological meta-citizenships.”

18. In the terms proposed by Eric J. Hobsbawm (1981).

19. By way of an example, it is enough to analyse the situation in the countries of the Persian Gulf, which may be considered very wealthy in terms of their accumulation of huge financial reserves and their high levels of per capita income. Nevertheless, there is no way they can be included in the list of developed countries: their levels of inequality are aberrant, the lack of freedom is notorious, and political and religious intolerance is the order of the day. Many of their governments are not only undemocratic, but characterised

by deeply authoritarian practices; Saudi Arabia, a monarchy with medieval features, would be the paradigmatic example on quite a long list.

20. In the mining regions of Peru, a country often cited as an example of openness to mining, human rights violations have multiplied exponentially. In this country, the conflicts related to mining and the oil industry, but particularly mining, account for more than 80% of all recorded social conflicts (De Echave, 2008, 2009). What happened in Bagua in June 2009 is just one well-publicised episode in a lengthy series of acts of repression and systematic human rights violations. In Colombia, a country lashed by a long and bloody civil war, about 70% of the forced displacements that took place between 1995 and 2002 occurred in mining areas. In Ecuador, the most serious cases of human rights violations in recent years are related to transnational mining companies and, of course, the oil industry.

21. Nigeria confirms this statement: the country underwent a long and painful civil war over the control of oil, followed by vicious repression against the Ogoni people. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, violence has not ceased in the countries of the Caucasus, rich in oil and gas: Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ossetia, Dagestan and Chechenia.

22. To illustrate this last case, it is sufficient to mention the US military aggression against Iraq and Afghanistan, with the aim of controlling these countries' oil and gas reserves. The NATO intervention in Libya in 2011 may also be categorised as an act of imperial aggression with the aim of controlling oil and, in this case, one of the largest reserves of fresh water in the world.

23. Thus, for example, as a newly rich oil-producer, Ecuador was able to obtain loans more easily than when it was merely a poor banana-producer. In the middle of the economic boom of the 1970s, Ecuador's public debt, and its external debt in particular, grew out of all proportion to the oil boom (it is true that it also grew due to external conditions arising from the demand for capital accumulation).

24. See Osmel Manzano and Roberto Rigobon (2001), as well as the list of authors mentioned before, who address the issue of external debt.

25. In Ecuador, one of the leaders of the military governments during the 1970s oil boom, General Guillermo Rodríguez Lara, boasted that one of his government's achievements was to stop collecting taxes.

26. Consciously or unconsciously, the various Socio País projects of the government of the "citizen revolution" in Ecuador seem to be having these effects. In addition, it is worth mentioning that this government is openly attempting to weaken and divide the

major social movements, especially the indigenous movement, which fiercely oppose the expansion of extractivist industries.

27. There are also thinkers in the global South who are making proposals for contracting the economy – see Leff (2008).

28. How to take forward these transitions has increasingly been the subject of discussion in recent years. Several authors have contributed various ideas and suggestions to the debate, including Eduardo Gudynas, Joan Martínez Alier, Enrique Leff and Roberto Guimarães. For a concrete example, see the contributions of several authors edited by Alejandra Alayza and Eduardo Gudynas in Peru (2011). Some suggestive ideas for how to build these transitions can be found in the report on the subject produced by Oxfam (2009). I have also offered some thoughts on how to build a post-oil economy (Acosta 2000 or 2009). It is also worth noting that several proposals for building a “post-oil Ecuador” were published by various authors in 2000.

29. See Martínez and Acosta (2010). This initiative arose from a proposal for a moratorium on drilling for oil in the centre-south of Ecuador’s Amazon region, formulated in the year 2000 in the book by various authors, *El Ecuador Post Petrolero*.

30. Especially economic, social, inter-generational, gender, ethnic, cultural and regional inequalities.

31. Two suggested works in the increasingly ample literature on the subject are Acosta and Martínez (2009) and Acosta (2010). Another text that sets this debate in a wider context is the work by de Tortosa (2011).

Complementary and conflicting transformation projects in heterogeneous societies

Edgardo Lander¹

During the decades of neoliberalism, the weakening of nation states - especially those of the global South, but most recently also of the North - has been a fundamental neoliberal strategy geared at making societies less democratic and thereby more vulnerable and helpless in the face of global markets. Under these conditions, in many of the debates of the Latin American left, the recovery of the state has been considered a necessity for strengthening national sovereignty, for recovering the public good, and for the very possibility of any significant societal change. Without material, symbolic, and institutional state resources, any attempt at societal change could be more easily halted and/or defeated by privileged national/international interests. However, this leads to severe contradictions, given that these very institutional state frameworks have historically operated as instruments and structures for the reproduction of the existing relationships of colonial domination and exploitation.

In his classic formulation, James O'Connor (1973) stated that the liberal capitalist state is inherently penetrated by tensions and contradictions. It operates not only as an instrument of capital accumulation, but also guarantees the legitimization of capitalist society. This state complexity becomes even greater in the peripheral countries of the world system. Latin American states have been, and fundamentally continue to be, *monocultural colonial states* in heterogeneous and pluricultural societies.¹ To this historical heritage has been added decades of neoliberal policies geared towards the dismantling of the state. By giving full priority to the demands of accumulation over democratic legitimacy, these states were largely privatised and placed directly at the service of capital. Additionally, to different degrees, these states have been characterised as inefficient, clientelistic, infiltrated with corruption, and, even in the best of cases, as having weak representative democracies that have excluded large proportions of the population. This raises important questions in relation to the role these states could play in enabling social change in Latin American societies. Are these states simply obstacles to change, or can they in some way further a transformative agenda?

In this paper, these contradictions and tensions will be explored in the context of the current processes of change in the three South American countries with the most radical agendas for societal change, countries that in recent years have

carried out ambitious constitutional transformations, namely Venezuela (1999), Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009).

The state in multiple and heterogeneous processes of change

The state's actions in the current processes of change in the continent are affected by strong and distinct tensions. The reflections made in this paper about these tensions relate to three fundamental areas: the complex *historical-structural heterogeneity*² of these societies; the heterogeneity and internal contradictions of states that do not constitute unitary bodies, but rather complex territories in dispute; and the presence of various transformation logics and partially complementary, partially contradictory projects for change that are simultaneously played out in these political processes.

All this must be seen in the context of profound transformations in global patterns of accumulation and hegemonic structures.

Revolutionary transformational projects identified with socialism over the past two centuries were supported by theories of progress, by faith in the ascending linearity of historical development, and the claim that it was possible to guide the whole of society in one direction, towards a predefined horizon, the general attributes of which were considered to be known. The necessity of a vanguard capable of foreshadowing future society was a part of the same idea of revolution. Although the capitalist societies that were confronted were recognised as complex and heterogeneous, the notion of a principal contradiction (capital/labour or bourgeoisie/proletariat) led to an attempt to articulate all the contradictions of society and the direction of their processes of transformation around a single main axis. Moreover, these projects on the whole operated within the pattern of Western civilisation and of unlimited confidence in progress.

The current worldwide processes of social transformation face radically different historical contexts. The dominant logic of modern politics has suffered an implosion as a result of the crisis of Western monocultural modernity and its idea of progress. This has become particularly visible in South American politics over the last decades and is increasingly evident both in the impossibility of endless growth on a planet whose limited carrying capacity has been exceeded, and by the strong presence of other societal options that radically deny the 'end of history' and reject the belief in liberal capitalist society as the only possible historical option, as the inevitable destiny of all humankind.

Today's processes, projects, and imaginaries of change cannot be reduced to any single unitary logic.

The *internal* heterogeneity of the processes of change has been conceptualised in many ways. According to Arturo Escobar: "the current conjuncture can be said to be defined by two processes: the crisis of the neoliberal model of the past three decades; and the crisis of the project of bringing about modernity in the continent since the Conquest" (Escobar 2010: 3). According to this view, the contemporary transformations move beyond the left-right continuum in which the politics of the Western world have operated in the last two centuries. Escobar considers that the proposal by Walter Mignolo is a more apt formulation of these political forms. Mignolo speaks of "the left, the right, and the decolonial", opening up the political spectrum beyond Eurocentric frameworks. The transformations involve not only a turn to the left, but a decolonial turn" (Escobar 2010: 6).

According to Raúl Zibechi, in Latin America today, "political and social reality is not only shaped by a single scenario but by three of them": the struggle to overcome the dominance of the United States, to overcome capitalism, and to overcome development (Zibechi 2010, translation AN/SN). This involves the simultaneous presence of anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist tendencies and the search for alternatives to development. It would make sense to add at least a fourth scenario or direction for societal change. This would refer to national-popular projects that give priority to industrialisation, democratisation, inclusion, and redistribution, which together could be characterised as the pending tasks of the project to establish national democratic states, an aspiration that is still operative in these societies. It is not a question of fully complementary or necessarily mutually-exclusive historical alternatives or future projects, but of tendencies and imaginaries that are closely intertwined in current political confrontations.

As Escobar indicates, the terms used for the current processes of change illustrate this extraordinary complexity: "*Socialismo del siglo XXI* [21st century socialism], plurinationality, interculturality, direct and substantive democracy, *revolucion ciudadana*, [citizens revolution] endogenous development centered on the *buen vivir* [good life] of the people, territorial and cultural autonomy, and decolonial projects towards post-liberal societies" (Escobar 2010: 2, emphasis orig.).

These different projects condition the tensions and confrontations of these processes of change and are simultaneously present in public discourses and in some ways articulated in the government proposals of these countries. However, at different junctures, one or another of these central threads may acquire special relevance or urgency. The effect of this is that at times other dimensions are

put on a back burner, and can thus lose visibility either in public debate or in governmental priorities.

A major focus of the current political strife is built around conflicts between the popular democratic processes, on the one hand, and the interests of privileged national and transnational sectors, on the other. These confrontations may be understood as the classical opposition between left and right, or of popular national struggles against an exclusionary social order. These agendas often appear associated with socialist horizons. In this national-popular logic the priorities are national sovereignty, democratisation and the redistribution of wealth. This is associated with the idea of development, with a demand for a stronger state, and with key issues such as national control of the commons as well as struggles for land distribution and the pursuit of greater levels of equality.

In the decolonial logic the main priorities are plurinationality, the recognition of diversity, the sovereignty of indigenous people over their own territories, autonomy of peoples, communities and movements, judicial pluralism, the rejection of the developmental state and extractivism, as well as the recognition of the rights of Mother Earth. The decolonial struggle points towards a deep social transformation that questions not only capitalism but the dominant Western patterns of production and knowledge. This is best captured in the ideas of *vivir bien* or *buen vivir*, a term in Spanish that can be translated as “living well,” but with a distinctive meaning in the Latin American and particularly indigenous context (Mamani 2010).

The future of these processes of change depends on whether or not these different logics of social transformation manage to articulate and supplement each other. The political projects associated with the idea of socialism are not easily compatible with the historical projects of decolonisation: they correspond to different histories, theories, socio-political subjects, as well as different notions about a desirable future. On the part of those who defend the validity of a form of socialism, this requires a penetrating criticism of the experience of 20th century socialism and of the struggles of the Latin American left of the last century, in particular its limited confrontation with patriarchy, its monocultural or colonial character components, and its developmentalist, predatory conception of a better future.

These different heritages can become complementary parts of the same heterogeneous, non-linear, plural and democratic process of social transformation only through complex negotiations, difficult processes of dialogue, alliance building and – above all – dynamics of reciprocal learning and reflexive self-questioning

within each of these political/cultural traditions. The inevitable conflicts arising from settling on priorities have to be dealt with by non-violent means.

If these various transformative logics (popular-national, socialist, decolonial) are politically constructed as contradictory or antagonistic, the result can only lead to the defeat of these projects of change, thereby consolidating or strengthening capitalist domination, and accelerating the environmental crisis of the planet. With the current fissiporous state of popular movements, with their profound political and cultural heterogeneity, it certainly does not seem likely that one of these projects might achieve hegemony over the whole of society.

The tensions between these logics or projects of change outlined above (popular-national, socialist, decolonial) are also present within the state itself: in the ideas and actions of those politicians leading these processes of change and in the claims and demands made of the government by the most diverse sectors of society. Likewise, these tensions and perspectives exist in different expressions in the popular classes and even operate within the same subjects and/or movements, giving priority to some dimensions over others, depending on the situation. These multiple demands addressed to the state cannot be realised simultaneously. They constitute sources of permanent tensions and conflicts which require constant negotiations. There are, therefore, calls to – variously – recover the state, strengthen the state, democratise the state, decolonise the state, make the state an instrument of transformation, maintain the autonomy of the movements and organisations with regard to the state, ensure sovereign control of the commons and their use for the collective benefit, and confront an extractivist economy based on the export of unprocessed commodities.

Extractivism and modes of insertion in the global market

One of the issues around which these tensions have become more evident since the new constitutions came into force has been that of extractivism and the modes of insertion of these countries in the global economy. Throughout Latin America today many of the main popular struggles are related to the defence of territories against oil exploitation, the accelerated expansion of single-crop farming (monocultures), and large-scale open-pit mining. These issues are particularly crucial in Ecuador and Bolivia, where the organised struggles of indigenous people and movements have played such a central role and where the new constitutions or subsequent legislation established the rights of nature, or Mother Earth, for the first time in history. Given the limits of the planet and the global environmental crisis threatening the conditions for the reproduction of life

- or at least human life,- it is evident that there is no possibility of any significant social transformation if alternatives to the predatory order of unlimited economic growth are not a central component.

As was pointed out earlier, the current processes of change in Latin America have occurred after decades of neoliberal policies, hallmarked by privatisations, the reduction of the public sphere and the opening of economies to global markets. It was precisely the popular struggles against neoliberalism and their consequences - mobilisation against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and other free trade agreements, overthrowing neoliberal presidents etc. - and the accumulated political capacity generated by these disputes, that made the electoral victories of the current so-called 'progressive' or left-wing governments possible. However, this did not imply that the deep economic, political, and cultural transformations caused by neoliberalism ceased to be present. These effects included more unequal societies, less solidarity, and less democracy; more unstable countries; more open economies and the weakening of productive processes directed at the internal market. This reinforced both the economic and political roles of the entrepreneurial sectors connected with primary export activities, finance and, in general, the groups more directly associated with the external sector of these economies.

'Progressive' or left-wing governments are likewise in a very different global economic and geopolitical context from the years when the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) used to defend the need for import substitution. The political and economic tools available to them now are much more limited. New conditions have been created by neoliberal globalisation. Given the opening of the markets created by the new global institutions - such as the WTO and the various multilateral and bilateral free trade agreements,- as well as the vast differences both in salaries and in the existing productivity in the world today (especially *vis-a-vis* China), the obstacles confronting any attempt to boost industrial politics are formidable, particularly in small countries with limited internal markets. The steps taken towards productive regional integration have until now clearly been insufficient and tend to benefit large economies, especially that of Brazil.

The new accumulation patterns of capital have stressed the colonial forms of the international division of labour and the international division of so-called 'nature'. This model of 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey 2004), has reaffirmed the roles of Africa and Latin America as suppliers of primary goods, of agricultural, energy and mining *commodities*. The tendencies towards the deepening of extractivism present in the whole region have to be regarded within

the context of these structural conditions of global capitalism, which can be properly characterised as processes of re-colonising the planet.

All of this has acquired the shape of a new geoculture of the planet. The cultural patterns and social beliefs characteristic of a globalised individualist and consumer culture ('possessive individualism') spread by the global corporate culture industry, in particular from the United States, are a fundamental part of this logic of re-colonisation and have likewise become serious obstacles in the search for alternatives.

Any process of significant change in these societies necessarily requires profound ruptures with these forms of insertion in the world market, the consequences of which are not only economic. Without these ruptures the current colonial insertions will consolidate, strengthening the internal economic, political and cultural bases – as well as state structures – of this pattern of accumulation, creating even greater obstacles for anti-capitalism for progressive alternatives to development, and even the possibility of decolonial transformations.

Several years after these governments were elected - more than a decade in the case of Venezuela - it seems clear that extractivism and the logic of primary exports have been continuously reinforced. In this sense, there are no significant differences between the so-called 'progressive' or left-wing governments and the neoliberal governments. In almost all countries of Latin America, the share of primary goods in the total value of exports has increased in the last decade, in most cases significantly. With regard to the whole continent, the proportion of primary products in the total value of exports grew from 41.1% in 2002, to 52.9% in 2009 (CEPAL 2010: 105). This tendency has been evident even in Brazil, the most industrialised country in the continent, where the percentage of primary goods relative to the total value of exports increased from 47.4% in 2002 to 60.9% in 2009 (*ibid.*: 105).

The export of primary goods has become a direct source of relatively abundant public income, which could not be obtained through other means. The increasingly significant role of China in global geopolitics is contributing to the consolidation of this mode of insertion in the world market (Bridges 2009). Among other paradoxes concerning these South American political processes is the way in which an anti-imperialist discourse (i.e. that of the United States or the EU) is used to justify steps that tend to consolidate the subordination to another global capitalist power: China.

Trade between Latin America and China depends even more on primary

products than does trade with the United States and Europe: Exports from Latin America to China are almost exclusively based on extraction and intensive use of natural resources. These are exported with very low or no processing as in the case of soya, fish-meal, grapes, sugar and copper. This has led to strong pressure on ecosystems, removal of the natural resources of Latin American territory (farmland, biodiversity, water, fish resources and energy resources) and undermined the sovereignty of local communities over their natural resources and their territories and the services they supply (food, water, etc.). This is particularly irreversible in the case of mining. (Larrain et al. 2005: 47)

In the three countries, there is an important and growing distance between, on the one hand, the discourses and the legal texts referring to the rights of nature and the critique of development, and on the other hand, the content of some of the main political and economic decisions.

Obviously, it is impossible to demand from the governments of Venezuela, Ecuador, or Bolivia the closure of their wells, oil, and gas pipelines, and that they stop exporting hydrocarbons overnight. However, if the target is to change the productive model based on extractivism, clear and effective decisions have to be taken today that are geared towards a *transition* to productive models that overcome extractivism. There have so far been very few signs in this regard. Furthermore, in all three countries the government discourse has taken an increasingly developmentalist and extractivist tone.

This distance between discourses, projects, norms, and laws, on the one hand, and some of the main political/economic decisions, on the other, has led to important confrontations in these three countries. A notorious example was the – strongly opposed – decision in Bolivia to open large parts of the Amazon region for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons (Morales Ayma 2010), a decision taken almost simultaneously with the introduction of the *Law of Rights of Nature* in the legislative assembly. The subsequent decisions of the Bolivian government regarding the construction of a motorway through the indigenous territory of Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécure (TIPNIS), in spite of the firm opposition of its indigenous inhabitants, have been even more conflictual. This project has produced deep divisions in Bolivian society, a very controversial national debate, and conflicting positions between popular movements and organisations with different visions in relation to what is at stake (Prada Alcoreza 2010a, 2010b; 2010c; Arkonada 2011; Toer/Montero 2012; Mamani Ramírez 2012).

In Ecuador the Mining Law - portrayed by indigenous and environmental

organisations as directly breaching a constitution that grants rights to 'nature' for the first time (CONAIE 2009) - is only one of many disputes between the government of President Rafael Correa and indigenous and environmental organisations within the context of the pro-developmental policies which have characterised that government.³

Of all these countries, anti-developmental and decolonial disputes have the least public presence in Venezuela. Accentuating the country's century-old oil dependency, this product accounted for 95% of the total value of exports in 2010 (Banco Central de Venezuela 2011). This phenomenon is not just the result of the inevitable inertia caused by this historic centrality of oil (in the economy, the political system, and the Venezuelan State), nor can it be explained as a result of a temporary statistical distortion caused by high oil prices in the international market. It also corresponds to the productive model proposed as an indispensable condition to make 21st century socialism possible.

During the last decade, a sustained policy of investments and partnerships with international – state-owned and private – companies, both in gas and oil, was carried out with the aim of considerably increasing production. According to the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Venezuela has 296 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, the largest in the world. Those reserves represent a quarter of OPEC members' total reserves, and 20% of global oil reserves, the bulk of which are in the Orinoco oil belt (OPEC 2011: 11, 22-23) . According to Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. : The Orinoco oil belt is situated in the southern part of the Guárico, Anzoátegui and Monagas regions; forming a huge reservoir with a geographical area of approximately 55,000 km², with superficial hydrocarbon-bearing sand covering about 12,000 km². It contains accumulations of heavy crude and extra-heavy crude oil with an average gravity of 8.6° API. (PDVSA 2010: 92). Furthermore, Venezuela also has two-thirds of the total gas reserves in the whole of Latin America

Agreements were entered into for the quantification and certification of the reserves of the Orinoco belt (ibid.: 93) with 28 companies from 21 countries, including Russia, China, the United States, France, Japan, Brazil, Spain, Iran, India, Norway, and South Africa. In the Strategic Plans for Gas Development, apart from investments by US corporations, there were investments by corporations from Italy (ENI) and Norway (STATOIL) (see PDVSA n/y).

Official announcements of projected future production levels have changed over time. According to former President Hugo Chávez, Venezuela would double its production between 2011 and 2021, and will be able to produce six million

barrels of crude oil a day. “We estimate a daily production of six million 120 thousand barrels a day by 2021 [...] The price of this barrel will be about 200 dollars,” which will be used for the purpose of sustaining “the development of a world power, namely, the Venezuela motherland” (RNV 2011). In January 2012, the president declared that a daily production of 10 million barrels would be achieved by “around 2030” (Durand 2012).

In order to accomplish this increase in production, a large proportion of the national territory has been opened for oil and gas exploitation, including huge areas of the territorial waters (Red Alerta Petrolera-Orinoco Oilwatch 2005). Bearing in mind the extraordinary magnitude of reserves, the planned increase in the scale of production, and the complex technology required to extract these heavy and extra-heavy crude oils, and oil from the hydrocarbon-bearing sands of the Orinoco belt, massive investments by transnational corporations from all over the world have been planned in the form of joint ventures with the state owned PDVSA. The characteristics of these crude oils inevitably imply a greater environmental and socio-cultural impact than that involved in the exploitation of traditional lighter crude oils.

The centrality given to hydrocarbon in the production model of the country is expressly found in the first national plan for development, conceived as a project leading to socialism: the *Simón Bolívar National Project* (República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Presidencia 2007). One of the seven central themes or targets defining this development project is to make Venezuela a “world energy power”. According to this project: “Oil will continue to be decisive in gaining financial resources from abroad, in generating productive internal investments, in meeting the country’s own needs for energy, and in consolidating the Socialist Productive Model” (ibid.).

The politics relating to the internal market are an expression of the fundamental continuity in the development model and energy pattern based on oil. A litre of ‘ecological’ gasoline with the highest octane level is sold in Venezuela at a price of between two and three cents (US\$). This massive subsidy has inevitably promoted a sustained increase in the consumption of hydrocarbons in the country, thus reinforcing energy waste and a rentier culture.

The most significant foreign investments of recent years have been Chinese. In response to the unquenchable thirst of the Chinese economy for a reliable and growing supply of hydrocarbons, Rafael Ramírez - the Minister of Energy and Petroleum - announced that the Venezuelan government had signed contracts to the value of \$32 billion (Aporrea 2011).

In September 2010 the law authorising the most important of these contracts was published. China would provide a \$20 billion credit line over ten years China to Venezuela, half of which would be in Chinese renminbi yuan. Venezuela agreed to supply China with between 200,000 and 250,000 barrels of oil every day for the first two years and thereafter no less than 300,000 barrels daily until the loan has been repaid. Neither the barrel-price of the oil, nor the interest rate of the loan are specified in the contract. The latter “will be jointly determined by the lender and the borrower, based on direct negotiations and market principles” (Asamblea Nacional de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2010). These futures sales – used to finance current expenses or investments – not only consolidate a long-term dependency on oil, but also generate structural demands for increased levels of production over time, if only to maintain the same levels of fiscal income.

President Hugo Chávez talked about this relationship with China in the following terms: “I think that China is showing the world that it will be the leading world power. This is good for the world because it is becoming a great world power without knocking down, invading or blocking anybody, without knocking down peoples or imposing leonine conditions: without breaching the sovereignty of the peoples. With modesty, we say, all the oil that China will need for its growth and consolidation as a great world power, and to continue to improve the living conditions of its people, is here - not only crude oil, but also iron” (Venezolana de Televisión 2010).

Processes of change in democracy

Among the fundamental challenges of the current processes of change are demands for deep cultural transformations, and the establishment of new state forms and institutions that can articulate these plural societies within the current national territorial limits. These frontiers, which completely ignore previous history and the entire socio-cultural reality that existed before the arrival of the colonisers, have been assumed as fixed by the governments of these three countries. The integrity of these national territories has only been questioned by right-wing opposition movements when they have found it convenient to use separatist threats as a political weapon. This implies that the processes of change have to operate within the deep historical, structural heterogeneity existing within these national territories. This is what the ideas of plurinationality, interculturalism, and decolonialism signpost (Walsh 2008).

These new/other political-cultural forms will only be possible if built democratically, both for pragmatic political reasons and for much more

fundamental reasons, related to the desired type of future society. The current processes of change in the continent have been carried out by means of elections. This implies that the continuity of these governments is only possible through the preservation of political legitimacy and majority electoral support (unless a decision is made to interrupt the current constitutional frameworks, which does not seem to be on the agenda). In this context, public policies face the challenge of contributing to the transformation of the beliefs and shared common sense of majorities without distancing themselves too much from that shared common sense, since that would lead to electoral defeat.

History has taught us what happens when a state – against the will of large sectors of the population – tries by force to impose political transformation and radical reorganisation of society. The dramatic impacts of the authoritarian imposition of the utopian collectivisation of the Soviet farms, or of the Cultural Revolution in China are well known. These not only had extraordinarily high human costs but contributed to the loss of legitimacy of the revolutionary projects and severely undermined processes of transformation towards a post-capitalist society. There are severe limits to the actions that can be undertaken by the state in its quest to transform society. Pretending to substitute the complex and necessarily slow transformations and intercultural negotiations of deeply heterogeneous societies with the raw use of state power has well-known results. Perhaps this is one of the fundamental lessons of the revolutionary processes of the last century. The state, assumed as the subject or principal agent of transformation, ultimately imposes authoritarianism, thereby undermining the possibilities for building a democratic society.

An exceptional historic situation

Latin America is at an extraordinary, historic juncture. The so-called ‘progressive’ and left governments were elected as a result of prolonged processes of broad-based struggles and popular mobilisations – for democracy and against neoliberalism – struggles in which indigenous organisations played a key role. These are not right-wing governments, in spite of the existing continuity in some areas of public policies (in particular in the economic model of exporting unprocessed commodities), and in spite of the less-than-democratic intolerance in how they reply to their critics. But above all, and beyond the extraordinary importance that the head of state has in each of these cases, they are not monolithic governments. They are governments and states in dispute. Owing to their origin and composition, they are governments crossed by tensions, contradictions, and a multiplicity of tendencies. The popular, peasant, and indigenous organisations – which

contributed through their mobilizations to the election of these governments and are now disappointed with their policies – are now challenged to identify these tendencies and to look for allies in order to strengthen the transformational trends and to stop those that boost monocultural developmentalism. However, total confrontation with these governments, as if they were nothing more than a continuation of the policies and basic orientations of previous governments, can only contribute to reducing the capacity to influence their policies.

Today, the obstacles confronted in the struggle for the rights of the indigenous peoples and the rights of nature are not only found in governments and in public policies. As argued in this paper, the culture of these societies is deeply heterogeneous. In spite of the results of the referenda approving the new constitution, the ideas of *sumak kawsay* and *suma qamaña* (with all their potential as an alternative civilisation) cannot be assumed today to express a common understanding shared by the majority of the inhabitants of these countries. Five centuries of colonialism and three decades of neoliberalism have left deep footprints. The corporate media continues to play a fundamental role in the reproduction of possessive individualism, identifying *Buen Vivir* with US patterns of material consumption.

Many sectors of the excluded population, without access to the basic material conditions necessary for a dignified life, demand development, employment, public health programmes, education, and social security from these governments. Nor are the contradictions between the aspirations of indigenous people and government policies clear-cut and simple. This is particularly the case when the social programmes of these governments reach the bases of the indigenous organisations, improving their everyday lives, and contribute to creating a split between the base and the more politicised and demanding leadership of these organisations in terms of how they view the government. These contradictions and tensions also take place within indigenous peoples and communities. These are also heterogeneous and have been deeply impacted by colonial history. If the leadership of the organisations does not identify these tensions within their own ranks, the door is open for the welfare politics of the governments (even in the case of Venezuela, where these are expressly modernising and colonising policies) to undermine the bases of such organisations.

There are some severe shortcomings, limitations, and even serious setbacks in these processes of change that can be attributed to the inertia of State institutions, and the bureaucratic and political resistance taking place within the State. Added to this is the limited capacity - and at times, lack of political will)- of the leaders of these processes in the difficult tasks of, on the one hand, exploring and linking

the complex relationships between immediate administrative and social demands and, on the other, taking the necessary steps in the direction of productive models beyond extractivism and development.

However, the challenges faced are not only found in the need to build political and social consensus, in the lack of political will of the government, or in the structural limitations that the dominant pattern of accumulation imposes. Severe shortcomings are being confronted, both theoretical and in terms of the type of political and social organisations and instruments of democratic, collective public administration appropriate for the desired transformations. There is much more clarity over what needs to be rejected than over the characteristics of the alternative society.

The criticism of development – as an attempt to reorganise and transform peripheral societies in the capitalist-colonial-world-system along the path taken by metropolitan societies – has been made with rigour and depth (Escobar 2007). There are multiple community, local and regional experiences that illustrate that there are ways to live and produce and relate to ‘nature’ that are ‘actually existing’ alternatives to development. However, there is little experience - or theoretical and conceptual elaboration - with regard to the public policies required to deal with the contradictions faced in the process of building alternatives to developmentalism and extractivism. There is a lack of concrete policy proposals of transition that are politically feasible in the short term, and which are capable of leading these societies from development/extractivism to ‘beyond development’. These cannot be invented, they can only arise from multiple, diverse, collective experiences. The various government Ministries, and the so-called ‘development plans’, even if they are called ‘plans for living well’ (SENPLADES 2009), are not the most appropriate instruments for this kind of collective innovation. Their planning and governing tools are not neutral. They are the product of a type of state conceived after the the Second World War in order to ‘develop’ the so-called Third World, according to the monocultural patterns of the West. It is not possible to centrally ‘plan’ what necessarily would have to be an open process of plural and democratic experimentation based on the acknowledgement of the structural heterogeneity of these societies, and on the fact that the old assurances about the characteristics of the society of the future have ceased to exist. The alternative society cannot be technocratically designed or budgeted.

There is much at stake in these processes, not only for Latin America, but in terms of the possibility of advancing alternatives to the predatory logic that is undermining the foundations of life in the planet. In spite of their profound contradictions, these Latin American processes⁴ are where it is possible to the

find the most vigorous alternatives to the pattern of civilisation in crisis. The reversal of these processes would constitute a serious regression for anti-capitalist struggles throughout the world.

Translation by Aida Nelson and Stuart E. Nelson

Notes

1. When I speak of monocultural colonial states, I mean the Latin American states that both during colonial and republican times have colonised these profoundly heterogeneous societies (different peoples, languages, modes of relating to 'nature', etc.). These have – with varying levels of success – attempted to impose a colonial monoculture: one valid form of knowledge, one language, unique forms of property, a unitary legal system, an official religion, a single way of belonging, inclusion and participation (unique model of citizenship).
2. The concept of historical structural heterogeneity was formulated by Aníbal Quijano as part of his critique of Eurocentric and colonial patterns of knowledge that remain hegemonic in contemporary social sciences. With this category, he intends to dismantle the binary categories that presuppose a certain internal homogeneity of each of the parts: primitive/civilised; traditional/modern; oriental/western. According to Quijano, historical, structural heterogeneity is a feature of "all the realms of social existence". There are no homogeneous societies. "That which is really notable in the whole of societal structure is that elements, experiences and products, historically interrupted, varying, distant and heterogeneous, are able to join together in spite of their inconsistencies and their conflicts, in the common framework that binds them in a joint structure." Given its colonial historical experience, it is impossible to understand Latin American societies without a recognition of this historical structural heterogeneity, especially those countries in which the indigenous presence and slavery have been more pronounced (Quijano 2000, translation AN/SN).
3. In spite of the fact that Correa's government had kept high levels of backing in opinion polls, there has been a deep break with the major indigenous and environmental organisations. Evidence of the extremes that this confrontation has reached is the Manifesto of the Conference of Ecuador's Social Movements for Democracy and Life in August 2011, signed by a large number of indigenous, peasant, trade-union and women's organisations of the whole country, in which it is alleged that "Correa's project represents an authoritative and corrupt model of capitalist modernisation" (ABONG 2011).
4. Throughout the paper, references to the 'processes of change' in the three cases analysed

always refer to the societal processes of transformation, not only to the government's project. Thus the continuation and/or deepening of the processes of transformation does not necessarily mean the continuation of the current heads of state or even of their political parties.

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The Role of the State and of Public Policies in Transformation Processes¹

Ulrich Brand²

In Latin America and elsewhere debates and actions addressing possible alternatives to neoliberal and neocolonial policies often assume that a state led by a progressive government can change cultural and socio-economic practices with adequate public policies. These practices are understood to originate in the proposals and struggles that arise in society, but often only the state is seen to be capable of providing continuity to the changing relationships of forces; in Gramsci's words, creating "hegemony, with armed force".

This article aims primarily to contribute to the debate in Latin America, developing a theoretical framework and some hypotheses – both of course produced in Europe and hence to some extent Eurocentric – to understand the difficulties and constraints encountered in the transformation of the state itself and in the development of public policy for achieving far-reaching social change. It begins with a conceptual distinction which might be useful for understanding current circumstances in Latin American and the world, and will go on to develop a historical-materialist theoretical framework, in the tradition of critical theory, in which the state is understood as a social relation. It will end by briefly introducing the concept of the "internationalisation of the state" in order to understand certain dynamics that affect processes of change, and which take place *within and beyond* the national state.

Transition or transformation

I would like to introduce a conceptual distinction important for understanding what we mean when we talk about public policies. When we refer to social and political change, we often use the terms "transition" or "transformation" with no distinction. However, in current debates, *transition* is sometimes understood as a series of strategies and eventually processes of social and political change orchestrated mainly through public policies. This generally involves the creation of a new legal framework which is provided with the necessary funds and identifies the problems in order to establish new political institutions (or redirect existing ones), with the purpose of promoting the changes desired. The problems addressed tend to be the result of the ineffectiveness of the very public policies that are to be changed.

The concept of *transformation*, however, does not focus only on public policies and their structures, but is geared to more comprehensive and profound social change, in various spheres of social life and with various strategies (cf. Geels, 2010, Brand 2012, Brand/Brunnengräber et al. 2013). The fundamental questions here are: which are the players and institutions, the practices and structures, the problems and social relations that must change? How can they be changed through public policy, and with what kind of public policy? What other strategies might be necessary for achieving this?

In the current debate about alternatives, whether in Latin America, Europe or elsewhere, it is the concept of *transition* which prevails. A good example of this are the recent debates over the “Green New Deal” or the “Green Economy”, presented as a solution to the problems of predatory capitalism. These debates are reflected in the documents written for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in June 2012 (see UNEP, 2009, 2011; European Commission, 2011; for a critical view see also “The tale of the Green Economy”, ALAI, 2011, Salleh, 2013). Most of those who join the debate assume that just with an adequate policy framework, a change of direction towards green growth and a green economy, innovations and the creation of “green” jobs, all the grave environmental problems afflicting the planet will be solved, and at the same time create a win-win situation for companies, employees and nature.

However, it is currently far from certain that the political strategies the green economy proposes will in effect promote a greening of capitalism and how. It is also worth asking what this renewed capitalism would look like. Does it signify partial change not only to a sustainable energy system but also from a centralised to a decentralised energy base, or rather one under the control of the powerful transnational companies? Would it lead to more use of agrofuels, which in the end may foster an even more intense predatory extractivism in many countries? Or will it result in the opposite of a green economy, an intensification of the use of fossil fuels with all their geopolitical and geoeconomic implications?

As the strategies for a green economy mainly focus on public policies in the sense of transition, they do not question the “imperial mode of living” in the centres of capitalism, which depends on and exhausts resources and labour in other parts of the world (Brand/Wissen, 2012). Neither do they question gender or ethnic oppression, which cuts across all class structures. Despite the crisis, the imperial mode of living is still hegemonic in the capitalist centres (and possibly within the middle and upper classes in other societies).

The important point here is that the current debates about the green economy

do not take into account that the previous great transition embarked on, termed sustainable development and launched during the first Rio conference in 1992, has failed. It failed because it underestimated the multiple political, cultural and socio-economic factors which could not be addressed with sustainability policies. A thoroughgoing transformation cannot be reduced to public policy without first asking if – and how – social structures can be changed. Indeed and despite the more or less relative autonomous character of state, public policies are usually an expression of these structures.

The state as a social relation

For a better understanding of the structures that can stand in the way of a profound transformation, the state needs to be understood as a *social relation*, in the tradition of Nicos Poulantzas; but also with reference to Michel Foucault (Poulantzas, 1980; Foucault, 2006; Jessop, 1985; Aronowitz and Bratsis, 2006; Brand and Görg, 2008).³ Basically it is a matter of looking at society as a series of hegemonic social relations – which are not all exclusively capitalist – and as everyday practices that are actively or passively accepted and which are based on relations of power and domination. A critical theory of the state should begin with an analysis of society, not of the state.

The main function of the capitalist state –classist, patriarchal, racist, imperial and post-colonial – is to consolidate the dominant societal relations and give them a certain continuity, although it allows for measured support for moves towards convenient new constellations. Political, cultural and socio-economic reproduction thus functions by taking advantage of conflicts and crises, transforming them into opportunities. A further function of the state – which we can observe currently in Europe quite well – is to intervene in crises, usually in favour of the dominant forces. State apparatuses develop their own ways of working, not independently from society, but neither merely as an instrument of the dominant forces. Historical struggles and developments are inscribed within the state, its legal and material constitution, its internal rules and policies, its modes, priorities and decision-making. Bureaucracies have their own means, incentives and rationale, and have a strong interest in ensuring their own continued existence. The state structure and functioning is selective and usually the social forces consider this selective character in their strategies. Bob Jessop calls this, referring to the work of Nicos Poulantzas, the “strategic selectivity of the state” (see below).

The state is also a battlefield, structured in a particular way, where the different

social and political forces compete as they try to promote their own interests, identities and values and to compromise or to weaken others. Each group aims to have its own interests represent the “general interest” – as we see with dominant factions of capital in powerful countries promoting “competitiveness” as the general interest when it is not – in order for it to be fostered by the state. For this reason also subaltern forces and actors are also found within the state, but in an asymmetrical relationship. Those struggles waged at a distance from the state - social movements which hold that they are “anti-political” for example - might also have some influence on power relations and dominant developments within society and hence on the state.

The state is thus a fundamental factor of societal domination, as it makes the rules and to some extent can also bind the powerful to certain conditions. At the same time, however, the state attempts to concentrate legal, police and financial resources, knowledge and recognition, and capacity for action, and by doing so appropriates the power of ordinary people and weak social organisations. The state claims exclusive competence over many social problems and hinders alternative ways of addressing and processing them.

The concept of the state as a social relation cannot only contemplate power relations. It should also consider the generalised discourses now naturalised in the minds of the majority. This aspect is key to understanding gender relations or racism.

What are public policies?

Bearing in mind the brief analyses presented above, public policies are not (only) an instrument for the action of the state, which would act neutrally. They must be understood in relation to:

- the heterogeneous structures within the state itself;
- the heterogeneous structures of society;
- the functions in reproducing the state itself and society.

Clearly, and against most conceptions in political science, public policies are not an “instrument” of the state, but must be understood as an unstable equilibrium, the result of rivalry between different social and political actors, which always correspond to a particular set of circumstances.

Many factors have a bearing on whether public policies can effectively solve the problems they aim to address. This does not depend only on the measures adopted, but also the social and political structures which formulate them. Here I would like to enlarge upon some aspects in order to better conceptualize public policies.

1. Public policies and existing social structures

A question framed by Claus Offe and Gero Lenhardt in 1977 still seems to me to be an important starting point (acknowledging, with reference to the following quote, that societies are not permeated exclusively by class contradictions and that it is not only the private expropriation of capital gain that is in play): “How do (particular) public policies *arise* (...) from the specific problems of economic and class structures that are based on a private valorisation of capital and ‘free’ wage labour and what functions have [these public policies] in this structure?” (1977: 100).

In other words, a first look at public policies considers existing social structures and how these policies are a complex reflection – or, to be more precise, a condensed articulation - of them. For Offe and Lenhardt, the structural problems of capitalism are articulated as: a) the demands of the social actors which need to be, to a certain degree, fulfilled in order to maintain legitimacy and b) the driving imperative to uphold the process of accumulation. Their argument is interesting here, because the claims and demands translate into inter- and intra-organisational tensions within the state, i.e. in the actions of the political parties, bureaucracies and other actors, all trying to address the problems in their own way.

For Latin America today, we could ask a similar question: how is the accumulation process maintained through extractivism? What are the social demands that promote extractivism and the distribution policies for the surplus these produce? And finally, in contrast, what demands are being formulated against extractivism? In addition, we should also study how the state apparatuses process these demands and imperatives and tries to reproduce a certain legitimacy.

Going beyond Offe and Lenhardt, we could also ask how the state organises its knowledge of the problems to be addressed, as a precondition for formulating public policies. Of course, it is the actors themselves who formulate the demands, but there are other mechanisms (such as reports and statistics, secretariats or commissions), which promote a particular kind of knowledge about the problems

and solutions. For an emancipatory perspective, it is important to understand the contradictions, demands and requirements.

2. The state as a social relation

The state is not a neutral stakeholder that acts “above” society, formulating the general will and solving problems, nor is it the instrument of capital or the colonial powers, as is sometimes thought. I think it is more productive to think of the state as a social relation which for centuries has safeguarded the dominant social relations and their more or less dynamic and crisis-driven development. In fact, the state often actively organises the dominant forces (which are also in a competitive relationship, like the bourgeoisie) and disorganises the weaker and dominated forces. In its structures and through public policies, the state “materially condenses” (Poulantzas, 1980) the contradictions of society, it shapes them so that they become viable and is a permanent attempt to prevent the break up of social cohesion. To carry out any emancipatory project, this fact must be considered: that the structure of the state is a power relation, but also a series of apparatuses whose transformation is necessary. This does not mean embracing the state, but it does mean it is necessary to understand it in order to be able to change it profoundly, and to reorganise power relations – or, more precisely: relationships of forces, discourses and practices - through struggles and democratic and learning processes.

3. The state's role in reproducing the capitalist colonial structure

What is striking about the processes of change in Bolivia and Ecuador, with progressive governments, is that they are having great difficulty changing the structure of the state. The countries' social forces must articulate their interests, values and projects within the same capitalist and post-colonial state as ever, and take action using a structure that forces them to submit to its rules ... and this hampers change.

Marx spoke about capitalist social forms like value and money to throw light on some crucial forms of societal reproduction. In their actions, human beings unconsciously reproduce value. This ‘value’ is based on the separation of producers and the means of production, their need to reproduce themselves through wage labour and the need of capitalists to produce a surplus in competitive conditions, dealing with the demands of the wage earners. The form of value is not only a structural condition, it is also a way of seeing society and acting in it – as a wage

earner and as a capitalist. The relationships of domination and exploitation are not explicit at all times, as they are not, for example, when the workers themselves also are concerned for the economic success of “their” company.

The same occurs with the political form, which is strongly – not exclusively – institutionalised within the state. Structurally, the state reproduces important conditions for societal reproduction, and is a way of dealing with the conflicts that arise. This structure reproduces itself however, through a multitude of actions carried out daily by the staff of the state apparatuses, with their own orientation, knowledge and micro-practices, with their rules and resources; by political parties and lobbyists, by associations and many others. It reproduces and legitimises itself with the support of civil society and the media, where they embrace a specific role for the state in society.

It is important to note that the state reproduces inequalities by guaranteeing private property and recognising certain interests before others, even though this bias is not always clearly visible. As noted above, Poulantzas introduced the concept of the “selectivity” of the state: the structuring of a particular state apparatus - its staff, budget and rules - to show how its attention is more geared to certain problems (private property for example, or competitiveness), and to certain actors and interests (those of the dominant classes, men, white people) than to others. This means that public policies are part of a state structure that is classist and patriarchal, imperial and post-colonial, and likely resistant to progressive political change which stands against dominant structures and processes (while the state can promote other interests and policies quite effectively as we know from the neoliberal era).

4. The state and hegemony

The state and its apparatuses are, then, a heterogeneous whole and a material condensation of specific relationships of forces. In Brazil, for example, a political project for land reform and another for the further industrialisation of agriculture coexist. Not only do they contradict each other in many aspects, but their relationship is asymmetrical. This means that different state apparatuses concentrate particular relationships of forces, in which the agrarian bourgeoisie, the urban population, peasants, landless peasants and others come into play. Public policies are part of a process in itself, the aim of which is to formulate and implement “state projects” (like neoliberalism, which despite “slimming down” the state, was and is a state project and implies, to refer to our example, a tendency towards a further industrialisation of agriculture)

that permeate the various apparatuses with their own logic and tasks. A state project does not develop independently of hegemonic projects in a society, or of those imposed from abroad, such as neoliberalism in Latin America). They are projects which are (ultimately) based on the threat – or actual use - of force, but also on negotiated commitments and on consent. For an emancipatory project to arise then, it would be important to formulate and/or identify the hegemonic projects, which are possible, already existing, or in construction. These hegemonic projects can still be emancipatory and can be many at any one time, in a world in which many worlds fit.. State projects – its structures and its public policies – cannot be independent of the projects formulated by society.

For our discussion, it is important to observe therefore that a certain absence of coherence often found in public policy is not a political problem in suggesting that the fundamental actors are not able to reach agreement. *The lack of coherence is an indicator of the lack of hegemony*, in other words, the inability of one power bloc to lead the dominant patterns of the organisation of society. Only when a hegemonic project exists in society can this be translated into one or several state projects. This is an important condition for emancipatory strategies. Under hegemony, i.e. broadly accepted and viable conditions of capitalist development, it is more difficult to formulate alternatives than in a constellation where the dominant project is already contested. This poses different and important questions concerning the current model of resource extractivism and possible alternatives.

Hegemony however does not imply the absence of conflict or debate, nor of domination and power. In my view, hegemony is a particular constellation in which the main actors are adequately represented in the political structures and can reproduce themselves materially, while also reproducing their identities. An emancipatory perspective of hegemony should be much more inclusive than the capitalist hegemony.

5. Public policies and adequate knowledge of society

State officials – and this is clearly visible in the processes of change in Latin America – tend to act as if they had a sufficiently accurate knowledge of the problems, actors and other issues, that public policies address. But their perspective is limited: developing public policy is not merely a technical process. The state has to be organised to get a solid grasp of the problems and the social structures that have to be changed. The neoliberal project looked to neoclassical knowledge and

chose to discover it through the state itself, through private advisers, companies, etc. (Lander, 2006).

Emancipatory public policies are also in charge of organising, very carefully and non-hierarchically, this form of developing knowledge about society; its problems, its demands, interests, values, etc. The danger lies in the state apparatuses continuing to think that they already have enough knowledge about the problems, wishes, interests of society and reasons for social conflicts. This dominant perspective is one of the reasons –apart from any imposed interests and the self-interest of the bureaucracy – why many public policies are not effective. In the end they reproduce an authoritarian political attitude and a view that separates the state from society.

The internationalisation of the state

One aspect which seems to me to be greatly underestimated in the debates in the Andean region and in political practices, is the fact that not only the economy but also the state are internationalised. In other words, the demands of the world market, such as extractivism, are *written into* state structures and public policies. Furthermore, international political structures also have the character of a state (Brand and Görg, 2008).

The anti-neoliberal policies of the progressive Latin American governments reconstitute a certain “relative autonomy” of the state, which for example strengthens its economic base through tax collection. Formally, this occurs at the national level. So while social forces and neoliberal economic and political thinking may change certain economic and social relations and certain ways of thinking, progressive distributive policies are based ultimately on a certain integration into the world market. This means that the intensification of extractivism is profoundly inscribed into the structures of the state itself and even, end up providing greater room for political manoeuvring and greater legitimacy to the progressive governments in question.

What I want to emphasise here regarding public policy is that the internationalised state is reproducing this same model; in other words, it is fostering the conditions for the commodification and industrialisation of nature on various scales (on the international scale, the actors are the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the UN Framework Agreement on Climate Change, etc.).

The political consequence is that for an emancipatory project to prosper, we

need alternative public policies both on the national and international scale, simultaneously. And if the state is a social relation, we need to work at the same time on profound changes in cultural and socio-economic relations, modes of production and of living, societal discourses and power relations or relationship of forces, respectively. We need experienced orientations about the meaning of *Buen Vivir* and about what is “rational” and “plausible”. This opens up an enormous array of fields of struggle which must be faced for the transformation of societies that go far beyond the promise of a transition achieved through public policies.

Notes

1. This text results from a lecture given in Quito in April 2011. Therefore, references are scarce.
2. Chair of International Politics at the University of Vienna. Brand works on critical and especially state and governance theory, global political economy, resource and environmental politics, and on critiques of neoliberal globalisation. He was a member of the “Growth, Well-Being, Quality of Life” Expert Commission of the German parliament (January 2011-April 2013), is a member of Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and on the Scientific Council of Attac Germany.
3. Again, for the purpose of the lecture in Quito I referred to theoretical debates in Europe and acknowledged that they might contribute some elements for understanding aspects of actual problems of transformation in Latin America. I did not want to deny the rich debate on the state and heterogeneous societies in Latin America.

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Resource Extractivism and Alternatives: Latin American Perspectives on Development ¹

Maristella Svampa

Even when these nations try to break free from their colonial heritage, that is, their dependence on the export of primary products, through the implementation of development plans directed at diversifying their economies, they generally need foreign currency to achieve this. But they can only access foreign currency by exporting primary products, which again increases their dependence on exports. Paradoxically, by trying to exploit their comparative advantages, these countries that are exporters of natural assets, are frequently reassuming their colonial role as exporters of primary products- a role now redefined in terms of the neoliberal rationality of globalising capitalism. For them, neocolonialism is the next step on from post-colonialism. (Coronil 2002)

Transition into the ‘Commodities Consensus’ and the change in the extractive economy

Over the last decade Latin America has switched from the Washington Consensus with its focus on finance to the Commodities Consensus based on the large-scale export of primary products. Although the exploitation and export of natural assets is by no means a new activity in the region, increasing growth was evident in this area towards the end of the 20th Century. Against the backdrop of a changing system of accumulation, the expansion of projects geared towards monitoring, extracting and exporting natural assets without (greater) added value intensified. What we are therefore referring to here as the ‘Commodities Consensus’ is the beginning of a new economic and political order sustained by the boom in international prices for raw materials and consumer goods, which are increasingly demanded by industrialised and emerging countries.

This new economic cycle is characterised by extraordinary profitability and the high growth rates of Latin American economies. According to CEPAL (2011a: 65), “in spite of recent trends to stabilise prices, increases during the first half of the year were so great that a significant improvement in exchange terms in Latin America is expected.” The majority of the region’s exported commodities grew exponentially during the last few months of 2010 and the beginning of 2011. Food prices reached an all time high in April 2011 (maize,

soya and wheat). Prices for metals and minerals too were above the maximums registered before the crisis of 2008. CEPAL data projected a 4.7% growth in GDP for 2011 compared to the 6% achieved in 2010 (see CEPAL 2011a; Bárcena 2011). Thus, even within the context of an international economic and financial crisis that heralds great uncertainty and volatility in the markets, Latin America will continue on a positive track.

Nonetheless, and in despite the promise of further economic growth, which cannot be valued highly enough after decades of economic austerity and structural adjustments, the current economic model displays numerous structural fissures. On the one hand, compared to the 1980s, the demand for raw materials and consumer goods has led Latin American economies to rapidly become providers of primary products. An earlier report by CEPAL demonstrated this trend. The figures for 2009 showed an increase compared to the year before. In the Andean Community the percentage of primary products exported went from 81% in 2008 to 82.3% in 2009. This growth was even greater in the MERCOSUR, rising from 59.8% to 63.1% (CEPAL 2010). As Gudynas (2009) showed, Bolivia leads this process of *re-primarisation* (92.9% of Bolivia's exports are primary products), but this dynamic even affects a country like Brazil. During Lula da Silva's two successive presidencies, the share of primary products in exports rose from 48.5% in 2003 to 60.9% in 2009.

It is also worth mentioning that this process of re-primarisation is accompanied by a loss of food sovereignty, which seems to be linked as much to the large-scale export of food as to the end purpose of this food. The growing demand for these products is increasingly geared towards livestock feed or biofuel production. This is because other energy sources are becoming more expensive and also because of the adverse climatic conditions in other countries.

In terms of the logic of accumulation, the new Commodities Consensus adds to the dynamic of dispossession of land, resources and territories whilst simultaneously creating new forms of dependency and domination. It is no coincidence that a large number of critical Latin American authors believe the result of these processes will be the consolidation of a model of development based on an extractive economy. Inherent to such an economy is a type of accumulation based on an over-exploitation of – largely non-renewable – natural resources as well as the expansion of frontiers to territories formerly considered 'unproductive'. This definition of an economy based on extraction is not limited to activities normally falling into this category (mining and oil), but also includes other sectors such as agribusiness or the production of biofuels. This is due to the fact that they consolidate a model that tends to follow a monoculture, the

destruction of biodiversity, a concentration of landownership and a destructive re-configuration of vast territories.

In addition, it includes the transport infrastructure projects (waterways, harbours, bi-oceanic corridors, and so on), energy projects (large hydro dams) and communication infrastructure projects planned by IIRSA, the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (*Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana*), a programme various South American governments agreed upon in the year 2000 with the central goal of facilitating the extraction and export of products to their destination points.

Another of the current extractive economic model's traits – consolidated under the Commodities Consensus – is the large scale of the projects. This can be seen in the magnitude of capital investments (in fact these projects are more capital- than labour-intensive), the types of players involved (large transnational corporations) and the major impact and risks these projects pose for social, economic and environmental issues in the territories where they are executed.

These projects usually lead to the consolidation of export enclaves with little or no connection to local chains of production. They create strong social and regional fragmentations and configure socio-productive spheres dependent on the international market and the volatility of the prices on this market (Gudynas 2009; Colectivo Voces de Alerta 2011). Lastly, the large scale of such projects not only challenges the existing economic and social structures; it also curtails democracy in the sense that the population has no say in the development of projects. This generates all kinds of social conflict, divisions in society and a spiral of criminalisation of resistance which will undoubtedly open the door to a new and dangerous chapter of human rights violations.

Talking of a 'consensus' that it does not just invoke an economic order. It also consolidates a system of domination. This consensus is different to that which existed in the 1990s because it refers less to the emergence of a single dominant discourse that downplays the role of ideologies or celebrates neoliberalism as the unrivalled goal of our times; rather, it points more to a series of ambivalences and paradoxes that mark the coexistence and interweaving of neoliberal ideology and new progressive development.

The Commodities Consensus can therefore be understood in terms of a series of ruptures as much as that of continuities from the prior period. As already occurred during the Washington Consensus phase, the Commodities Consensus also establishes rules that imply the acceptance of new asymmetric environmental

and political relations and inequalities by Latin American countries in the new geopolitical order. It helps to stress the links between one period and the next, because the transformations suffered by the state and the policy of privatising public goods during the 1990s effectively established the normative and legal basis for the extractive economy. They guaranteed 'legal security' for the invested capital and high profitability for companies that in general terms will persist – notwithstanding specific variations – in the commodities era.

Nevertheless, there are significant elements of differentiation and rupture. We must not forget that in the 1990s, the Washington Consensus put finance at the top of the agenda, bringing with it a policy of important structural adjustments and privatisations that ended up redefining the state as simply a mediating, regulatory agent. The system also brought about a homogenisation of politics in the region, characterised by the identification with or great proximity to neoliberal models. At present, the Commodities Consensus focuses on the implementation of large-scale, export-oriented extractive projects by establishing the role of the state and its relation to society in various ways. This enables the establishment and co-existence of progressive governments that question the neoliberal consensus and other governments that continue a conservative political agenda within the neoliberal framework. Whereas the former show evidence of a change in political language and ways of intervening in society, while following heterodox economic policies (Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil and others), the countries in the latter group continue along an orthodox economic route (Mexico, Colombia, Peru).

Consequently, from a political perspective, the Commodities Consensus is a sphere of changing power constellations that allows for a kind of dialectical progress that combines the aforementioned continuities and ruptures in a new 'post-neoliberal' context; however, this does not mean that it supersedes so-called neoliberalism. As a result, this context confronts us with a series of new theoretical and practical challenges. These encompass various spheres, which are at once economic, social, and ecological while also political and civilisational.

Progressive governments and fractures in critical thinking

One of the characteristic traits of the Commodities Consensus is that it is accompanied by an explosion of socio-environmental conflicts linked to the disputes over land and common goods. It is therefore no coincidence that Latin America has experienced innumerable struggles spurred by socio-

environmental conflicts that involve new and interesting political and theoretical challenges and also create strong tensions and ruptures within critical Latin American thinking.

What Enrique Leff (2006) referred to as the 'process of environmentalisation of struggles', is now, without doubt, a central aspect that is creating new turns, junctions, demands for articulation and shifts in the field of Latin American intellectual thought. And this in turn within different disciplines and knowledge systems such as sociology and critical philosophy, political ecology, cultural studies, environmental studies, social economy, feminism, indigenous studies and new Latin American constitutionalism among others.

It is certainly important that such knowledge systems and critical disciplines gain nourishment not only from historically cosmopolitan traditions – feeding off and invoking the most varied schools and currents of critical western modernity – but that they also build on other, formerly undervalued or epistemologically negated traditions, especially those related to local knowledge systems and the indigenous world view.

This recent 'ecology of knowledge systems' as Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) has coined it, also includes the recovery of certain older themes and debates that extended across the history of social sciences and humanities in Latin America. As is well-known, these themes and debates have typically been characterised by a lack of articulation, which is a factor that worked against their recognition within the continent and internationally. In this sense the extractive economic model and the current socio-environmental struggles have helped resurface a set of debates that cross critical Latin American thinking on concepts of progress, views on nature, the role of indigenous peoples in the construction of national and continental identities, as well as matters surrounding the persistence of national popular identities, debates that seem as belligerent and radical as perhaps never before.

These debates and shifts in positions have brought about a fracture within the field of critical thinking. Effectively, and in contrast to the 1990s, when the continent appeared re-formatted by the single neoliberal model, the new century is marked less by a unique discourse than by an ensemble of tensions and contradictions that are hard to integrate and crystallising in a set of ideological positions that are, it appears, increasingly antagonistic.

Schematically and in general we could say that there are currently three discourses or positions on development. Firstly there is liberal neodevelopmentalism, then

progressive neodevelopmentalism and lastly the post-developmental perspective. We will discuss these three positions with reference to some national cases.

Liberal neodevelopmentalism

Even though the Washington Consensus is being questioned, the liberal or neoliberal discourse is far from defeated. In essence, the basic orientations of this position have not changed, but faced with the Commodities Consensus they have been updated to a certain degree. Two decades after it was ousted, we are therefore witnessing the strong return of developmentalism as the overarching homogenising discourse that resurfaces as a word and a concept full of promises related to growth, productivity and modernisation. However, this time it surfaces in relation to the development of ‘mega’ extractive projects and not to an ideology of industrialisation. In addition, the neoliberal discourse continues to equally emphasise the idea of a state subordinate to the market and above all to the now supranational regulatory institutions (that is, a *meta regulatory state*). Nature, in spite of the new ecological framework established by the environmental criticisms of the last two decades, continues to be seen as a ‘resource’ or as inexhaustible ‘capital’.

However, a new element of the Commodities Consensus is the combination of elements of neoliberal discourse with a global liberal discourse that seeks to neutralise criticism. By this we mean for example the concept of sustainable development, associated with a ‘diluted’ idea of sustainability (Gudynas 2011) that implies shifting the limits proposed by environmentalists. This ‘diluted’ vision promotes an eco-efficient position towards sustainability that confirms the idea of nature as capital (linked now to over-exploitation and the expansion of areas where such exploitation takes place) whilst looking for ‘clean’ solutions – supposedly through new technologies – to any ‘problems’ (Martinez Alier 2005).

A second axis of the neoliberal discourse is the concept of corporate social responsibility. The concept was promoted by the large transnational corporations and achieved institutional status under the Global Compact in 2000. It is based on the recognition of two factors: firstly that corporations are the primary subjects of the globalised economies and secondly that they themselves must deal with the conflicts with local populations relating to the social, economic and ecological impacts and risks created by their economic activities.

Corporate social responsibility is connected to the concept of governance as a micro-political conflict resolution device between multiple actors in the context

of a consciously complex society (Svampa 2008, 2011a). Not only does this framework promote the belief of a symmetrical relation between those involved, but it also presents the different levels of the state as another participant. Added to this are other players – specialists, journalists and symbolic mediators among others – that contribute to the process of ‘social discursive production’ (Antonelli 2009) aimed at gaining ‘social permission’ by convincing and disrupting communities.

In short, the combination of the three axes – sustainable development, corporate social responsibility and governance – configures the shared framework of the dominant discourse which aims to legitimise extractive economic projects. At the same time it develops their local acceptance through a powerful mechanism of bio-political control of the population.

Of course, from a political point of view, the neoliberal vision can be very brutal and direct, as happens in countries with a strongly militarised or war-faring neoliberalism (Seoane et al. 2006) such as Peru, Colombia and increasingly also, Mexico. In Peru’s case this position was illustrated by former President Alan García, who in October 2007 published an article in the conservative newspaper *El Comercio* of Lima with the title ‘The syndrome of the gardener’s dog’ (*El síndrome del perro del hortelano*) that crudely and brutally anticipated his policies for the Amazonas region and the resources to be found there: There are millions of idle hectares for forestry; millions more hectares not farmed by the communities and that will never be farmed, as well as hundreds of mineral deposits that cannot be exploited and millions of hectares of ocean that will never be used for mariculture and production. The rivers flowing down both sides of the Andean mountains are worth a fortune but are draining into the sea without producing electric energy. (García 2007)

The idea of the gardener’s dog began to materialise in December 2007 when Congress granted Alan García legislative powers to establish norms with powers equal to laws that would ‘facilitate’ the implementation of the free trade agreement with the United States. In June 2008, the executive passed around 100 legislative decrees, among them the 11 laws that affected the Peruvian Amazon region. These legislative decrees, baptised ‘the law of the jungle’ by indigenous groups and environmental NGOs, were criticised as unconstitutional from various sides.

This came to a head in the repression in Bagua in June 2009 that cost the lives of over 30 people from the Amazonas region, as well as 10 police officers and resulted in the disappearance of an unknown number of people. This, combined with the protests that ensued, forced García’s government not only to repeal the decrees

that directly affected the people's right to be consulted, but also brought attention to the peoples of the Amazonas region who historically had been excluded. The Peruvian Amazon is home to 11% of the Peruvian population and 66 different peoples, 14 of which have no contact with western culture.

Most recently, in 2011, and in spite of the expectations generated by the election of Ollanta Humala as President of Peru, the government has again turned to militarist solutions to the conflicts in the Cajamarca region where people are resisting a mega mining project. This confirms the tendency to return to the classical approach of 'order and investment' associated with this neoliberal project.

The blind spots of progressive neodevelopmentalism

Neodevelopmental progressivism and neodevelopmental liberalism overlap and share a common framework in certain areas but there are also important differences, especially with regard to the role of the state and spheres of democratisation. One must stress that, concerning the differences, the rise of progressive and left-wing governments is intrinsically linked to the cycle of anti-neoliberal struggles in recent decades. The protagonists of these struggles were different social movements and peasant-indigenous organisations. The era that began at the very beginning of the 21st century offers a new framework for deciphering the relationship between society, politics and the economy, a new public agenda and politics related to the expansion of rights and the need to reduce poverty.

In countries, such as Bolivia and Ecuador, concepts including decolonisation, the plurinational state, autonomy, *Buen Vivir* (a term in Spanish that can be translated as "living well," but with a distinctive meaning in the Latin American and particularly indigenous context) and the 'rights of nature' marked the new constitutional agenda within the framework of strong participatory processes. At the same time they set the foundations for the ecological and territorial turn of today's social and environmental struggles (Svampa 2011b). Still, over the last 10 years and with the consolidation of these regimes, other concerns have become more central. Even though the platforms for political action of many progressive or centre-left governments appear to be marked equally by an epic discourse as well as by actions leading to tensions and antagonisms (frequently in a nationalistic and popular tone) that stress and exaggerate the diversion from the neoliberal model, these governments nonetheless promote a productivist concept of nature and nature's 'comparative benefits', a concept today nurtured by the high prices of commodities.

Without doubt this vision is connected to what the Bolivian sociologist René Zavaletta called the ‘myth of profit’ nearly 25 years ago. Zavaletta (2009 [1986]: 29-46) argued that this myth was based on the idea that the subcontinent is “the locus par excellence of natural resources”. By this, the Bolivian author made reference to the myth of El Dorado, “that every Latin American bears in his soul”; the idea of a sudden discovery (of a resource or natural good) which without doubt creates a profit, but a profit which is “magical” and “which in most cases has not been used in a balanced fashion.” While the author’s focus on magical profits are of little relevance to today’s environmental concerns the author’s obsession on the control of this profit (its conversion into “material for the state”) is very relevant.

The current return of the myth of magical profit in the guise of a new developmental illusion related to the abundance of natural resources also makes Zavaletta an important reference. The theme of abundance has been developed by several Latin American authors, among them Fernando Coronil (2002) who wrote about ‘the magical state’ (*El estado mágico*) in Venezuela, linking it to the profit mentality and the ‘culture of the miracle’. In the same vein, Alberto Acosta and Jürgen Schuldt (referring to what is known as the ‘Dutch disease’) also reflected on the ‘curse of abundance’: There are countries which “are poor because they are rich in natural resources” these two authors confirmed (Schuldt/Acosta 2009: 11; Acosta 2009), and then went on to analyse the connection between the paradigm of the extractive economy and the population’s increasing poverty, rising inequality, the distortion of the productive structure and the depredation of natural resources.

Consequently, in the framework of a new cycle of accumulation, progressive governments seem to have resurrected this founding and rudimentary myth, which in today’s context nurtures the *developmental illusion*, expressed in the idea that, thanks to current economic opportunities (the rise of prices for raw materials and increasing demand, especially from Asia), catching up with industrialised countries can be achieved *quickly*, as can the promised but never realised development of these societies.

In the shorter term the developmental illusion is related to the experience of crisis, that is, the neoliberal legacy of the 1990s associated with the rise of inequalities and poverty and the possibility to now escape the consequences of the international crisis thanks to comparative advantages. The fiscal surplus and the high annual growth rates of Latin American countries are to a large extent based on the export of primary products and form the foundations for a triumphalist discourse of a ‘specifically Latin American pathway’ that alludes to political, social and economic ruptures. For example, the end of the ‘long

neoliberal night' (as the Ecuadorian President Raphael Correa put it) has its political and economic correlate, which is linked to the great crisis at the turn of the 21st century (unemployment, fewer opportunities, migration). This theme has also been commonplace in the discourse of the Kirchners in Argentina, who look to oppose today's economic and social indicators with the figures of the neoliberal years (the 1990s neoliberal cycle under Carlos Menem) and of course with the figures during the great crisis in Argentina from 2001 to 2002, when the system that pegged the Peso to the Dollar broke.

In this sense the case of Bolivia is one of the most emblematic and at the same time most paradoxical Latin American scenarios for the developmental illusion. In fact, the extraordinary rise in prices of commodities, to the extent that the nationalisation of companies translated into a multiplication of the income linked to the export of raw materials, created enormous expectations. At the beginning of the President's second term there was an opening of the economy up to new exploitive projects. After a phase of struggle for hegemony (which ended with the defeat of the so-called half-moon oligarchy in 2008), a new phase began in 2010, characterised by the consolidation of a new hegemonic project. Consequently, the Bolivian government has now intensified its pro-industrialisation discourse (the 'great industrial leap' as Vice-President Alvaro García Linera called it), which focusses on a series of strategic megaprojects based on the expansion of extractive industries: participation in the first steps of lithium exploitation, expansion of mega open-pit mining operations of large multinational corporations, construction of roads and large hydroelectric dams in the context of IIRSA, and other projects.

In more general terms this developmental illusion so deeply rooted in the Latin American political imaginary, appears related to the actions of the state (as the producer and as far as globalisation allows, as a regulator) and to a whole set of social policies geared towards the most vulnerable sectors of society and financed through the profits from extractive projects.

It is undoubtedly true that in a context where neoliberalism is no longer seen as natural, but called into question, and this questioning is nurtured by the emerging new progressive governments, the nation state has recovered institutional tools and options by becoming an economically relevant player and, in certain cases, an agent of redistribution.

Nonetheless, in the framework of critical state theories the tendency is clearly against the state becoming a 'mega player' again. As mentioned previously, the return to the regulatory state takes place within a sphere of variable geometries,

that is, in a setting of multiple stakeholders (increasing complexity of civil society illustrated by social movements, NGOs and other stakeholders), yet closely linked to private multinational capitals, whose importance in each of the national economies is becoming ever greater.

One must not forget that the state's regained distributive functions are rooted in a new social fabric (a worker and peasant matrix with strong plebeian elements), itself a product of the transformations of the neoliberal years. They also frequently – openly or secretly – continue with the compensatory social policies applied in the 1990s through the models of the World Bank. Moreover, beyond the official industrialist rhetoric of the governments, the reality is that ongoing economic changes have tended to deepen the primary extractive model.

In intellectual terms it is necessary to remember that, maybe more than in other regions, the left in Latin America – whether in its anti-capitalist or its national-populist guise – has strongly resisted ecological currents that critique the productivist paradigm. Not only did such criticisms question some pillars of Marxist theory, a clear heir of modernity, but the ecological problem was also seen by a large part of the Latin American left (with a few notable exceptions) as a concern imported from the agendas of rich countries. It was seen as an agenda that would deepen inequalities between industrialised countries and those on the road to (or aspiring to) industrial development.

From this perspective Latin American progressivism, rooted in the developmental tradition, today shares a common platform with neoliberal discourse concerning the advantages of the Commodities Consensus. In the most extreme cases, it shares and promotes the productive 'Development/Corporate Social Responsibility/Governance' triad as the dynamic axis of neodevelopmental discourse. Furthermore, both positions promote extractive mega projects with the argument it will create employment, thereby creating hopes for jobs among the population that are hardly ever fulfilled because these projects are typically capital- and not labour-intensive: Large-scale mining projects are among the most capital-intensive economic activities. For every million dollars invested only 0.5 to 2 direct jobs are created. The more capital-intensive an activity is, the fewer employment opportunities it will create and the lower the share of the total added value created by workers through their work they receive in the form of salaries: the largest profit goes to capital. The metal mining industry directly employs 2.75 million people globally, which is 0.09% of the total number of jobs globally. Small-scale mining employs about 13 million people. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), one third of miners in the 25 most important mining countries lost their jobs

between 1995 and 2000. This is mainly due to technology replacing people. (Colectivo Voces de Alerta 2011: 27)

Moreover, both positions share the idea of the inexorable 'destiny' of Latin America as 'nature exporting societies' (Coronil 2002) within the framework of the new international division of labour and in the name of comparative advantage.

Lastly, both progressive and neoliberal language also share the orientation towards an economy that adapts to the different cycles and booms and busts of accumulation. This confirmation of a divided global economy - split into those that produce primary commodities in and those that manufacture goods and services - is one of the unresolved continuities at the core of both the Washington Consensus and the Commodities Consensus. It suggests that progressive governments have accepted the international division that has marked the continent since colonial times in spite of their emphatic discursive rhetoric that demands economic autonomy and postulate the establishment of a political Latin American sphere.

To conclude, while the Commodities Consensus develops a more flexible field of action than the Washington Consensus, it still establishes clear restrictions on the actions of the state (which already is no longer seen as a major player) and even deeper restrictions on calls for democratisation by communities and villages affected by the large extractive projects.

Post-developmentalism and criticisms of the extractive economy

A third discourse and position opposes the Commodities Consensus, both in its neodevelopmental as well as in its neoliberal guise.

We must not forget that in recent decades the crisis of the idea of development, in its hegemonic form, led to the revision of the paradigm of modernisation. Particularly important is the ecological position that began to become part of the global agenda after the Meadows report *The Limits to Growth* (1972). This ecological position helped question the ruling model for developmentalism whilst sending the countries of the global south clear signals that the model of industrial development was far from a universal blueprint (Mealla 2006).

Since the 1980s, many Latin American authors also critiqued the macro-social, planning and centralist vision of development, calling for an inclusive and participatory concept of development, based on respect for peasants and

indigenous cultures, and strengthening of local and regional economies (Unceta Satrustegui 2009).

The notion of 'sustainable development', which would go on to install itself in the political-ideological debate, was born at that time too. Besides its complexity, it is important to point out that there are two very different sides to the definition and limits of this concept. On the one hand there is a strong position that sees growth as a means and not an end in itself and is centred on the idea of responsibility (to today's and future generations) and respect for the integrity of the natural systems that make life on the planet possible (political ecology, economic ecology, deep ecology and other paradigms). On the other hand there is the diluted position that believes in sustainable development based on technological progress and the efficient use of such technologies. Whilst the strong position is currently upheld by different social organisations, ecologists and critical intellectuals, the diluted position is part of the rhetoric of corporations and is used by government officials from a range of different countries.

More recently, the Colombian author Arturo Escobar (2005) coined the notion of 'post-development', which aims to dismantle the modern category of development as a discourse of those in power. Escobar's goal was to reveal the principal mechanisms of domination (the division between development/underdevelopment; the professionalisation of the problem – that is, by means of 'experts' – and its institutionalisation in a network of regional, national and international organisations. He also showed how modern development concealed other local experiences and local knowledge and practices (the idea of epistemicide as Boaventura de Sousa Santos 2007 would later call it).

Before continuing, it is worth adding that during the 1990s, under the Washington Consensus, the category of development as an overarching narrative associated with the state as a main player disappeared. Now, under the Commodities Consensus we are witnessing its strong return, as much on the political as on the academic agenda, although, as we have seen, this cannot easily be compared to that which existed in other times.² It takes the guise of diluted versions of sustainable development in combination with other concepts like ecological modernisation, corporate social responsibility and governance). The resilience of development as a leading narrative is highly problematic for transformation proposals which need to think through the complexities to transform production and consumption.

With the resurgence of the concept of development, critical thought is reconsidering the notion of 'post-development' and further elements of the strong

sustainability position (in line with indigenous currents of thinking). The post-development perspective formulates a radical critique of the hegemonic version of development as it was reformulated by neoliberalism and progressivism. It also criticises their vision of nature and promotes, as Gudynas (2011) states, a different valuation of nature based on alternative world views (such as indigenous world views, ecological perspectives, eco-communitarian views, eco-feminist positions, anti-colonial positions and the approaches by eco-territorial movements). Such positions demand a different type of ecological rationality, a utopian vantage point from which to rethink the relationship between peoples/societies and nature in the context of the crisis of civilisation.

Still, as we have already pointed out, one of the fundamental critical categories of this position is the notion of the extractive economy. In a recent article, the Marxist economist Bob Jessop (2011) proposes the interaction of four processes to understand the crisis. Firstly, he suggests the global ecological crisis (oil, food and water); secondly, the decline of the United States, the return to a multipolar world and the rise of China; thirdly, the crisis of the global economy in the shadow of neoliberalism and the contradictions and struggles inherent to capitalism; and lastly, the crisis of a system of accumulation led by financial capitalism and its contagious effects.

A focus on extractivism gives us an important vantage point to analyse the multiple crises, because it warns us about the global ecological crisis and the increasing risks of this form of appropriation of nature and the modalities of consumption. Secondly, it warns us about the decline of the United States and the emergence of new extractive powers such as China and India and the consolidation of regional sub-imperialist states such as Brazil. It also warns us about the global economic crisis, to the extent that the current extractive economic model arose from the neoliberal reforms in the 1990s, the normative and legislative framework of which remains in place; and lastly, it is associated with financial capitalism in as far as this defines the prices of commodities.

Furthermore, and as we have already pointed out, the extractive economic model reminds us that a new cycle of abuse of ecological and collective human rights is beginning, even though these rights are protected by national and international norms that also include the rights of indigenous peoples (ILO Convention 169). It is no coincidence then that one of the contested issues is the application of the ILO's Convention 169 that demands the right for indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent. This norm has become an important tool to control/regain territories threatened by the current model of development. This struggle is visible not only in the Andean countries such as Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, but

also in Argentina and affects other human rights too such as freedom of speech and the right to petition. This has led to a dangerous spiral of the criminalisation of and litigation against social demands. From this perspective, the outlook for democracy in Latin America is beginning to look very bleak (and worrying).

Finally, the extractive economic model highlights the crisis of modernity, or, as Arturo Escobar (2005) and Edgardo Lander put it, shows the need to think of alternatives to modernity, or, more specifically, to think from the perspective of colonial difference.

Nevertheless, even though a focus on the extraction-based economy has proved a powerful tool for mobilisation and helped highlight a whole set of defining dimensions of the current crisis, we believe that excessive use of this term to denounce certain situations conspires against its potential for describing and analysing the problem. We risk turning it into a kind of demonising concept, applicable to any situation related to the exploitation of natural goods. This would thus disqualify other potential agents of transformation (like unionised urban populations). More careful use of the term can help us deactivate current myths related to development as well as assist us in building bridges to other sectors of society.

The Postdevelopmental perspective has a strong critique of neodevelopmental progressivist positions for their failure to locate extraction in the current model of accumulation and for minimising the reality of dispossession. Progressive neodevelopmentalists have sought frequently to only counter the 'ecological' criticism of social movements and intellectuals (disqualifying them as 'environmental fundamentalists'), negating other – political, economic, social and civilisational – dimensions that this problem implies.

There are still many countries - particularly in the Andes - where, despite discussions on the risks of the extraction-based economic model and an increasing dynamic of dispossession, the production-oriented vision remains dominant. Ecuador is without doubt the Latin American country where these issues are discussed most seriously. Within the context of a new ecological institutional setting, the theme of *Buen Vivir* is postulated as an alternative to conventional development. By way of example, it should not be forgotten that the new constitution (2008) proclaims the rights of nature, describing nature as a subject with a right to be restored and defended.

In the same vein, through the National Secretary of Planning and Development SENPLADES (*Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo*), the government

prepared the Plan for Living Well 2009–2013 (Plan del Buen Vivir, 2009–2013) that proposes, in addition to a ‘return of the state’, a change in the regime of accumulation from that of an exporter of primary products towards a more local development, centred on life and based on the use of biodiversity, knowledge and tourism.

Yet despite this, the government of Rafael Correa has taken a clearly neodevelopmental path, for instance with its support for mega mining projects that have met with considerable resistance in the country. Another noteworthy contradiction is the current criminalisation of social and environmental struggles as ‘sabotage and terrorism’. Around 170 people have been affected by this, most of them in connection with social and environmental struggles. Correa’s declarations on the ‘childish environmentalism’ of organisations have not helped establish a dialogue in an atmosphere of open conflict between grassroots organisations and the government. This division is reproduced within critical thinking, and the unity that existed during the constituent process of Montecristi (2008) has been lost. We should not forget that when Rafael Correa took office, his cabinet had a developmental and an ecological wing. One of the representatives of the ecological wing was the economist Alberto Acosta, who was president of the Constituent Assembly in Montecristi and is currently one of the intellectuals most critical of the extractive economic regime.

In Bolivia the situation is equally controversial. Obviously, due to the conflict between the government and regional oligarchs, internal differences basically played no role during Evo Morales’ first term. However, during the last two years, internal differences have surfaced with the re-consolidation of the national state. With this consolidation, several strategic laws were passed that limit the right to be consulted and the territorial autonomy of indigenous territories. This is aimed at facilitating extractive projects that include everything from lithium mining to mega opencast mining projects. In this mood of tension, certain indigenous organisations such as CIDOB, the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Eastern Bolivia (*Coordinadora de Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano*) and in some cases CONAMAQ, the National Council of Ayllus and Marcas of the Qollasuyo (*Confederación Nacional de Ayllus y Marcas del Qollasuyo*) have demanded their right to be consulted as established in the ILO convention 169 and have called for respect for their own political structures (as well as the installation of parallel indigenous authorities and the rejection of elections) and demanded coherence between the discourse of the defence of Mother Earth and the practised extractive regime (Svampa 2011a).

One of the turning points that put the extractive model on the agenda in Bolivia

was the counter summit in Cochabamba in April 2010 that paralleled the official Peoples' Summit on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. The official summit, convoked by the Bolivian government, sought to bring together social movements from around the world to work collaboratively on an alternative global agenda for action following failures by governments to act at the UN climate conference in Copenhagen in December 2009. However this openness did not extend to internal national debates on the environment and the expansion of extractivism in Bolivia and Latin America. As a result an autonomous 'Workshop 18' was organised by various organisations to discuss environmental problems within Bolivia (that proceeded without the authorisation of the Bolivian government).

Another key moment was in 2011: TIPNIS, the Indigenous Territory and National Park Isiboro Sécure (*Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécure*), turned into a conflict zone between its inhabitants and the government because of plans to build a road. TIPNIS is a very isolated and protected zone whose autonomy was recognised in the 1990s. The conflict surrounding TIPNIS is of multiple dimensions. The government defended the construction of the road, alleging it would help with the integration of the different communities and would grant them access to healthcare and education and help them market their products. However, it was also true that the road would open the door to numerous extractive projects with negative social and environmental consequences (backed by Brazil and other partners) and that the government was looking to curb the region's autonomy without consulting the affected indigenous population. In this sense, the blindness of the government after the *Gasolinazo* (a controversial hike in gas prices that took place December 2010 that was rapidly reversed after widespread protests)³ means we are faced with a process of construction of hegemony that is hardly pluralistic. Social organisations are not consulted and when they are, the government patronises them. After a march by indigenous inhabitants of TIPNIS to La Paz that was supported by several indigenous and environmental organisations and after a widely denounced repression of the marchers, the administration of Evo Morales initially backed away from its plans, even though the final outcome of the conflict is still unclear. Nevertheless, what occurred in TIPNIS had the merit of restarting the discussion on the construction of hegemony in the more pluralistic framework of 'leading by obeying', which was one of the stated founding principles of Evo Morales' government.

Nevertheless what happened in TIPNIS was to mark a watershed because this conflict revealed the contradictions between an eco-communitarian discourse, protective of nature and in favour of protecting Mother Earth (*Pachamama*) and the reality of the extraction-based political practice of Evo Morales' government.

At the same time, it revealed the deep dispute over how one was going to define decolonisation in Bolivia, creating tensions between the strong position of the state and that of the attempted construction of a plurinational state. The fact that various intellectuals and important civil servants, who had been part of this project of change, left Evo Morales' government, shows the fracture within critical thinking in Bolivia as well. In July 2012 several intellectuals who had been government civil servants published the *Manifiesto for the Renewal of the Process of Change* (*Manifiesto por la Reconducción del proceso de cambio*, see *Coordinadora Plurinacional de la Reconducción* 2011), albeit with a more nationalistic than environmental tone. Vice-president Alvaro García Linera quickly answered this manifesto, calling his former colleagues "resentful" (among other epithets). In the end, the conflict surrounding TIPNIS helped to clarify criticisms of the model for development.

Argentina, with the governments under the Kirchners (Néstor Kirchner 2003–2007, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner 2007–2011, 2011 until today), is firmly on the traditional developmental track, with a discourse that, unlike Andean countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia, leaves little room for other ideas. Of course, there have been several conflicts that have put environmental issues on the public agenda. This has happened, sometimes directly, as was the case in the conflict with Uruguay surrounding the building of a paper mill (leading to a long-standing blockade of the international bridge between the two countries by local activists from the *Asamblea Ambiental de Gualeguaychú* movement between 2005 and 2010). Another such issue was the contamination of the Riachuelo basin and the discussion in Congress regarding a national law for the protection of the glaciers in 2010. Further conflicts, such as the one between agrarian corporations and the federal government on applicable variable export taxes in 2008, showed in more detail the process of dispossession of peasants and indigenous peoples in areas today called marginal, especially in the northern provinces and associated with the production of soya. This latter conflict went beyond the binary schematic of Argentinian politics and helped align a set of intellectuals with the central government, today connected in a group called *Carta Abierta*.

In the context of a strongly polarised political climate that tends to impoverish any debate, intellectuals and the new political youth linked to Kirchnerism tend to use an 'armour-plated' discourse when faced with complex problems such as the models to follow for mining, agribusiness and the policy of concentration of agricultural land. They deny the central government's adherence to the logic of dispossession which is characteristic of certain state policies, underlining, in contrast, the results of social policies and the revitalisation of labour institutions such as collective bargaining. Currently, criticism of the extractive model is

a primary issue for a set of territorial (not only social-environmental) and intellectual movements⁴ linked to autonomy and the independent left. To a lesser degree it is also an issue for the classical left that centres its most important arguments on the dynamic of increasing precariousness inherent to the model of labour relations.

In conclusion, with or without its popular-nationalist side, progressivism continues to understand the problem in developmental terms linked to the ideas of economic growth, modernisation and the expansion of productive forces. In certain cases it does grant to a limited degree, due to the pressure and mobilisation of social organisations, the opening of a political and theoretical debate on the different dimensions and criticisms of development, as has happened in Ecuador and recently in Bolivia. However, progressivism's practice and policies ultimately correspond to a conventional and hegemonic idea of development based on the idea of infinite progress and supposedly inexhaustible natural resources.

Theorising transition and its challenges

We mentioned that post-developmental positions unite a large number of currents with ambitions of decolonisation that aim to dismantle and deactivate arrangements of power, myths and imaginaries which form the basis of the current model of development. Simultaneously they aim to create new concepts for the future and recuperate others from the tradition of critical Latin American thinking, without renouncing either their *mestizo* consciousness or their indigenous past and present. This in turn demands, as so many Latin American intellectuals underline, the inclusion of critical thinking within a regional and global dimension of current processes (see Lander 2000, and others).

There are multiple perspectives that all share the idea of decolonisation. For example, there is an integral environmental perspective that emphasises the idea of *Buen Vivir*; an indigenous, communitarian perspective; an eco-feminist perspective with a focus on the care economy and the struggle against patriarchy; and an eco-territorial position linked to the social movements that have developed a political grammar based on the ideas of environmental justice, common goods, territory, food sovereignty and living well. Within this framework a discussion surrounding the rights of nature has recently begun and these rights have become part of the Ecuadorian constitution.

Categories such as decolonisation, anti-patriarchy, the plurinational state, interculturalism and *Buen Vivir* are general notions and concepts under

construction, which form the backbone of new Latin American thinking in the 21st century. Nevertheless, and in spite of the advances and discussions - especially in Bolivia and Ecuador - , a search for multidimensional strategies and concrete actions to further these general principles and ideas seems urgent.

In this vein, discussions have begun in many Latin American countries on alternatives to the extractive model and the need to work out ideas for a transition from a matrix of multidimensional intervention scenarios. Due to the scale of the extractive model, a basic agreement would require examining responses on a larger scale. We believe that one of the most interesting and thorough proposals has been developed by the Latin American Centre for Social Ecology (CLAES) directed by Eduardo Gudynas (2011) from Uruguay. According to this proposal, the transition will need a set of public policies that will make it possible to consider the link between social and environmental concerns in a different light. It also considers that, faced with the extractive model, a set of 'alternatives' within the framework of conventional development would be insufficient, and that therefore it is necessary to think of and draw up 'alternatives to development'. Lastly, it stresses that this discussion must be analysed at a regional level and within a strategic horizon of change, which indigenous peoples term *Buen Vivir*.

Although these debates have resonated more strongly in Ecuador, it was in Peru that a group of organisations and members of RedGE, the Peruvian network for a balanced Globalisation (*Red peruana por una Globalización con Equidad*), made a breakthrough. Shortly before the presidential elections in 2011, they presented the main political parties with a declaration that had a strong impact. In this declaration they drew up a possible transition to a post-extractive economy based on measures that aim at a sustainable use of land, the strengthening of tools for environmental management, changes to the regulatory framework, the application of the right to be consulted and other important issues. Maybe this idea lacks the radical nature of proposals in other countries such as Bolivia or Ecuador because there is no talk of *Buen Vivir* or the 'plurinational state', but it at least shows the need to think of specific scenarios, a discussion still lacking in countries like Argentina (see RedGE 2011). As the economists Vicente Sotelo and Pedro Francke (2011) showed in their recent book, it is possible to envision a transition through public policy, that is, a scenario that combines economic and ecological reforms. The book presents several possible scenarios and shows that two measures in particular enable a viable transition to a post-extractive economy: firstly, a tax reform for greater revenue collection (higher taxes for extractive projects or a super-tax for particularly high profits) and a moratorium for mining, oil and gas projects that began between 2007 and 2011.

At the same time, it is necessary to analyse successful experiences of development 'from below' at a local and regional level, but not with the idea of mechanically reproducing them, or in terms of simply aggregating them; instead, one should analyse the diversity of these experiences and what makes them different to others. In reality, the Latin American social, communitarian and solidarity-based economy offers a whole range of possibilities that must be explored in order to diversify the existing dominant capitalist economy. This would undoubtedly require the appreciation of the value of other types of economies that in turn demands strategic planning directed at strengthening alternative, local economies (agro-ecology and social economy amongst others) scattered throughout the continent. It is not unusual for governments to seek to hide the possibilities and alternative modes of production in the region through public policies that aggravate the 'crisis' and through extractive projects promoted on the basis of untrustworthy environmental impact studies that claim to minimise the effects of this activity on the local economy. (Colectivo Voces de Alerta 2011). Supporting alternative local economies not only requires the greater participation of ordinary people but also the greater support of the state (see Coraggio 2011).

One major challenge we face is to develop an idea of transformation that configures a 'horizon of desirability' in terms of lifestyles and quality of life. The resilience of the notion of development is largely due to the fact that the patterns of consumption related to the hegemonic model of development permeate the whole population. By this we refer to the cultural imaginary that builds on the conventional idea of development and on what is generally understood as 'quality of life'. The definition of 'a better life' is usually associated with consumption, which for the poorer parts of the population and after so many crises, is becoming possible in the context of the commodities consensus.

On the other hand we must ask ourselves whether we should perhaps change the focus of the discussion. Before asking about the direction we wish to go in, we should perhaps develop a theory of human needs based on certain fundamental questions. We should ask what the minimum requirements are for a decent, and with regard to future generations, reasonably sustainable life. How can we satisfy these needs without hurting ourselves and without damaging our ecosystem? How can we decolonise social needs that translate into new forms of slavery, self-destruction, and destruction of the environment? How can we construct a decolonised consciousness that then becomes a political force for change?

In this sense, and to conclude this article, we would like to mention three approaches that might help us re-consider a theory of requirements. A fundamental approach is the one developed by the economist Manfred Max-Neef. Traditionally, he says,

it has been believed that human needs tend to be infinite and that they constantly change, from one era to the next and from one culture to the next. However, this is not true. The mistake lies in not differentiating clearly between the requirements and the means to satisfy those requirements. “Basic human needs are the same, in all cultures and throughout every historic period. What changes over time and from one culture to the next, is how or by which means these needs are met” (Max-Neef 1993: 50-1).

According to this author, every economic, social and political system adopts its specific forms to satisfy the same fundamental human needs. One of the defining aspects of a culture is its selection of (always culturally constructed) means to meet those needs. Goods are the means by which the individual strengthens the elements required to meet his or her needs. When these goods become an end in themselves, life is at the service of these goods (instead of the other way around). Therefore, in light of the current crisis of civilisation, “the construction of a humanistic economy calls us to rethink the dialectic relation between needs and the means to satisfy those needs and goods” (ibid.).

Secondly, in Latin America and the global south there are numerous examples of social and solidarity-based economies whose social subjects belong to the most excluded sectors (women, indigenous, young people, workers and peasants). We might note here an interesting contribution by Franz Hinkelammert, who has developed criteria for what he calls ‘an economy for life’ order to construct an alternative. (Hinkelammert/Mora 2005). From the perspective of the economy for life the purpose of human work is the production of use values or means for life. The systems of the organisation and social division of work are only considered rational if they allow for the reproduction of life over time. “The most important aspect is the human being as a being with needs and the necessary reproduction of the material conditions for life” (ibid.). When examining the reproduction of external nature and of the human being, it is important to consider “the non-use values, which also condition existence and the possibility to reproduce the system of life. Our perspective must no longer centre on work value, instead we should focus on life value” (ibid.; see also the review of Hinkelammert’s book by Vargas Soler 2008).

Hinkelammert’s interpretation is very close to another perspective, the *ethic of care* advocated by eco-feminists. “By ‘caring work’ we refer to tasks related to human reproduction such as bringing up children, satisfying basic needs, promoting health, emotional support and facilitating participation in society” (Pascual/Yayo Herrero 2010: 3; see also León 2009). This is important, not only because of its criticism of essentialisms, but also because the new variants of eco-

feminism can provide a view of the needs, not from the perspective of deficiencies or human suffering, but instead from one of retrieving a culture of care as a central inspiration for a social and ecologically sustainable society through values such as reciprocity, cooperation and complementarity.

In conclusion, Latin American thinking in the 21st century needs to create a new epistemic system and re-consider existing contributions to develop a theory of human and social needs, not only as a basis for strong sustainability but also as a basis for strong interculturality that incorporates and recognises the traditionally subalternated subjects of our societies.

Translation by Tim Jack

Notes

1. This article is based on discussions during 2011 of the Permanent Working Group for Alternatives to Development (*Grupo Permanente de Trabajo sobre Alternativas al Desarrollo* 2011) supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. Within this framework an initial version of this text was presented for collective discussion in Quito and Brussels in June and July 2011 respectively. Furthermore, a later version was presented during the Latin American Seminar *Derechos de la Naturaleza y Alternativas al extractivismo* (Rights of Nature and Alternatives to the Extractive Economy) that we, as the Collective of Warning Voices (*Colectivo Voces de Alerta* 2011) jointly organised with CLAES, *Jóvenes por la Igualdad* (Youth for Equality) and CEPPAS in Buenos Aires in November 2011.

2. Certainly towards the 1990s, development as an overarching narrative temporarily disappeared off the political and academic agenda, not only in Latin America but in other parts of the world too. This abatement was related to the fact that, within the context of a crisis amongst the left and neoliberalism at its peak, Latin American social sciences – and in particular (political) economy and (political) sociology – which had led social thought for decades reached a significant political and epistemological turning point.

3. This is also the basis for UAC, the Union of Citizen Councils (*Unión de Asambleas Ciudadanas*), consisting of different grassroots organisations against mega mining projects and organisations that question the agribusiness model, of the Frente Darío Santillán as well as human rights organisations like the Peace and Justice Service Serpaj (*Servicio de Paz y Justicia*) directed by Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, and the Colectivo Voces de Alerta that several authors in this publication are members of.

4. At the end of 2010, President Evo Morales announced a rise in the prices of petro and

diesel (of between 57% and 82%) with the aim of ending the cross-border contraband in these products. After a week of intense street protests and even demands for resignation, Morales announced an end to the price hike, admitting that it was a mistake.

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Buen Vivir as a model for state and economy¹

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Since the late 1990s, indigenous groups have been looking at the etymology of the words “development” and “progress” in order to translate them as accurately as possible into their native languages. This is not for the sake of linguistics, but because they seek to understand the incompatibility of two different world views: on the one hand, the policies described as “development” by the state and the international aid community, which have had a negative impact; and on the other, the indigenous “cosmovision” of co-existence with nature as a new view of development. Development project designers’ expectations and those of the target population were clearly incompatible and led to misunderstandings. The words “development” and “progress” had no equivalent in any indigenous language that reflected this Western sense of growth through the possession of material goods.

Several words were suggested as approximations: the Aymara *suma qamaña*, the Quechua *sumak kawsay* and the Guaraní *ñandereco*, although they clearly represented a perception that was wholly different from, and even the opposite of, the concept of *development*. There are fundamental differences between various indigenous languages, but it is interesting to note that they all share a concept of an *ideal life*. The concept does not split mankind from nature and has an inseparable interconnection between the material life of reproduction and the production of social and spiritual life. Men and women, together with nature, are part of the Mother Earth and there is a communion and dialogue between them mediated by rituals in which Nature is understood as a sacred being.

This cosmocentric thought has some practical consequences: if Nature is sacred, then people should take from her only what is necessary to live, since Nature is understood to be alive and also possesses the will to withhold from communities the sustenance they need if she is badly treated³. As these cosmocentric concepts establish a relationship with Nature, which is mediated by the community, it is understood that men and women are not bereft of relationships or community networks. Reproduction is only possible when links of mutual interdependence are established, in which the ideal is posed in terms of a life of reciprocal relationships and solidarity.

The study affirmed the existence of two visions of civilisation: the indigenous and the capitalist and socialist. It is not by chance that it was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, David Choquehuanca, a knowledgeable participant in the debate, who revived the topic while designing and formulating the National Development

Plan 2006-2011. For the first time, this put the issue of *Buen Vivir* at the forefront of public policy, and went on to become the overarching objective of the five-year plan, which a year later, was endorsed in the Constitution.

Buen Vivir, for indigenous and Andean peoples, expresses a sense of satisfaction in achieving the ideal of the community by feeding and nourishing itself through its own production. Not just nutrition in the sense of food consumption, but through the equilibrium between the living forces of Nature and the commonwealth of the community. This allows energies to flow so that life and reproduction can follow: water, weather, soil and the ritual blending of humans and their surroundings. Work and production are collective acts of celebration (work and community festivals are inseparable); well-being is enjoyed collectively, as is the use of the resources which make it possible for life to be reproduced. The principles of this plenitude are:

1. Social solidarity, with the presupposition that human beings can only achieve such plenitude together with their fellow human beings, in other words, in community.
2. Production, the result of the interaction of communal work.
3. The reproduction of the work force and the care of the family is the responsibility of the family and the collective.
4. Complementarity, the underlying premise of the interdependence between different human beings - who have different abilities and attributes - which enriches interaction and is the foundation for common learning.
5. Production and work is done with respect for and in harmony with nature.
6. Nature is sacred and pacts with it are renewed through ritual⁴.

However, two dimensions of *Buen Vivir* have to be distinguished: experience and practice, along with ethics and politics. From the former, it is impossible to extrapolate one single concept or line of interpretation because experience is linked to Bolivia's regional, social and cultural plurality. But it is possible to move from the ethical and political dimension to build another view of society which, while being diverse and enormously plural, establishes some minimum

agreements regarding common and socially-shared well-being. This dimension perceives the collective (which is not the sum of individuals) as part of Nature – our home – and that without a relationship with it, we will not be able to reproduce our lives. *Buen Vivir* thus construed implies a common cultural construction on the basis of respect for life.

The Constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador have adopted the concept of “*Buen Vivir*” as a state and government objective. This is a profoundly decolonising act: it acknowledges firstly that the source of this concept is the indigenous cosmovision, and secondly inspires and establishes a plurinational direction for our cultural, political, economic and social co-existence. *Buen Vivir* in these terms strives to become a meeting place, a *taypi*⁵ of minimum agreements; it does not attempt to standardise and is neither ethnocentric, nor androcentric: it sets out plural alternatives for life in accordance with each community’s own cosmovision and culture.

Buen Vivir, as the principle and goal of public policies and the foundation for both the model of the state and the economic model, is inspired by the indigenous ideal of a harmonious relationship between living beings that ensures diversity, life and the equality of redistribution.

Buen Vivir, beyond the expectation of meeting certain needs, involves social change: the state is expected to guarantee the basic conditions for the reproduction of the life of its population without jeopardising the regeneration of the natural biodiversity. It involves exchanging the market system for one that vindicates the right to life (sustenance, reproduction and subsistence) and subjects the economy to social and political criteria.

Despite the radical shift towards the concept of *Buen Vivir*, the word “development” is still a powerful myth: full of glowing and apparently praiseworthy ideas, both desirable and even “necessary”. It is associated with a series of markers: progress, modern life, evolution, industrialisation, technology and, more generally, ideas of advancing forward, and the uninterrupted growth towards a civilisation in the image and likeness of the countries of the North.

The policies adopted to reach this “ideal” model were similar throughout the American continent, even if they were applied unevenly. These measures included the incorporation of modern technology into industry; transition from agricultural production to agro-industry; the stimulation of urban development and – in politics and education – the encouragement of cultural standardisation which would lead to citizenship. This implied the uniformity of an individual

behaviour that was disciplined for consumption and favourably disposed to representative democracy. In other words, apolitical social movements. To summarise, it is a discipline which completely ignores the country's cultural diversity: development projects have never considered the indigenous people as development actors.

In a country with vibrant indigenous cultures, both this development model and the perspective of the future it proposed were not only unviable but profoundly unequal: unviable because the Bolivian business class was never committed to industrial development or able to become a genuine modern bourgeoisie; unequal because only a few were linked to the international market and enjoyed the benefits of globalisation. One of the greatest obstacles that the Bolivian bourgeoisie were unable to recognise or surmount was precisely their status as a nobility. They were modern in some respects, but profoundly backward in that they did not create universal citizenship. In other words, they had the use of indigenous labour while showing no interest in developing "citizenship". The state was used as a channel for capital, embarking on a host of projects which were supposedly 'modernising', but which ended in failure. In other words, the road towards modernity was basically oligarchic: land concentration, the personal use of cheap labour and the concentration of power and privilege.

Acknowledging these historical shortcomings, it is impossible to continue believing in the development project. While the bourgeoisie have been unable to respond to these challenges, the opposition and direct action of social movements and civil society have moved to take the lead in building another kind of state and another direction for development.

Buen Vivir as the ideal development objective (or even as an "alternative to development") is a new perspective for looking to the future, guiding it and imagining it. It is not just a change in semantics or discourse. Let us look at the conceptual and programmatic implications of *Buen Vivir*:

- Development is no longer single or universal but plural: it is understood to be comprehensive, able to address situations that are not homogenous, and to incorporate social, political, economic and cultural aspects.
- Development is no longer merely a quantitative aim: it is a qualitative process that must consider the community's enjoyment of material goods and subjective, spiritual and intellectual realisation. Non-utilitarian trends and meanings

thus come to the fore in unison with access to services: collective enjoyment, the capacity for intercultural dialogue, cultural identity as a fundamental element for understanding what is “common”.

- The accumulation of wealth and industrialisation are no longer the aims of a desirable future, but are means for attaining the harmonious co-existence between communities, and between communities with nature.
- The focus on the individual gives way to co-existence, interaction and intercultural dialogue. Co-existence between human beings becomes primary; well-being does not depend on exploiting others, less still on the cultural exclusion of the indigenous peoples.

Buen Vivir is a different way of seeing the world (moving from anthropocentrism to cosmocentrism); it is critical of modernity and capitalism. Does this deny the need to generate wealth, or minimise the economy? No, but the objectives change radically: objectives such as the calculation of efficiency, utility and maximum profit lose relevance, and give way instead to the survival of human beings, seen as natural, interdependent beings – not detached from nature or the community. *Buen Vivir* is an axiological principle (i.e. production geared to values) which aims not only at meeting the material needs of the production of use-value, but other values of emancipation. Above all, it is freedom - not reduced to a Western negative freedom - that links human beings to politics and the ability to have a direct influence on decisions that affect their lives, their natural and community contexts. This is cultural plurality in the broadest sense.

The plurinational state and the institutional revolution

The plurinational state involves building a new state based on the guiding principle of respect for and defence of life. The new Bolivian Constitution recognises and incorporates fundamental rights- including those of the indigenous peoples - and is constantly charged with promoting, protecting and respecting them in order to achieve equality and justice.

The necessary institutional revolution must go beyond simply redesigning the government apparatus towards the support of plural government structures: some more modern, rational and bureaucratic, based on distrust and audits; and others more community- and consensus-based, depending on trust, community

meetings and public accountability. This involves devolving the administration of local activities in accordance with local customs and, in the framework of autonomous processes, of commissioning government departments to deal with that which they themselves cannot manage, organising government at the regional level.

This is a hugely significant revolution because it supersedes the view that state government spheres are the primarily channels for public management, returning to society its capacity to solve its problems. This is essential, because the authorities and civil servants will not easily relinquish the state machinery or mechanisms, which continues to reproduce the old oligarchic, despotic, egotistical, racist and paternalist practices, which have led to the current government inertia and its inability to solve people's real problems.

At present, public administration and policy decisions are not managed centrally by social movements, but instead preserve the existing relations of power and privilege. New community-based forms of organisation and policies are needed to ascertain and meet collective needs in harmony with the environment.

The colonial state ruled through a central structure of command and control. The independence movement failed to change this kind of relationship between governed and governors. It was only towards the end of the 20th Century that governments started to decentralise administration throughout the region and began a process of delegation to lower levels of the administration.

However, the plurinational state makes an 180-degree turn in the way the state is structured: by creating local and regional government levels, the conditions are given for forming institutions from the bottom up, where some of the public goods and services are supplied through community organisations and others delegated to local government. Government in a plurinational state is restructured into a two-way process: first, transferring competencies from central government to the departments, municipalities and autonomous indigenous territories; and second, by transferring competencies from the bottom up, from community organisations to the regional authorities. The quality of the new plurinational state will depend on the amount of work done at the local level and the way government departments at all levels reflect the plural ideas of the local organisations within their jurisdiction. This is a substantial step towards the deconstruction of colonial state structures and the incorporation and recognition of the community principles in state administration, complementing Western, modern and technocratic processes and practices with indigenous and community processes.

The formal recognition of the indigenous autonomous territories already means that in practice their customs are being incorporated into government administration, but this also needs to be matched by recognition on equal terms of both organisational styles - the modern/rationalist and the community based. The modern, technocratic system and style is more geared to complying with specific government-sector competencies. While the community system aims to build qualitatively-deeper, consensus-based networks, producing forums for discussing problems and problem-solving, motivating collective action and building reciprocal networks.

There also needs to be a rethinking of territorial and sectoral areas of government. Sectoral offices have been shown to be inefficient when trying to solve particular problems since they do not operate at a territorial level. The plurinational state must build new administrative entities to respond to the territorial demands of the various regions of the country in tandem with sectoral entities that think of the best solutions, monitor progress and challenge the community with innovations from their sectoral perspective.

The *intercultural character of the state* is expressed in environmental policies and the law of Mother Earth, which appreciates the cultural diversity of knowledge and practices concerning Mother Earth. The state institutes *shared responsibility* with territorial community organisations, to care for Mother Earth and manage natural resources responsibly. While the problems faced today –such as pollution and climate change – are new to the indigenous cultures, the environmental crisis of the planet makes it imperative to maximise efforts and resources to find and apply solutions. By fostering various peoples' traditional knowledge and practices for caring for the Mother Earth and their responsible use of resources, the state also promotes the development of the necessary science and technology through a “knowledge dialogue”, so that intercultural alternatives and solutions can emerge.

Towards the social and community economy

The fourth chapter of the Constitution covers the state's economic organisation and reveals the wealth and complexity of the new economic model. It starts by describing the plural economy, composed of various forms of economic organisation – community, state, private and cooperative. The model is geared towards *Buen Vivir*, complementing individual interests with collective well-being that are aimed at constructing a social and community economy.

How do we build this social and communal economy? According to the

Constitution, the state will recognise, respect, protect and promote the community economy, which encompasses the systems of production and the reproduction of social life, founded on the principles and vision proper to the original indigenous peoples and nations (Art. 307).

A second aspect that stands out in the process of formulating the new economic model is the role attributed to the state, which - and we should never forget - is another kind of state. The function of the new state is to lead social and economic planning, with public participation and consultation, as set out in some detail in the Constitution. The state is expected to:

direct and monitor the economy - particularly the strategic sectors - and regulate production, distribution and the marketing of goods and services; participate directly in the economy to promote social and economic equality; integrate the various forms of economic production, while promoting the industrialisation of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, and at the same time respecting and protecting the environment; promote equitable production policies for the country's wealth and economic resources, determining which productive and commercial activities are considered indispensable and may become the monopoly of the state; regularly formulate, through public participation and consultation, the general development plan; manage economic resources for research, technical assistance and technology transfer for promoting productive activities and industrialisation; and regulate aeronautical activities (Art. 316).

How can this state function be understood in a plural economy? Is this a state in transition creating the economic, social, political and cultural conditions for the development of a social and community economy? This state function must be deciphered by understanding the form of state economic organisation that covers state companies and other state-owned economic entities. This form of economic organisation has the following objectives:

to administer in the name of the Bolivian people the property rights over natural resources; to exercise the strategic control of the productive chains and industrialisation processes; to administer the basic services of potable water and sewerage; to produce goods and services directly; to promote economic democracy and food sovereignty; and to guarantee

participation in and the social supervision of its organisation and management and workers' participation in decision-taking and benefits (Art. 309).

The system of government is participatory democracy, with social participation and control, including the exercise of direct democracy, delegated democracy and community democracy. This distinguishes the process from the experience of the nationalist governments that tried to industrialise the country and substitute imports, in what was called 'state capitalism' in Latin America.

As mentioned above, the new economic model proposed by the Constitution is complex and proposes a period of transition full of contradictions. There are clearly tensions between the interests of 'development' and those of the community, and between the strategy of the industrialisation of natural resources and safeguarding the environment. These all pose problems for various forms and levels of economic organisation. There are a number of questions to be asked in this transition period: how can we move from the plural economy – whose structure is shaped by the hegemony of the capitalist mode of production and from a context determined by the capitalist world economy – to a social and communal economy? And how is this facilitated? What is the scope of the state economy and how is it articulated with the other forms of economic organisation? What is the scope of the coverage and composition of the productive model? Does it repeat or go beyond the paradigm of the industrial revolution? How does it uphold fundamental rights and meet the aim of food sovereignty? How can we respect Mother Earth and achieve environmental equilibrium? Understanding this is a process of transition, in what way can we – from the outset – create the conditions for *Buen Vivir* to become historically and culturally possible?

While the transition process entails phases and stages, it can be directed from the start towards the pre-established goals. From the perspective of the economic organisation of the state, the new economic model has to abandon the structure imposed by the international market -being a country devoted to raw materials exports- and must start shaping a productive model which includes the state-led industrialisation of the strategic natural resources. The Constitution declared Bolivia's wealth of minerals and hydrocarbons to be strategic resources, as well as evaporitic sediments, lithium and brine; and it describes the forest, water and energy resources as strategic wealth - except that, in this case, they are not only destined for industrialisation but also for protecting the environment. The problem lies in understanding what the industrialisation of the natural resources means: Is it to be understood in the terms of the paradigm of the industrial revolution followed by 'industrial' countries; or is there another epistemological

perspective which combines technological revolution and the recovery of traditional technologies?

Another key question is how this economic model can open up to the third wave of social revolutions that was set in motion by the indigenous movements. Indigenous opposition has already led challenges to 'free trade' agreements, corporate globalisation and the forms of privatisation and dispossession entailed by neoliberal policies.

One possible way forward – which tackles the perennial problem of unjust terms of exchange between dominant and periphery countries in the capitalist economy – is the strategy of *disconnection*: focusing economic development on strengthening the domestic and regional markets. Disconnection also means opting for food sovereignty, meeting the basic needs of the population and directing economic policy to *Buen Vivir*.

The scope of the plural economy: the transformation of the productive matrix

One of the objectives of the plural economy is to transform this productive matrix (mode of production) in harmony with nature, where renewable natural resources are exploited with consideration for the constraints of the environment; where surpluses are invested in the development of community economies and in the conservation of the forests and quality of the environment. The plural economy model has six pillars:

1. The expansion of the “interventionist” state, so that it takes an active part in the productive apparatus. Because it is the chief generator of economic surplus, there should be state intervention over the productive chain of the strategic sector of hydrocarbons
2. The industrialisation of natural resources in order to overcome the dependence on raw materials exports.
3. The modernisation and technological upgrading of small and medium rural and urban production and the community economy.
4. The state as a “redistributor and reinvestor” of the economic

surplus, with guarantees that the wealth remains in the country, to promote the community economy, support small- and medium-scale production and strengthen state intervention to the benefit of the population.

5. Priority is given to satisfying the domestic market, and only subsequently the export market.

6. Recognition and promotion of those involved in the community economy as being credit-worthy and subjects of rights.

The plural economy is put into practice through combining three domains: public, mixed (public-private) and private-cooperative-community, with the state participating actively as a protagonist.

The first domain is comprised of the strategic public companies of the hydrocarbon, mining and food sectors that engage in the production, marketing and export of products that have a major effect on job creation and income for Bolivians, and that generate and redistribute wealth for the benefit of local community stakeholders across the country. The strategic public companies must become the drivers of a productive network integrated into various geographical regions, producing manufacturing products that fuel other strategic productive sectors.

The second domain is comprised of the mixed companies given priority at sub-national level (departments, regions and municipalities), and organised with public and private capital in which local community organisations act in partnership with the local state in production, transformation and agro-industrial marketing and other strategic manufactured products to increase production and income generation. These mixed companies should act as key links in the productive networks for the benefit of private-community business ventures and guarantee the creation of alternatives for a high percentage of value-added in final products.

The third is composed of private-community ventures and the agro-industrial, artisanal, manufacturing and industrial cooperatives in rural and urban areas. The private and community business ventures must promote the production of goods and services by taking part in making a final product. Private-community ventures will receive support via urban and rural financial and non-financial services.

The plural economy functions with an expanded role for the state, which participates through state companies in mining, industry, food and services, controlling the industrialisation of natural resources to overcome dependence on raw materials exports, achieve food sovereignty and transform the productive matrix (mode of production) in harmony with nature. It is envisaged that the state will create territorial productive complexes (gas in the Chaco, iron in Pantanal and lithium in the salt flats) that develop a series of links with other mixed and private-community-cooperative services and ventures connected to these strategic resources.

This will be complemented by regional productive complexes that will bring together community, private and mixed companies and organisations to produce primary goods for local markets and high added-value goods for national and international markets.

The political, economic, social and cultural project of the social movements and indigenous peoples

Did the protests of 2000-2005 produce a political project? Undoubtedly yes, particularly after the country passed a Constitution that defines the state as plurinational, community-based and with regional and indigenous autonomy. This is the project: a new state, and a new relationship between state and society that takes the form of decolonisation. It recognises forms of community that have succeeded in surviving throughout the colonial and the republican eras and which today have become forms of resistance to capitalism, even if they are also caught up in the circle of commerce, money and capital and are drawn into capitalist relations. In the Constitution, communities, community forms and community pluralism become an alternative. This is the political interpretation of Buen Vivir defined in the Constitution, as an expression from the constituent assembly of the social struggles against capitalism and the indigenous struggles against colonialism.

The horizon opened up by social struggles is a transition to the goals proposed, as well as a shift in the forms, practices and institutions of society, and hence also of values. It recognises the inherent strength of peoples, their creative power to institute and constitute and their radical imagination. Buen Vivir in Bolivia and Ecuador are political translations of *suma qamaña* and *sumak kawsay*; they are intentional interpretations that play with the cycles of time, coming back to renewed interpretations of indigenous cosmovisions to open the way for new critiques of capitalism and modernity, and discern the grave

consequences of the environmental crisis.

How can *Buen Vivir* or 'living well' be attained? The key is in the shape the transition takes; how it is guided. In other words, how the relations and corresponding structures of the capitalist world economy are transformed, and how the nexus between production and reproduction is broken. First, socially reproducing the symbolic difference from capitalist meanings; second, advancing towards the conformation of other relations of production. That is why it is so important to strengthen cultural resistance, and restore opportunities for community experience.

This can lay the ground for a transition from the dissociative, fragmentary, dependent, extractivist and export-based situation in which we live towards a comprehensive, biological, social and psychic ecology that also makes possible all-round sovereignty - food, technology, energy, economic and financial. Bolivia could then return to the market with other codes, neither mercantilist nor capitalist, but codifying the market with symbolism that values the synergy of diversity - the meeting of worlds, peoples, cultures and organic beings - in the perspective of the fullness of life.

Notes

1. This text contains parts of the "Plurinational Plan for Living Well, 2010-2015," a document drafted collectively under the direction of Raul Prada in 2010, who was the then Vice-minister of Strategic Planning. The plan was approved by the cabinet in September of the same year but was not implemented due to political decisions by the Bolivian government. *Buen Vivir* is a term in Spanish that can be translated as "living well," but with a distinctive meaning in the Latin American and particularly indigenous context. We feel that the conceptual work on *Buen Vivir* presented here is important and should be included in this book.
2. Former Vice-Minister of Strategic Planning of the Plurinational state of Bolivia and former member of Bolivia's Constituent Assembly. Professor in Political Theory at the San Andrés University. Member of the Comuna research collective. Adviser to the social organisations of the Unity Pact during the drafting of the Mother Earth Act.
3. "We are neither owners nor lords of the earth: the Jichis of the lakes, the lords of the forests in the low lands require us to ask permission to take their elements; the Andean Pachamama expects to be fed and have offerings to be made to her if she is to reciprocate": Luz María Calvo (quoted in the Plurinational Plan for Living Well, 2010-2015).

4. “The land is a fecund mother, as a place to live, like the fields, the orchard people tend for their food, nature lavish in water and in air. So the concept of nurturing is fundamental: people, like the other creatures on the Earth, are all together members of a community of life; so the quality of fecundity explains this unique ability of cherishing a community of life, a community that constantly bears fruit again and again”: Carlos Mamani (quoted in the Plurinational Plan for Living Well, 2010-2015).

5. Taypi refers to the middle or central place, where the antagonistic halves of the dualist system meet. This is where two elements meet: awqa (enemy, opposite), in other words the place where differences can flourish (Beltrán, 2003: 77).

Decolonisation and dismantling patriarchy¹ for 'living well'

Elisa Vega

From the *jatun ayllu* of Amarete to public office: restoring dignity

From my life story, my career, the path I have taken as an indigenous woman, a woman from the Kallawaya Nation, I have learned to live together with Mother Earth and with other indigenous peoples. The Kallawaya Nation is made up of several *ayllus* and none of them is superior to any of the others. Drawing on this experience, we are seeking to re-establish ancestral forms of knowledge. Decolonisation means restoring our dignity as indigenous peoples, because colonialism wanted to make us believe that our knowledge is worthless and our peoples are inferior.

The path I have travelled, from the *jatun ayllu* of Amarete, where I am from, to public office, began with my work with community organisations. Knowing how to read and write meant that I could support my mother when she held office as an authority. When I was a girl I accompanied my mother and helped her to write the records of meetings and decisions. When I was a young woman I started to become actively involved in young people's and women's organisations. In the Municipality of Charazani, an opportunity opened up for me to work in the communities and help women to learn to read and write and become aware of their rights. Despite my young age, I was elected sub-prefect of Bautista Saavedra province, but because of my age I did not take office.

In 2006 I was elected as a representative for the Constituent Assembly. First of all I was appointed by the Kallawaya Nation to represent Bautista Saavedra province. Because the Special Law Convening the Constituent Assembly provided for women's participation, through parity and alternation on the lists, when the representatives for my constituency – which includes another two provinces, Omasuyus and Muñecas – were appointed, I ended up being elected as the only woman representative. After my appointment, there was resistance from the other provinces whose leaders have traditionally been men; there was patriarchal resistance that was all the harsher because I was a young woman. I was kidnapped and they tried to force me to sign my resignation. In exchange for letting me go, they made me sign a blank sheet of paper, so that they could falsify any document against my will. They also threatened me with retribution if I denounced them. But fortunately the community mobilised to rescue me. After that personal struggle, with the support of my community - and women

and young people from other communities - I entered the Constituent Assembly at the age of 22.

My main battle in the Constituent Assembly was to gain recognition of the Kallawayá Nation as one of the 36 indigenous peoples that make up the Plurinational State, as well as the Kallawayá-machajuyá language and indigenous autonomy. I also fought for the decolonisation of justice and the valuing of the indigenous peoples' traditional medicine. The defence of women's rights in the Assembly was another hard battle. The point of all of this was the need to build a Plurinational State based on *Buen Vivir* (a term in Spanish that can be translated as "living well," but with a distinctive meaning in the Latin American and particularly indigenous context).

As a member of the Assembly's Social Development Committee, getting certain articles included in the text of the new constitution wasn't easy either, even though women from different parties and different social classes were in the majority in the committee. The women from the opposition parties were against having specific articles for indigenous women. They even proposed the right to life from the moment of conception, and wanted to criminalise the use of certain contraceptive methods because they might provoke an abortion. This idea of the right to life from the moment of conception was patriarchal. It was coming from women, but women with economic power, and that's why they were not in solidarity with indigenous women with low incomes, women from rural areas, who use certain medicinal plants to space our pregnancies.

In 2010 I was invited to join the Vice-Ministry of Decolonisation, together with other sisters and brothers from the Constituent Assembly. We set up the Office for Depatriarchalisation as part of the vice-ministry, and that's where I work today.

On my journey from my *ayllu* to public office, I learned that the Plurinational State must take into account Bolivia's 36 indigenous nations who have different concepts and experiences of *Buen Vivir*, in order to build a fair and harmonious society, free from discrimination and exploitation, from the bottom up.

***Buen Vivir* from the wisdom of the indigenous peoples**

Buen Vivir can only be built by taking the example of how our communities and *ayllus* live. The community is made up of all living beings – human beings, animals and Mother Earth. From when you are a child in the community, they teach you respect for all beings. For our grandparents, everything that surrounds

us has life, including water and the mountains. The rainbow has life because it forms out of the springs of water. Everything in nature is *chacha-warmi* and has its own equilibrium.

In the community we also learn forms of organisation such as *mink'a* and *ayni*. *Mink'a* is community work for everyone, and *ayni* is reciprocal work. We also barter the region's crops and livestock, and this enables us to diversify and produce the Kallawayaya Nation's own economy. What's also important alongside this is the ancestral wisdom about the *pirwas* – the storage of food and cereals, which enables us to provide for times of drought or floods, as we have food that can last more than five years. We don't have the idea of consuming everything we produce in the *ayllu*, squandering what Mother Earth gives us. *Qapana*, which is crop rotation, enables us to look after the earth and maintain its production capacity. *Waki* is solidarity or the gift of produce you give to someone who's had unforeseen expenditure due to illness, for example, or for other reasons. We need to draw on all this wisdom as we build the concept of *Buen Vivir*.

Decolonisation and dismantling patriarchy

To build *Buen Vivir*, we need to get rid of relations of domination and exploitation by means of decolonisation and dismantling patriarchy. We say that colonialism rests on two axes: racism and patriarchy. That's why, in the Vice-Ministry, we are seeking to:

1. Reveal the social relations of domination that correspond to the patriarchal and colonial order, and make them visible.
2. Destabilise the structures of patriarchal and colonial domination, and throw them into crisis.
3. Transform these social relations of domination, to build a fair and harmonious society, in equilibrium with Mother Earth.

One of our policies in the Vice-Ministry of Decolonisation's Office of Depatriarchalisation was to set up the "Marriage rooted in community and ancestral values" Programme. This seeks to build an experience of recovering ancestral models of family composition, and re-establish and affirm indigenous and original peoples' knowledge systems. It should be pointed out that marriages based on patriarchy are currently in crisis. The state should take into account that, in order to transform society and build the Plurinational State, it must change the

dominant forms of organising the family, which are the fruit of colonialism and patriarchy.

We need to reinstate the exercise of authority by indigenous and original peoples and rural communities, and take it back to its ancestral roots, because the arrival of colonialism and the church usurped the ancestral form of marriage, linked to the ways authority is exercised in communities. Since colonial times, in order to hold office the couple must get married under the norms of the Catholic church, and the resulting marriage likewise conforms to the church's patriarchal norms. In the community, someone is considered a person when they form a married couple – *jake* (in Aymara) or *runa* (in Quechua). Only after marriage do they gain access to land and the couple is able to perform rituals to Mother Earth and be an authority. Positions of authority in indigenous communities are held jointly by the couple. That is why it is very important to re-establish marriage based on ancestral knowledge, restoring good wisdom and getting rid of bad practices.

It is necessary to mention that the Catholic church has played a central role in the patriarchal colonial domination of indigenous peoples and women in marriage, assigning them different roles. The man is given the role of provider and head of the family, while women are assigned the reproductive role. With these ideas, imposed by the church, you get beliefs such as that women who have 12 sons will go straight to heaven, without sin, because Jesus had 12 disciples, all men. That is just pure machismo.

This allocation of roles to women is a form of domination, so that indigenous people accept that they must be poor and uneducated, and women spend their whole lives looking after children with the idea of going to heaven.

In these times of change with the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the construction of new families, we maintain that if the family is made stronger in its relations based on parity and reciprocity, society and the Plurinational State will also be strengthened. At the moment, the patriarchal family is the cause of violence based on male domination and, as a result, family break-up. What we are proposing as an alternative is to build new family forms, as the basis for dismantling patriarchy. These new families are not just the nuclear family – they are plural in their composition.

Changing the law, or moving from liberalism based on colonialism to emancipatory plurinational laws, implies legal reform with a view to decolonisation and dismantling patriarchy, leading to the formation of the Plurinational State. That's why we're working to reform the Family Code, which will be changed to the

Families (plural) Code. We're also working on a law to change the civil registry and the Constitutional Equivalence Law, which will introduce parity in all systems of public office and also enable public policies to be drawn up for women and the new families. If there is parity in the composition of state institutions, it will reduce patriarchy in the state.

From the experience of the communities, where the whole community supports the newly-weds in their new life through *ayni*, we believe that the Plurinational State should be built from the bottom up, from the *ayllus* and families as the smallest spaces in day-to-day life.

The new Constitution of the Plurinational State opened the way for dismantling patriarchy to be included as part of the decolonisation process. It is the movements and ideologies of indigenous people who have managed to make it clear that the concepts of equivalence, complementarity and harmony between women, men and Mother Earth are not just discourses but the very *ajayu* (spirit) of the process of change.

Science and modernity are challenging *Pachamama*, looking for life on other planets. In the same way, they want to replace women with ideas such as implanting a uterus in men, which is something they're currently trying to do. Usurping and stealing women's wisdom or ancestral achievements, in the name of modernity and science and developmentalism, are the acts of patriarchs captivated by their own domination – it's capitalist patriarchal racism.

To re-establish *Buen Vivir*, we need equilibrium between women, men and Mother Earth, our *Pachamama*.

Transitions to post-extractivism: directions, options, areas of action

Eduardo Gudynas¹

The development styles being followed in Latin America are unsustainable. Dependence on the export of raw materials persists, serious difficulties are still hampering poverty elimination, and environmental deterioration continues apace. At the same time, on the global scale, we are undergoing a multidimensional crisis, and if we look beyond the economic bonanza some Latin American nations are experiencing, we cannot fail to see the serious international economic and financial problems, or the threats of global climate change.

Despite these constraints and warnings, South American countries are continuing to intensify a style of development based on the intensive exploitation of natural resources and their sale on global markets. We are seeing a strong drive towards extractivism, both in classical sectors such as mining or oil and gas, and in some agro-industrial practices. All these countries are becoming extractivist: those that were already are diversifying their extractive industries, while those that were not are now trying to get into mining or drilling for oil. An oil-producing country like Ecuador, for example, is seeking to promote large-scale mining, while Uruguay, a nation that used to specialise in farming, is now betting on open-cast mining for iron ore.

Likewise, in all these countries, extractivism is at the centre of serious tensions and social protests. The reasons are very diverse, and range from the environmental impacts of the extractive industries to their negative effects on traditional economies, from the forced displacement of communities to the threats experienced by indigenous groups.

Such situations are found in all these countries, despite their substantial differences in aspects such as state involvement, the percentage of the profits captured by the state, or the role played by extractivism as a designated national development strategy. This is why it is necessary to distinguish between conventional extractivism and progressive extractivism (Gudynas, 2009b). Some key aspects are common to both, such as the appropriation of Nature to feed economic growth, and the idea of development understood as an on-going, linear process of material progress.

These situations mean that any exploration of an “alternative to development” must necessarily deal with extractivism. Otherwise, the proliferation and

intensification of the extractive industries will mean that any alternative is incomplete. In other words, alternatives must also promote a post-extractivism which enables that dependency to be broken and overcome.

In this chapter we will examine some aspects of possible transitions to post-extractivism. The analysis is part of the work done by the author and the team at the Latin American Centre on Social Ecology (CLAES) to explore what we call “transitions” to another development, or “transitions to *Buen Vivir*.”²

The post-extractivist imperative

The list of arguments to show why it is imperative to move towards a post-extractivist strategy is too extensive to review here, but it is important to mention some of the most important.

In the first place, there is the need to call a halt to the acute social and environmental impacts of the major extractive industries. There is ample evidence of these impacts, which range from pollution to the loss of natural areas. Mega-mining and the oil industry, for example, are moving into vast new natural areas, affecting sites of high biodiversity and placing water sources, etc., at risk (Dematteis and Szymczak, 2008).

It is also urgent to deal with the high propensity for conflict that surrounds many extractive enterprises. These tensions are very acute in many places, sometimes spiralling into violence, and go against democracy in others (examples are the cases described by De Echave et al., 2009).

We need to bear in mind that extractivism offers very limited economic benefits. For example, the fact that the social and environmental costs are externalised represents a heavy economic cost, aggravating the economy’s focus on primary commodities and reducing the ability to diversify production, while the employment generated is minimal (Acosta, 2009).

Neither should we forget that many sectors depend on resources that will be exhausted in the not-too-distant future (such as the oil and gas deposits in several countries). Moving into new areas of resource exploitation implies risky procedures with a high social and environmental impact. It is also uncertain whether they will work, given the limitations of today’s technologies.

Finally, global climate change imposes serious constraints on the exploitation of

fossil fuels. If we wish to prevent global warming from increasing still further, the remaining deposits of oil in our countries must not be burned, and therefore it is senseless to extract them.

All these problems indicate that what predominates today in South America is a “predatory extractivism,” where the activities take place on a large scale or are intensive, their social and environmental impacts are substantial, and their costs are externalised. National societies are the ones who have to cope with the negative effects that these industries leave behind. At the same time, they are merely enclave economies dependent on globalisation, with scarce benefits for national economies or job creation.

This is why it is necessary – and urgent – to take forward a post-extractivist alternative. It is no longer a question of debating whether this needs to be done or not. Instead, we need to consider the different options available for breaking the dependency on the extractive industries. In fact, the countries that start to discuss these matters first will be better prepared to deal with a near future that will inevitably have to be post-extractivist. Thus, the discussion should focus on how to organise these transitions: what directions they might take, what their areas of action might be, which actors may be involved in constructing them, and the goals they will pursue.

Despite the urgency of the need for a post-extractivist alternative, there are still several constraints to be faced. In some countries, the very idea is rejected by governments and broad sectors of society; in others, the debate is essentially being conducted in civil society. In the case of Ecuador, the National Plan for “Living Well” 2009-2013 (SENPLADES, 2009) proposes a post-extractivist objective, but does not offer convincing details on measures to be taken to achieve it, and the government’s current policies are going in completely the opposite direction.

Aside from these constraints, the need for “alternatives” has often been brought up by many different actors. Despite this, thinking about concrete measures to bring them about, and attempting to test them, has been much more limited. Problems and limitations persist in how to implement measures for change that are effective, concrete and applicable.

The problem of alternatives to extractivism therefore poses several challenges. It is necessary, firstly, to clarify the direction these alternatives should take, and secondly to offer ideas for actual changes. In the sections that follow, we will attempt to address these aspects, without pretending to cover them fully, while pointing to possible ways forward.

Transitions – directions and goals

Transitions away from predatory extractivism will need to overcome various obstacles. The persistence of conventional development, despite all the evidence of its constraints and detrimental impact, is a demonstration of how deeply rooted and resistant to change the ideologies of “modernity” and “progress” are in our culture. Some people do not believe it is necessary to explore alternatives, others actively resist the possibility, and finally there are those who believe that progressive governments already represent an alternative.

The reasons for these stances are varied, and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore them, but they are the source of the continued attachment to extractivism.³ This means that ideas for alternatives to extractivism – moving away from mining or the oil sector – are rejected as naive, infantile, dangerous or impossible. We have the singular paradox where those on the left in today’s progressive governments – while believing themselves to be agents of change, – are now so set in their ways that they refuse to think about transformations, are frightened by the alternatives, and therefore build conservative defences.

For reasons like this, thinking about transitions to post-extractivism must both defend and promote the validity of alternatives, and explain the need for them.

Recognising that the “alternatives” offered by contemporary development thinking are insufficient in general – and particularly inadequate for dealing with extractivism – we should jettison conventional ideas of development. Within a post-developmental critique, it is necessary to go further and think about alternatives to the very idea of development. Therefore, what we are aiming at are “alternatives to development.”

Mainstream thinking has usually focused on the so-called “development alternatives”, understood as instrumental and partial adjustments within conventional development ideas. Some of them may play an important role, if they encompass the changes and adjustments necessary to reduce and minimise the social and environmental costs of developmentalism and improve its economic contribution. They may also feature in dealing with the urgent need to redistribute wealth, especially to certain grassroots groups, and could facilitate more substantial transformations. As they stand, the “development alternatives” are always incomplete and do not offer meaningful solutions to current problems.

“Alternatives to development,” in contrast, challenge the whole conceptual basis

of development, its ways of understanding Nature and society, its institutions, and its discursive defences. This approach aims to break the bounds of current development rationality in order to move towards radically different strategies, based on other ideological foundations.

These alternatives mesh with the constellation of ideas referred to by the term “Buen Vivir” (a term in Spanish that can be translated as “living well,” but with a distinctive meaning in the Latin American and particularly indigenous context that needs to be unpacked further as I explain below). *Buen Vivir* provides a reference to guide the transitions to post-extractivism.

Very briefly, *Buen Vivir* can be characterised by its critical approach to the ideology of progress and the expression of this in contemporary development as economic growth, the intense exploitation of Nature and the corresponding material interventions. *Buen Vivir* also seeks to ensure people’s quality of life, in a broad sense that goes beyond material well-being (to include spiritual well-being) and the individual (to include a sense of community), as well as beyond anthropocentrism (to include Nature). Under *Buen Vivir*, the values inherent in Nature are recognised, and therefore also the duty to maintain its integrity at both the local and the global level. This perspective aims to transcend the dualism that separates society from Nature, as well as breaking with the linear idea of history that assumes our countries must imitate the lifestyles and culture of the industrialised nations.

The ideas of *Buen Vivir* draw on the vital contributions made by indigenous cultures, and are intrinsically intercultural. They differ from hegemonic Eurocentric Modernity, but they are neither a return to the past, nor a set of fixed behaviours; instead, they involve interactions and linkages between multiple knowledge systems. Finally, the concept of *Buen Vivir* is non-essentialist; there is no formula for it, and it must be constructed for each historical, social and environmental context.

Obviously, it is not possible to maintain a “predatory extractivism”, because this precludes the possibility of *Buen Vivir*, both as individuals and as a community, as well as destroying the Nature with which we coexist.

Transition sequences and networks

These transitions are viewed as a set of steps and actions facilitating a process of moving from conventional development to *Buen Vivir*. This implies changes on

various scales, from local, apparently insignificant modifications to substantial transformations.

The will to change and move away from conventional development points to a radical perspective focused on *Buen Vivir*. This creates a normative mandate, with clear appeals to social and ecological justice, from whence it is possible to imagine a future that is preferable to others which are equally possible. This involves values and judgements – both affective and cognitive – through which conditions preferable to the current ones can be visualised (Voros, 2003).

Clearly we need to consider how these transformations can be taken forward. Firstly, the transition to alternatives to development suggests profound changes in the way we organise our lives, and will need to be rooted in a deep and growing social support base. The changes cannot be brought about willy-nilly or overnight, nor can they be expected to result from a messianic political leadership, still less an authoritarian one. Because the transition requires democratic support, the focus should be on broadening the consensus and presenting compelling arguments in favour of it.

Secondly, there is no complete and precise idea of what this “alternative” looks like. Since it is a “work in progress”, one cannot anticipate what all its elements will be. Adjustments will be needed, and their successes and mistakes learned from, nourished by links and feedback between different sectors.

At the same time, the transitions require inter-state cooperation, and other types of regional integration. The post-extractivist development proposal cannot be implemented by one country on its own. It requires certain levels of coordination within Latin America, or at least among neighbouring countries, all of which will take time to cohere.

To reiterate: the transitions proposed here do not represent either cosmetic changes or a return to “development alternatives.” What we are arguing for are objectives aimed at a radical change in development. This rejects a continuation along the path of contemporary capitalism, with its high consumption of materials and energy, while trying to mitigate its most disagreeable effects. A radical change is obviously necessary. Arguments in favour of transition must make clear that it will not be possible to fulfil all the fantasies of a future society of plenty, replete with consumer goods, automatic devices for every task, and individual transport.

Finally, the disparate elements of change should meet various conditions, including

having positive effects in terms of quality of life and environmental quality, and should in turn serve to catalyse new changes. The proposed transitions should be equitable, in the sense that they should not place additional burdens on those who are currently disadvantaged. They should be democratic and recognised as legitimate by citizens. They should also be coherent, in the sense that their different elements should complement each other. If they are to be achieved, the transitions will need to be understandable and credible as real possibilities for change.

Key contributions on transition

There exist several contributions directly or indirectly related to the consideration of transitions. We will briefly look at a few of these, to illustrate the different options that have been explored. Since the mid-1990s, the Global Scenario Group, based in Sweden, has been looking at different transitions and alternative scenarios. Its most comprehensive proposal was the “Great Transition,” presented as future scenarios focused on transformation under normative commitments (with a strong call for environmental sustainability and quality of life, including its non-material aspects; see Raskin et al., 2002).

The “Sustainable Europe” programme, and the contributions made by researchers at the Wuppertal Institute for Climate in Germany, have also been very influential. They did much to promote concepts such as the “dematerialisation” of the economy, the “ecological rucksack”, the “environmental space”, as well as calling for the idea of transitions (Sachs et al., 1998). This work in turn fed into similar experiences in the Southern Cone of Latin America, for example. Among other sources, this type of approach draws on environmental economics, proposals for no-growth or “steady state” economies, the “degrowth” movement, etc.

The analysis by the United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP) Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) project has also included scenario assessments which, in several of its first case studies in Latin America, explored normative transitions (for example, the 2003 Latin America and Caribbean GEO, and the 2008 Mercosur GEO). Various calls for development transitions to ensure biodiversity conservation are also emerging from the environmental field (Parris and Kates, 2003).

Among the citizen initiatives, we should mention the “transition towns” movement in the UK and the US, which focuses particularly on reducing the use of fossil fuels and building local resilience and networks (Hopkins, 2008).

Citizen initiatives are also under way in South America. These are early efforts that feed into post-extractivist proposals, such as the campaign for a moratorium on drilling for oil in Ecuador's Amazon region (the Yasuní-ITT initiative), or the calls for prior and informed consent on mining in Peru.

More recently, the most complex and well-thought-out campaign also took place in Peru, under the title "Alternatives to Extractivism." Promoted by the Peruvian Network for Globalisation with Equity (RedGE), the campaign was launched at the end of 2010, bringing together a wide range of organisations and networks.⁵ The campaign lobbied political parties, presenting them with an agenda of reforms and positions to take with regard to the extractivist enterprises. Training workshops were held, the mass media were drawn in, and studies of possible transitions to post-extractivism were carried out for various sectors (the environment, energy, mining, farming, fisheries, etc.; see the studies in Alayza and Gudynas, 2011).

This Peruvian agenda of alternatives to extractivism listed a set of demands and proposals for the new government under the so-called "necessary transition scenarios." The starting point was the warning that, *inter alia*, "the limits of the strategy for growth based on the extractive industries have been revealed and it is facing serious criticisms." It is therefore necessary "to move towards new scenarios of sustainability, equilibrium and unconditional respect for people's rights." It goes on to specify different elements required for these changes, such as "starting to define transition scenarios" whereby "the state restores its presence and ability to regulate and exercise control" over the territory, with genuine environmental safeguards, organisation and planning of the sustainable use of the territory, improving environmental assessments, etc. It adds that "we need to move away from a profoundly extractive economy and model of growth to one that, instead of threatening our biodiversity, uses it rationally and sustainably." It also calls for an ethical commitment to "unconditional respect for people's rights and democratic principles, and therefore to promote citizen participation and free, prior and informed consent."

Drawing on experiences of this type, in 2011 a platform was set up to explore transitions to development alternatives. This is a space for organisations seeking to promote initiatives of this sort to cooperate and share their views.⁶

These contributions reflect a wide variety of experiences, in some cases in the form of analysis and technical studies, and in others the local practices of NGOs and social movements. This demonstrates the wide range of ideas, proposals and elements available for drawing on in building transitions.

Zero poverty, zero extinction

Transitions to post-extractivism must meet two indispensable conditions: poverty eradication and preventing new losses of biodiversity. These conditions represent demands intrinsic to a process of change aimed at *Buen Vivir*, where the rights of Nature are also recognised. This explains why these conditions are given the same level of importance.

This means that the options for using natural resources and organising production processes must consider both environmental limits and quality of life. The post-extractivist alternatives must ensure that everyone rises above a certain “poverty threshold”. It is likewise necessary to counteract an excessive and wasteful use of natural resources, because over-consumption is one of the main factors creating the inequality that pushes more people into poverty, as well as being largely responsible for environmental problems. This is why the alternatives seek both poverty eradication and an end to over-consumption. With regard to the use of natural resources, it is also necessary to set limits on the appropriation of Nature. These limits are essential to guarantee biodiversity conservation and the integrity of ecosystems, as well as Nature’s rights. When these limits are exceeded, as is the case in many enterprises typical of predatory extractivism, serious environmental impacts are produced, irreversible changes are unleashed in ecosystems, and species may become extinct.

Figure 1 illustrates these thresholds and limits schematically. As the diagram shows, a “sustainability field” can be described within them. This is understood as the set of possible activities that enable people to enjoy an adequate quality of life while also guaranteeing Nature’s integrity. Within this field, there are different possible options that each country or region could follow. Note that this transition proposal does not impose the same consumption patterns on everyone, and neither is it based on rigid centralised planning. It does not forget the diversity of individual and cultural positions which *Buen Vivir* encompasses.

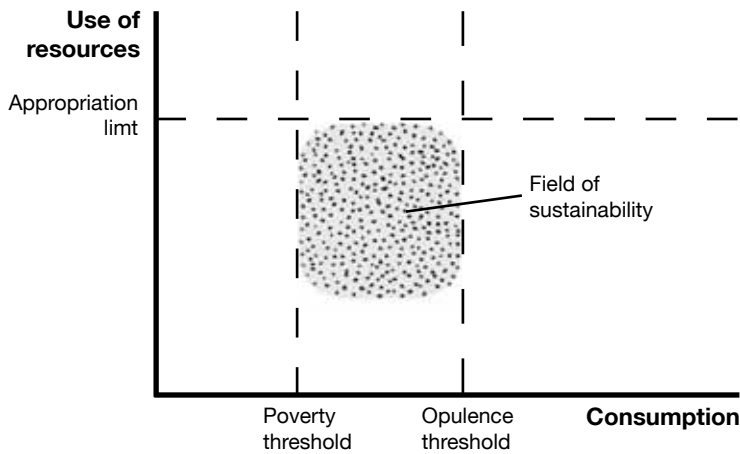
This new vision implies making important changes. The illusion of repeating the industrialised countries’ pattern of economic growth, based on very high consumption of materials and energy and serious environmental destruction, must be abandoned. Imitative development has no future under these alternatives. Thus, the classical idea of a direct and mechanical relationship between economic growth and social well-being becomes meaningless, and GDP loses its status as the priority indicator.

In many South American countries today, a substantial percentage of the

population lives below the poverty threshold, while a small elite lives in opulence (following the diagram in Figure 1). The transitions argued for here, therefore, require taking steps to bring vast numbers of people out of poverty and at the same time imposing limits on opulent consumption. This reordering of consumption and production priorities should in turn be done within an established limit on the appropriation of Nature.

The reorganisation of production processes under these conditions will lead to a rebalancing of different sectors of the economy. Extractivism will be drastically reduced, but the demands for a better quality of life, for example, will require the building of more schools or health centres, and thus the construction sector may expand. Therefore, although these transitions abandon growth as a development goal, in South America there will be sectors that may grow while others contract. In contrast, it is clear that a transition of this type in the industrialised countries will, above all, require “degrowth”.

Figure 1



Field of sustainability, delimited by the poverty threshold and the opulence threshold in consumption, and by a limit on the appropriation of natural resources to ensure the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Components of transitions to post-extractivism

The preceding sections have established the framework of transitions to post-extractivism as part of an alternative to development focused on *Buen Vivir*. It is

now, therefore, appropriate to present a set of concrete components to make these changes possible. We will not try to illustrate the far-reaching change involved in one particular alternative to development; instead, we will look at the changes that are needed to make the shift away from extractivism possible.

The first phase is the need to move swiftly from a “predatory extractivism” to a “sensible extractivism,” understood as one in which each country’s social and environmental laws are fully complied with, under effective and rigorous controls, and where the impacts are internalised. Here, the best technologies are used, proper measures are in place for remediation and the abandonment of sites, and effective mitigation and social compensation strategies are applied. We are not saying that this is optimal, nor that it is an objective in itself, but it is necessary to tackle the serious problems we are experiencing in many places all over the continent. There is a sense of urgency in the need to stop the damage to the environment and society. This phase, in its turn, enables the dependence on exports to be drastically reduced and allows the state to recover its ability to regulate.

Next, it is necessary to move to a focus on “indispensable extractivism,” where the only enterprises still left operating are those that are really necessary to meet national and regional needs – in other words, to ensure people’s quality of life under the field of sustainability illustrated in Figure 1.

Thus, transitions to post-extractivism do not imply a ban on all extractive industries, but rather a substantial downsizing whereby the only ones left are those that are genuinely necessary, meet social and environmental conditions, and are directly linked to national and regional economic chains. In this way, global export orientation is reduced to a minimum, and the trade in these products concentrates mainly on continental markets.

We will now go on to illustrate some measures that will make it possible to reduce the dependence on the export of extractive industry goods while lessening and repairing its economic effects, as well as some associated components. These make up a substantial set of reforms, transformations and changes in a wide range of fields, including everything from the instrumental aspects of organising production processes to the valuing of resources. These measures must be applied at the local, national and continental level. The proposal is therefore based on a set of measures that are interconnected and coordinated; the proposal should not be analysed by looking at the measures separately, because they are all linked and it is essential to apply them as a cluster. We will now go on to outline some of their key components (see further details

in Gudynas, 2011a; some sections of this chapter summarise or reiterate the contributions made there).

1. Environmental and economic components

A first set of measures involves applying substantial and efficient social and environmental controls on the extractive industries, and simultaneously moving forward with a correction of the prices of the resulting products, based on social and environmental criteria.

This first set of measures seeks to do away with the current situation whereby many mining or oil operations are only able to carry on because rigorous environmental or social controls have not been applied to them. This may be due to limited or incomplete environmental impact assessments, the relaxation of social or environmental standards, or weak oversight and monitoring of these operations. One urgent step is to start enforcing the law stringently and efficiently in each country. Should the extractivist projects fail to abide by a country's laws and standards, they must be altered or shut down.

Likewise, extractive operations that are permitted under current laws must be subjected to robust environmental and social regulation and oversight (including effective harm-mitigation programmes, contingency plans for accidents, etc.). Regulation must cover the whole life of the project, including the pulling-out phase.

The second set of measures involves determining the prices of the products of extractivism on the basis of their social and environmental effects. The aim of this is to respond to the fact that raw materials exports do not include environmental externalities in their prices, and the cost of these externalities must be borne by society or the state. These artificially low prices also bolster these corporations' profits, as well as creating an incentive to persist with extractivism.

Therefore, the prices of these resources must include costs such as payments for remediation or cleaning up environmental pollution, water use, compensation for the loss of agricultural land, etc. Recognising that not all social and environmental components can be included in the price, the suggestion here is that at least a revised calculation should be arrived at. The production costs of commodities like minerals or oil and gas will become much higher. This could lead to several extractive operations becoming economically unviable, while the rate of extraction of those that remain may well be reduced due to a fall in consumption because of the higher price. These changes must necessarily be coordinated with

neighbouring countries to avoid international buyers shifting to other nations offering lower prices.

The rigorous application of social and environmental standards, together with a price correction to take into account environmental and social costs, will lead to important changes in conventional cost-benefit analysis. Many extractivist projects have always been presented as great economic successes, simply because the costs of their social and environmental impacts were ignored or not included in the balance sheet – they were “invisible” from the accounting point of view. Therefore, by rectifying prices to factor in social and environmental costs, these losses and negative effects will be made visible to economists, and the losses will undoubtedly exceed the gains in many enterprises. When a conventional tool like cost-benefit analysis is applied correctly, many extractive projects will cease to be good business.

The environmental component is particularly important in current and future transitions. Indeed, it is based on recognising the values intrinsic to Nature (as stipulated in Ecuador’s new constitution). Therefore, environmental commitments are not an ancillary objective but occupy the same centrality as those that refer to people’s quality of life. It will be necessary to ensure biodiversity conservation and keep human impacts within the capacities of the ecosystems that sustain them, or otherwise face the dire consequences of these impacts.

In one way, it is clear that the extraction of renewable natural resources must not exceed the rate of reproduction of each of these resources, and production processes must be adjusted so that they do not cause the loss of ecosystems or species. This is why limits must be established on the appropriation of natural resources. Likewise, the need to keep ecosystems and species alive means that it will be necessary to designate extensive protected areas, connected to each other and under effective management. The size of protected areas representative of the continent’s different ecosystems must increase substantially to ensure the long-term survival of these ecosystems in the long term. Such measures will no doubt lead to additional restrictions on land use and access to natural resources.

The social component is equally relevant here, and is aimed at eradicating poverty. Therefore, stricter limits must be placed on the use of natural resources, so that they are used primarily to meet the needs of the continent’s peoples - rather than exporting them to feed consumption in other countries - and to eradicate poverty. This means avoiding wastage of materials or energy, combating opulent consumption, and focusing on people’s quality of life.

2. Reconfiguring the trade in natural resources

Price correction will certainly also trigger changes in the international trade in natural resources. Raw materials and their by-products will become more expensive, and potential buyers will look for other, cheaper suppliers or alternative resources. At the same time, the supply of exports will fall, as stricter social and environmental regulations are applied, and many operations will no longer be viable. All this points in the post-extractive direction of reducing extractivist exports, both in terms of their variety and in their quantity, and thus diminishing dependency on primary commodity exports.

If corrections of this type are implemented unilaterally by one country in South America, the extractivist enterprises will simply relocate to a neighbouring country. If these measures are applied in Ecuador, for example, many corporations will start looking for the same resources in Peru. Furthermore, it would not be unimaginable that a neighbouring government takes advantage of the situation and offers additional benefits to companies in order to attract more foreign investment.

The introduction of such a measure would thus, critically, need to be coordinated at the regional level, while the price correction to take into account environmental and social costs will also need to be harmonised among several countries. It is evident that the transitions outlined here would need to be undertaken by groups of countries. To enable this, various changes will need to be made in the current regional integration blocs such as the Andean Community and Mercosur.

The measures described above assume that exports of raw materials and their by-products will fall. This scenario is the object of many criticisms of the transition proposal, which warn of job losses and a reduction in income (both from exports and from tax revenue).

The transition model we are exploring here offers several responses to these criticisms. Firstly, although the volume of exports can be expected to fall, the impact on revenue should be reduced because of the higher unit-values. Fewer barrels of oil may be exported, for example, but they will be sold for more.

Secondly, the state should achieve real savings by obviating the need to pay for remediation of the environmental and social damage caused by predatory extractivism, and by not subsidising any more such projects. Thirdly, the subsidies granted to extractivism should be withdrawn, and these funds

reallocated for other purposes. Fourthly, few jobs are created by the extractive industries; the diversification and expansion of production into other sectors should easily compensate for any job losses. Finally, comprehensive tax reform would enhance efficient collection and wider tax compliance, thereby raising revenue. Some of these points will be elaborated on below.

3. The transition economy

Transitions require a swift dismantling of the different subsidies that states provide to prop up extractivism. These forms of support are called “perverse subsidies” because they generate social and environmental impacts and artificially maintain, or make viable, certain economic activities. In the case of extractivist industries, such subsidies are found in tax exemptions, the building of transport infrastructure, subsidised energy, the supply of free water for mining, etc.

These subsidies make it clear that in many cases the problem is not really a shortage of public funds, but rather the way in which the money available is used. The transition proposal therefore suggests converting “perverse” subsidies into “legitimate” subsidies, understood as those that promote activities which meet the conditions of high environmental quality, high employment and good economic returns. This type of subsidy can be used, for example, to support the conversion to organic farming (which has a lower environmental impact, consumes less energy and employs more labour), particularly when it is focused on meeting regional food needs.

In the case of neoextractivism, the higher proportion of the surplus captured by the state is a positive aspect that should be maintained and extended to all sectors of the economy. The necessary changes include an appropriate level of royalties (which should not be thought of as taxes because they are in fact payments for the loss of natural assets); equitable tax burdens and the effective imposition of taxes on windfall profits. Countries in Latin America usually impose very low royalties on the extractive industries, the tax systems are porous (with many loopholes, exemption agreements, etc.), and taxes are not levied on windfall profits to prevent speculation.

Some changes are happening in this regard, such as the recognition of imminent increases in royalties in some countries, and the recent negotiation of a “levy” in Peru (to be applied in particular to those enterprises that enjoy tax exemptions).

One possible post-extractivist economy was analysed recently by Sotelo and

Francke (2011) for the case of Peru. They looked at different scenarios, including one in which all mining and oil operations started between 2007 and 2011 were closed down, and another where - in addition to this shut-down - the tax levied on those that continued operating was revised. They found that, in the first scenario, there would be a substantial impact on the Peruvian economy. In the second case, if a 50% tax was levied on profits, the negative effects would be reversed and positive results would be achieved in the balance of payments, as well as an increase in net international reserves. As this study makes clear, in order to reverse the dependence on extractivism, a key approach is to work on fiscal policy, and an essential component of this is to change the tax policies. This study also shows that suspending mining operations would not necessarily lead to economic collapse.

Of course, as the extractivist sector shrinks, other sectors – notably farming, manufacturing and services – must be diversified and expanded in tandem.⁷

4. Markets and capital

A post-extractivist perspective also requires substantial changes to regulation of capital, especially measures that rein in the financialised economy. The current crisis makes this even more pressing, as much of the capital that used to circulate in the productive sectors of the industrialised countries is now ending up in places like Latin America, where it is being used, for example, to buy land or speculate in metals or food. This makes it essential to block speculative capital, and reverse the subordination of regulation to the needs of a supposed free flow of capital. There are many other specific tools that can be used in this field, such as designing a “new regional financial architecture” (which would include a Bank of the South, the objective of which would be to finance socially and environmentally sustainable enterprises), or the launch of public investment in energy conversion or the protection of natural assets (including the so-called “ecological investment” as described by Jackson, 2009).

At the same time, it is necessary to conceptualise the “market” in its varied manifestations. The emphasis is usually on capitalist competitive markets, while other markets that are equally important in Latin America are ignored, sidelined or hidden. The markets based on the social solidarity economy, such as those typical of rural or indigenous communities that include the components of reciprocity and barter, for example, are a case in point. The transitions should serve to make this diversity of markets visible, and strengthen those that represent substantive contributions to another kind of development.

Finally, the transitions imply changes in the way conventional economics approaches capital. Limitations persist even when economic values are corrected, making it necessary to break with such reductionism and open up to a wide range of possible values. In other words, we need to recognise that there are other ways of assigning value which may be cultural, aesthetic, religious, ecological, etc., as well as acknowledging the values intrinsic to Nature (which are independent of the values assigned by human beings). By adopting this position, it is no longer possible for Nature to be bought and sold in the market or expressed as capital; it should rather be thought of as a cherished heritage.

5. Policies, regulations and the state

The elements outlined above make it clear that transitions involve diverse ways of regulating the market, some more direct, others indirect. But there is also a need to regulate the state to be able to tackle problems such as perverse subsidies, the relaxation of standards, or the execrable performance of state enterprises, which behave in exactly the same way as the transnational corporations.

Thus, transitions require social regulations, in the sense of being anchored in civil society, which would be applied both to the market and to the state. Within this very broad area it is timely here to recall the importance of transparency in public spending and discuss its composition and efficiency. This is because in many cases the state's financial resources are badly spent, at the wrong time, and on activities the usefulness of which is doubtful.

Transitions also require a far-reaching reform of the state, not just in the financial aspects mentioned above, but in a deeper sense that includes how it is organised, the services it provides, decentralisation, etc.

In this regard it is also necessary to have effective public policies. The emphasis placed on this is a reaction to the fact that many public programmes have disappeared, become weaker, or been replaced by privatised services. For example, different programmes are expected to be self-financing and profitable (the logic of the market has pervaded them and it is even proposed that public services should be sold).

Transitions to *Buen Vivir* make a radical break with this limitation, since plans or actions do not depend on their potential profitability. Even so, the state does not have a monopoly on carrying them out, and they may rest with broader and more participatory social networks (following the idea of the common good).

We should mention some examples of public policies that would be strengthened under post-extractivist scenarios. Environmental policies should be broadened, putting an end to the perverse insistence on limiting conservation to the buying and selling of environmental services, ecotourism or other forms of “green capitalism.” In rural areas it is urgent to introduce a wide range of public policies, some focused on the rural family and others on strengthening and supporting productive alternatives, particularly those that are suited to agroecology. Measures like this would also have the effect of reducing rural poverty.

Finally, we should note the importance of territorial public policies. Extractivism causes deterritorialisation and fragmentation, which must be reversed. Transitions must draw up policies to join the enclaves’ together, ensuring full state coverage everywhere in the country. This will require territorial planning, with appropriate procedures for citizen participation and mechanisms for coordination and compensation at both the national and the continental level.

6. Quality of life and social policies

When taking the post-extractivist path, another key component is to break the link that has been established between extractivist industries and poverty reduction plans, whereby the former are seen as necessary to achieve the latter. This demands, firstly, creating genuine sources of funding for such plans from elsewhere, and secondly, broadening the idea of social justice so that it goes beyond simple economic compensation measures such as cash benefits.

Reorganising public spending is an essential component. Because a post-extractivist economy – having abandoned perverse subsidies and got rid of the cost of extractivism’s social and environmental externalities – would be generating genuine savings, these funds can be used to eradicate poverty.

In some circumstances there may be a role for conditional cash payments, as they are useful for tackling serious and urgent poverty situations. It is understandable that they would be used at the start of a transition phase, but they cannot be the basis of a social policy, and neither can social policy be reduced to a form of economic assistentialism. Tools of this type must therefore be used sparingly, being restricted to certain groups and for short periods of time. The more substantive measures should be focused on creating genuine sources of employment, strengthening education systems, and providing good social security coverage.

Furthermore, it is necessary to revive the debate about social justice, which

currently seems stuck in a dispute about the values and applications of economic compensation. Social justice is much more than mere compensation measures. This indicates the need to reform the tax system and state spending, as mentioned several times already, but also to re-launch substantive discussions, such as the debate on basic income (Iglesias Fernández et al., 2001).

Social policies must address various dimensions. Among those that need to be dealt with most urgently, we should mention at least two: malnutrition and education. The eradication of malnutrition in Latin America is imperative; it is scandalous that several countries – Brazil is one – are some of the largest agrifood exporters in the world, but still suffer problems of malnutrition. Here, social policies should be linked to rural development and regional integration strategies, and thus redirect production towards meeting food needs in the region.

Education is another area that requires substantial reform. The serious constraints in primary and secondary education in several countries are alarming (and compounded by the fact that the left has failed in its attempts to reform school education in almost every country). Therefore, it is urgent to re-launch education as a public policy focus, with free access for all, and with improved quality and rigorosity.

7. Autonomous regionalism and selective decoupling from globalisation

As mentioned before, transitions to post-extractivism have little chance of success if they are taken forward by just one country in isolation. It is essential for them to be coordinated and linked between groups of countries, and a far-reaching reform of current regional integration processes is therefore required.

Today, the different South American countries are competing in the export of a similar range of raw materials. To reverse this situation, it is essential for countries to coordinate measures such as price correction, for example, or their social and environmental standards.

The alternative sectors to be strengthened should also be coordinated regionally and, if resources are shared, this will also boost trade within the continent. This will require, for example, coordination between the food and farming sectors in different South American countries (which are suppliers of food commodities to other regions), in order to break their dependence on the global market and use their resources to feed their own people, thus eliminating malnutrition among the

poorest groups as quickly as possible. Measures will also need to be coordinated in other areas, ranging from the conservation of natural areas to the setting up of production chains in which all countries participate on a genuinely equal footing.

These and other measures offer a new proposal for regionalism in the transition context, called “autonomous regionalism.” International trade is not rejected; rather, it is redirected to prioritise regional needs within the continent. This type of regionalism is termed autonomous to make it clear that one of the main objectives of regional linkage is to recover the autonomy that globalisation has taken away. In fact, the aim is to break free of the subordination and ties to global markets, since this where the factors that determine our countries’ production and trade strategies originate. In short, we need to prevent production choices being merely a response to the rise and fall in global prices or demand.

Thus, the autonomous regionalism proposal is substantially different to the prevailing strategy in Latin America that corresponds to different variants of open regionalism (as described by CEPAL, 1994): according to that point of view, regional integration in the continent had to be strongly based on free trade, and was seen as preparation for getting even more closely involved in globalisation. Under autonomous regionalism, in contrast, coordination between countries is understood to be necessary in order to recover the capacity to take autonomous decisions on development.

Autonomous regionalism therefore requires substantive regional coordination measures, and many of these will involve supranational norms. This means that the proposal demands much more from each country and from current blocs than mere rhetoric about brotherhood. Under autonomous regionalism, common policies must be designed, and the most urgent priorities for such policies are food and energy sovereignty.

At the same time, what we are arguing for here is a stance that breaks with the dependency imposed by globalisation. It is not a question of lapsing into regional isolationism, but rather of recovering decision-making capacities to determine the areas in which global connections should be maintained, and those where a decoupling should be brought about. This will be possible when, under the transitions proposed here, trade in raw materials and other products, as well as capital flows, are substantially reconfigured. In some respects, this decoupling is similar to the idea of deglobalisation proposed by Samir Amin (1988). But it also has substantial differences, starting with the recognition that transitions will only be possible for groups of countries and, therefore, under different regional integration arrangements. In other words, an alternative to

today's globalisation must necessarily include a regional dimension, and will therefore require a different type of continental integration.

8. Dematerialisation and austerity

The different components of transitions to post-extractivism illustrated above configure an arrangement whereby the obsession with economic growth as a development goal is abandoned. In other words, growth and development are decoupled, and subsequently redirected towards a substantive alternative under the concept of *Buen Vivir*.

The different proposed measures need to be reorganised in terms of productive uses, with the aim of reducing the consumption of goods and energy and cutting emissions. This is equivalent to a “dematerialisation” of the economy. It means production processes that not only use fewer inputs, but use them more efficiently, require less energy, reduce their carbon footprint, are provided with intensive recycling and re-use programmes, etc.

Dematerialisation is essential if the demand for natural resources is to be reduced. Obviously, this also requires changes in consumption patterns, such as an increase in the useful life of goods (making them last longer before they become obsolescent, prioritising functionality rather than the accumulation of possessions, and emphasising durability instead of constant replacement with new products), as well as a moratorium on certain high-impact goods. These and other measures must be complemented by a campaign against opulence. Rather than consumption understood as the possession of goods, the emphasis must be placed on accessibility and usefulness (for example, the demand for transport does not necessarily mean that everyone has to own a car, because the demand can be met by a reliable and efficient public transport service).

Political reform and a leading role for citizens

Although transitions to post-extractivism aim at a better quality of life, the future will undoubtedly be more austere. Current levels of over-consumption, especially consumption that is superfluous and trivial, must be abandoned. Quality of life must no longer be understood as simply the accumulation of material goods, but must be expanded to include cultural, affective, spiritual and other dimensions. Opulence is no longer a reason for celebration. At the same time, these changes also aim to break with the reductionism of purely economic forms of assigning

value, by opening up the options to include values from other levels and perceptions. These and other components mean that the transitions will be steps toward a post-capitalist future.

Transitions to post-extractivism will come up against huge challenges in the social field, particularly on the cultural and party-political flanks. The fascination with activities like mining is widespread in mainstream culture, as are the dreams of the wealth that oil may provide. These industries are also seen as essential ingredients of the ideology of “progress.”

Therefore, post-extractivism not only represents a substantial shift away from these productive sectors, but also requires cultural changes. Significant tensions and contradictions will be generated; opposition will be expressed repeatedly by many actors, whether they be business people who fear losing their profits, politicians reluctant to give up power, or sectors of society who long to be consumers of material goods. This is why the terrain of post-extractivism’s political and cultural transformation is complex. Without attempting to cover this issue thoroughly, we can offer a few pointers.

Intensive and coherent programmes will be needed to reform current patterns of consumption. This includes combating opulence, favouring more long-lasting goods and products with a better balance between energy and materials, intensifying re-use and recycling, promoting shared use, etc. Various measures must be undertaken to move forward in this area, such as public education and campaigns, together with economic mechanisms to encourage a reduction in consumerism, and strict social and environmental safeguards and regulations.

In the political field, transitions will require strengthening democratic structures, ensuring adequate social participation, and implementing social regulations to control the market and the state. Here it will be essential to reverse the disrepute in which politics and democracy are mired today, whereby formal electoral democracies are maintained – though still with many limitations on citizen participation and social oversight – at the cost of an exaggerated presidentialism. If we persist in going down that path, it will be almost impossible to build mechanisms for citizen participation and oversight, or to defend alternatives to extractivism. This is why it is necessary to expand the democratic base in the region, both by broadening and strengthening the mechanisms and institutions involved, and by renovating party politics and rooting out clientelism.

The re-launch of politics in the direction of possible changes is another component. In several countries it seems that the arrival of progressive governments has

frozen the debate about other changes, and many profess to be satisfied with the reforms undertaken. We need to restore the level of political leadership and participation we experienced a few years ago, and start to debate ways forward to post-extractivism from a much broader social base.

As these latter remarks make clear, there is a need to renew progressive politics as a stance committed to social justice. The progressives need to get away from their attachment to the ideology of growth, their materialist reductionism, and overcome their difficulties in understanding the demands of new social movements on issues such as the environment, gender or interculturalism (see Gudynas, 2010b).

It is clear that the practices of change will be diverse. In some cases it will be possible to make a clean break, a rupture or a revolutionary transformation, while step-by-step sequential reforms will be required in others. These approaches are not necessarily contradictory, and in fact they should complement each other. For example, there are places where it seems essential to make a clean break with extractivism, with major social protests demanding a moratorium on open-cast mining. In other circumstances, however, it will be a question of reforming economic regulations. Whatever the pace and extent of change - whether it is driven by the state or civil society in all cases post-extractivism's transformations will focus on getting away from current forms of development, and in that sense they would all be radical.

Faced with this challenge, the concept of citizenship must be reformulated and broadened, to include a territorial and environmental perspective. The field of justice must likewise be expanded to move beyond political and social rights, or forms of economic redistribution, and embrace the recognition, participation and rights of Nature. In Latin America, changes like these will only be possible under an intercultural approach, as the contributions made by indigenous knowledge systems cannot be discarded or supplanted. The alternatives for a future that is desirable express this normative sense.

In the end, the possibility of bringing about these changes is in the hands of individuals who have become actors creating history. The paths to post-extractivism begin with the first steps that each person can take, and by their example make space for others to join in the effort.

Notes

1. Researcher at the Centro Latino Americano de Ecología Social (CLAES), Montevideo, Uruguay (www.ambiental.net); MSc in social ecology.
2. Different ideas have been presented at workshops and seminars supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Ecuador, as well as similar activities CLAES has been carrying out in other countries in the region (particularly Peru and Bolivia, and to a lesser extent in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay) since 2009. Various aspects have been published in different media in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru; a general framework for these transitions was presented in the journal *Ecuador Debate* (Gudynas, 2011).
3. For a critical analysis of development and the ideologies of “progress” and “modernity” that run through it, see my chapter “Debates on development and alternatives to it in Latin America: a brief heterodox guide,” in this book.
4. “Peru and the extractive model: an agenda for the new government and necessary transition scenarios” was presented to society and political parties in March 2011 by the following organisations: Asociación Nacional de Centros (ANC), Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (APRODEH), Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales (CEPES), Conferencia Nacional sobre Desarrollo Social (CONADES), CooperAcción, Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR), Fundación EcuMénica para el Desarrollo y la Paz (Fedepaz), Forum Solidaridad Perú, Grupo Allpa, Grupo Propuesta Ciudadana, Instituto de Promoción para la Gestión del Agua (IPROGA), Movimiento Ciudadano frente al Cambio Climático (MOCICC), Red Jubileo Perú, Red Peruana por una Globalización con Equidad (RedGE), Red Muqui, Revenue Watch Institute, Comisión Andina de Juristas, Movimiento Manuela Ramos, Red Tukuy Rikuy, Asociación Servicios Educativos Rurales (SER), Consejo Machiguenga del Río Urubamba, and Centro Latino Americano de Ecología Social (CLAES). See <http://redge.org.pe/node/637>.
5. See <http://www.transiciones.org>.
6. Transitions to post-extractivism require other substantial changes in the economy that cannot be discussed here due to space constraints, but are aimed at bringing about a steady state economy. For complementary views, see Jackson (2009) and Victor (2010).

Glossery

Androcentric: perspective or approach that gives centrality to men's point of view. Its origin comes from the Greek term: ANER-DROS that refers to the masculine being opposed to women and gods and with specific characteristics that make him virile. A dominant androcentric perspective remains at the centre of our current political, social and cultural system.

Autonomy: taken from the Greek (to give oneself laws) is politically and theoretically an enigmatic term. It has very different meanings among different disciplines and discourses and is also viewed very diversely in political usage. It is used in Latin America mainly by indigenous peoples, but also by students, social movements and trade unions.

One can draw out three arenas where the concept of 'autonomy' is widely advocated for: the cultural-ethnic arena, the political-legal and the territorial-economic arena. None of these arenas are clearly distinct from each other and are rarely fully implemented in Latin America. However most movements consider real autonomy will only happen when these three arenas are integrated.

Calls for autonomy, and particularly indigenous autonomy, have revived in the context of struggles around new constitutions in Ecuador and Bolivia for example. For the Zapatista movement in Mexico, autonomy is a political and social global process (*proceso social global*), that combines having an own local government, with its legislation and juridical system with emphasis on ethnic and cultural identity and a rejection of existing national government and politics, which are corrupt and ruled by the dominant elites.

Cosmovision: Each culture has its own worldview, sense, perception and projection. The set of these different forms is known as Cosmovision or world view. Originally, the term comes from the German word *Weltanschauung* (Welt: world, Anschauung: observation or view).

Initially, the concept was used by the German philosopher, Alexander von Humboldt and linked to his discussions about language and speech; later, Kant and Hegel used the term to refer to philosophical, religious and cultural perspectives of a group of people.

Many Indigenous peoples in the Andean countries maintain an ancestral cosmovision, which is based on among other things, a communitarian approach and a stress on the need for balance and harmony with the environment.

Decolonisation/Decolonial: This concept has arisen out of the common historical experience of living under colonial rule. According to Walter Dignolo and Arturo Escobar, coloniality led to the attempted systemic elimination of subordinated cultures and knowledges by modern colonial powers. However colonial powers were never fully successful in this; and in resistance to colonialism there emerged new epistemologies that continue to fuel political, social and cultural demands today.

Decolonisation tries to look for “alternative worlds and knowledges” and “other worlds and knowledges” that pre-date colonialism as well as emerged in resistance to colonialism.

The reference to the “other” reflects the colonial attempts to impose a homogenous vision of culture and development that excluded women, indigenous peoples, poor or even Nature. Decolonisation tries to go beyond this colonial experience of exclusion, both in terms of the excluded becoming protagonists of their own liberation from oppression, and also in terms of forcing colonial legacies – such as legal systems – to incorporate the diversity of knowledges and peoples (see plurinational).

Endogenous development stresses local and regional dimensions as the key factor to achieve so-called development. The three characteristics of this kind of development are: local decision over development options, local control over development processes and the retaining of benefits in the community. This concept has been used by the Venezuelan government to describe its economic policy objectives and by some peasants’ organizations to defend importance of agro-ecology and farmer-based economies.

Extractivism derives from the Latin word ‘extrahere’, meaning ‘to pull out’ and is linked to sectors such as mining, oil, monocultural agriculture, as well as other sectors that provide materials, usually for export. It refers to an international division of labour, which determines that some countries (usually Southern ones) produce raw materials, extracting them and exporting to the Northern countries, which produce industrialised goods. Usually, governments sell natural resources from their countries to multinational companies, that are granted relative freedom to extract wealth, and are rarely subject to strict controls or required to respect human rights or communities. In this book, extractivism is divided into the so-called ‘traditional extractivism’ and into a new form called ‘neo-extractivism’ (see discussion below)

Intercultural: A process of dialogue and interchange among cultures that implies horizontal relationships and recognition of different cultures. The question of power is key in this process, because too often cultural dialogue and exchange has led to cultural colonialism or cultural appropriation where one culture dominates.

An effective interculturality is understood as a mutual dialogue and transformation of cultures in contexts of power that prevents economical, ecological and cultural conquest.

Buen Vivir: This ethic and concept comes from ancestral indigenous traditions from the Andean and Amazon regions in South America, known in quechua as “sumak kawsay”, Aymara as “suma qamaña” or Guaraní “ñande reko” (Medina 2006), amongst others. They are systems or ways of living that conceive relationships between human beings and Nature in holistic, relational, and harmonic terms.

They consider community as the fundamental axis of the reproduction of life, based on principles of reciprocity and complementarity (Azcarrunz 2011). It is sometimes translated as living well or living in plenty, which means to live in harmony with your community, the Earth, cosmos, life and history cycles, where one being does not dominate another. Living well is also a political project: it emphasises processes that facilitate this harmony including decision made by consensus as opposed to majority rule (where one group imposes a decision on another), and a prioritisation of community needs over individual needs.

Living well (Buen Vivir) is opposed to “living better”, part of the capitalist logic. “Living better” is linked to the idea of unlimited progress, more consumption and accumulation, and competition among people to have more, leaving others to live in poverty and exploitation.

The terms continue to be explored and reformulated, before and after they were included as societal goals in the constitutions of Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009)

Mestizo: During the period of colonial Spanish domination in the Americas, the term was used to mean a person whose parents were Spanish and Indigenous. In this period, racial differences determined social class and access to rights; Spanish born people were on the top of the social pyramid, followed by criollos: sons and daughters of Spanish parents but born in America; mestizos: descendants of indigenous peoples and Spanish/criollos; and indigenous people and Black descendants of imported African slaves at the bottom of the pyramid. For Svampa and Prada, a mestizo consciousness is fundamental to support peasants and urban organizations asserting their rights to autonomy and in building a plurinational State.

Neocolonial: The term has been used to describe the different ways used by industrialised countries to continue dominating their former colonies, after the independence struggles. It referred not only to the political control, but mainly to the economic, social and cultural

strategies implemented by those countries, to continue controlling their former colonies. These strategies included the use of foreign debt, trade and investment policies, and cultural patterns that facilitated transnational corporations extraction of raw materials and promoted unlimited levels of consumption.

Neodevelopmentalism: The “progressive” governments in Latin America have promoted a series of policies aimed at “developing” their countries, based on following a different path from neoliberalism. Rejection of neoliberalism has not led to any questioning of ‘development’ though; rather progressive governments have given great emphasis to economic growth, industrialisation and distribution of benefits based on large-scale development projects and extractive industries. Critics argue these policies have reinforced and deepened extractivism, reaffirmed the international division of labour and led to a re-primarization of Latin American economies.

Neodevelopmentalism has also done little to critically examine the link between increased economic growth and development with its impact on social and environmental well-being. It tends to overlook or even support repression of social and environmental conflicts that arise from extractivist ‘development’ projects.

Neoextractivism is linked to extractivism and neodevelopmentalism (see above). One of the ‘neo’ or new dimensions of contemporary extractivism is its link to financial capital. Financial players increasingly profit from investments in mines, oil fields or agricultural activities, purchase cargoes of raw materials, and speculate on price trends or derivative markets. This, linked to the creation of new financial goods, based on the privatisation and exploitation of nature (such as biodiversity, forests, emissions or ecosystem processes, is fuelling a process of financialisation of Nature.

Gudynas and Svampa identify the role of the State as a key factor in this stage of neo-extractivism, particularly among the progressive governments in Latin America. This advocates active participation of the State, with a view to increase state income to fund social policies through state owned companies or by imposing increased taxes or fees on private companies.

The same critiques of neo-extractivism (see *extractivism* above) apply, perhaps even more so given the way dependence on extractivism has increased across Latin America.

Pachamama comes from the quechua and aymara cosmovision: Pacha: earth, world, cosmos, and mama: mother. It is commonly translated as “Mother Earth”. It includes

everything that can and can't be seen, as life, energy, needs and desires. For indigenous peoples in the Andean Countries, the concept of Pachamama means a different kind of relationship with the land. They believe the people belong to the land instead of the people owning the land. It implies that the property rights don't follow the same pattern as those in the western juridical system, but also implies respect, balance and harmony between human beings and the earth.

Feminist organizations have questioned the patriarchal simplification of Pachamama as a mother earth (and women in general) as only valued for their fertility. This simplification reduces Pachamama's complexity and converts it in an instrument for production and development.

Plurinational: The concept of a plurinational State implies a re-foundation of the national State, recognising as equal and including within the State, a diversity of cultural and social logics, institutions and practices of indigenous and peasants, urban dwellers, small producers, workers and the middle class. It has been included in the national constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia, as a result of pressure by social and indigenous organisations.

In this way, plurinational and interculturality (see above) are linked. However turning the idea into practice with the state has led to tensions: between indigenous autonomies in the Plurinational State and the traditional autonomies at regional level defended by local business groups; between direct and representative democracies; in struggles over rights of property, administration of natural resources and their extraction.

Periphery: Dependency and subdevelopment theory formulated by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) during the 1950s characterised Latin America's economies as a product of the international division of labour. According to this theory, there are economies at the centre of the capitalist model and others at the periphery of it.

Prebisch and the CEPAL academics characterised the economies at the centre as homogeneous and diversified, that had developed different sectors of their economy to a similar level and built an internal market with state support. Periphery economies, on the other hand, were heterogeneous and specialised in the extraction and exports of specific natural resources or crops (ie. Coffee, cacao, soy, cattle, sugar), traditionally linked to foreign investment or national elites, and had limited development of other sectors of the economy.

Re-primarisation: This term is used to describe the process experienced in the Southern

countries during the last two decades of neoliberal policies, when the primary sector (or production and extraction of raw material raw) grew in comparison to other sectors of the economy. These materials are exported and not further industrialised or processed. This includes the development of *maquilas*, factories that typically are set up in low or no-tax zones paying low wages to process goods for exports. Reprimarisation accompanied a weakening of existing industries. It is a process that has deepened, even under progressive left governments, that promised to break with dependence on exports of primary goods.

Rights of Nature: If Nature and Mother Earth is recognised as an identity, a living being, an interrelated community of beings, various advocates have said then it must also be a subject of rights. This has legal and cultural implications. It implies, for example, that Nature must be protected and defended for itself and not because of the “services” that it provides to human beings or as natural capital or mean of production. It also implies that Nature has its own legal standing, questioning the primacy of property rights.

The Constitution of Ecuador of 2009 and a law in Bolivia in 2011 included Rights of Nature as part of the fundamental rights, however its application remains a source of tension given the respective governments’ policies that promote extractivism in their countries.

Other useful glossaries

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The **Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (RLF)** is a leftist political education institution in Germany. It undertakes research, provides forums for critical thought, and promotes political progressive alternatives.

Through its Andean office, RLF has facilitated a Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development, that has brought together activist researchers from across Latin America to diagnose problems of extractivist-based development and to develop and propose alternative policies that can engender social, race and gender equity and be based on a new relationship with nature.

This book is an English translated edition of RLF's book, *Más Allá del Desarrollo*, published in December 2011 in Quito, Ecuador. <http://www.rosalux.org.ec/>

The **Transnational Institute (TNI)** is one of the world's only think tanks dedicated to providing critical analysis for social movements struggling for a more democratic, equitable and environmentally sustainable world.

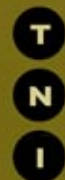
Founded in 1974, TNI seeks to expose the forces and institutions that cause poverty, environmental degradation and conflict; propose alternatives that are both just and pragmatic; and share good practice from movements and institutions that are involved in building a better world.

As part of its historical work, TNI has consistently matched its critique of corporate globalisation with proposals of alternative policies that promote democracy, equity and sustainability. Since 1990, TNI work on alternatives has included analysis on democracy, public enterprises, regional integration, food sovereignty, justice and nature. TNI fellow Edgardo Lander has been an active member of RLF's Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development. TNI worked with RLF to publish and coordinate this English translated edition. www.tni.org.

Design: Guido Jelsma

Cover photograph: Lou Dematteis

ISBN Number: 978-90-70563-24-0



Fundación
Rosa Luxemburg

