

REPORT: ENVIRONMENT

The New Extraction: Rewriting the Political Ecology of the Andes?

By Anthony Bebbington

ON JUNE 5, TWO MONTHS OF GATHERING indigenous protest across the Peruvian Amazon culminated in one of the country's most tragic moments in many a year.¹ Several thousand indigenous and non-indigenous people had assembled in the Amazonas town of Bagua, blocking the highway and demanding the derogation of executive decrees on which they had not been consulted and that they felt threatened their future access to land, and therefore their livelihoods, in the territories they have long occupied.² Also gathered were police forces, sent in by the central government to re-open the highway. In a still unclear sequence of events, shooting began.

By the end of the day, and though numbers are still disputed, five Awajún-Wampís indigenous people and five mestizo townspeople were confirmed dead, along with 23 policemen, 11 of whom were killed in retaliation by indigenous people as they were guarding a pumping station of the North Peruvian Oil Pipeline. One hundred and sixty-nine indigenous and mestizo civilians and 31 police were confirmed injured. A report issued in July by the national Ombudsman's office found that all the indigenous people involved in the conflict had been accounted for in the villages its representatives had visited and that no formal complaints of missing persons had been received. Indigenous leaders, however, said that many more remote villages had not been visited and that reliable figures on the missing or killed would not be available unless an independent commission were created to investigate the events.

While the roots of this confrontation run deep, the ticker on the time bomb was set more recently. On October 28, 2007, Peru's president, Alan García, published "El síndrome del perro del hortelano" (The Dog in the Manger Syn-

drome), the first in a series of newspaper articles in which he laid out his interpretation of Peru's ills and his vision of how to cure them. The problem, he argued, was that Peru's immense natural resource endowments are not legally titled, and therefore cannot be traded, do not attract investment, and do not generate employment. The result: continuing poverty. This situation persists, he maintained, because of the "law of the dog in the manger, which says if I can't do it, nobody can do it"—a position argued by "the old anti-capitalist Communists of the 19th century, who disguised themselves as the protectionists of the 20th century and then changed T-shirts again in the 21st century to be environmentalists."

Alan García's decrees represent "a clear project of state reform oriented towards the concentration of land and natural resources in private hands."

García bemoaned that "there are millions of hectares for timber extraction that lie idle, millions more that communities and associations have not, and will never, cultivate, in addition to hundreds of mineral deposits that cannot be worked." Oil development was being hampered because those who questioned the expansion of extractive industry had "created the image of the 'non-contact' jungle native." The solution, according to García, is to formalize property rights, offer up large swaths of land for sale, and attract large-scale investment and modern technology.³ By June 2008, García had passed 99 decrees to act on this manifesto, easing processes that would effectively break up community land and territory. The people in Bagua were protesting some of these very decrees.

As various commentators have argued, what lies behind García's decrees (as well as parallel initiatives in the coastal valleys) is, in the words of anthropologist Richard Chase Smith, "a clear project of state reform oriented towards the concentration of land and natural resources in private

*Anthony Bebbington teaches in the School of Environment and Development at the University of Manchester, U.K., and is a research associate with the Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales, Lima. He is the author of *Minería, movimientos sociales y respuestas campesinas: una ecología política de la transformación territorial* (Lima: IEP/CEPES, 2007).*



In July, Awajún farmer and landowner Ricardo Apanu Nampin, 53, returned home with part of the day's harvest. One month after a bloody clash between indigenous people, local migrants, and the Peruvian national police, life outside the provincial city of Bagua, Peru, had returned to normal.

hands.”⁴ Meanwhile, Chase Smith notes, the government has failed to respond to any of the land-titling requests made by about 3,800 communities, some of which date back a decade and a half.

Notwithstanding the neoliberal credentials of García's manifesto, its full significance lay elsewhere. “[T]he first resource is the Amazonia. It has 63 million hectares [almost 156 million acres] and abundant rain,” the president wrote, reiterating a long-standing vision of the Amazon as empty and awaiting development. His declaration, brimming with high-modernist sentiments, charted a route to a future mapped by faith in the infallibility of property rights, technology, and the potential of large-scale capital to transform Peru for the better.⁵ Environmentalism, in this view, is not simply the product of a misguided, unreconstructed left—it is naive and mistaken.

Furthermore, García portrayed Peru's countryside as a space to be once again colonized in order to extract, and profit from, the natural resources embedded in the fields and forests thought of as occupied, if at all, by technologically backward indigenous and mestizo small-scale farmers and nomads who are, quite simply, in the way. Just hours before the violence erupted in Bagua, García practically accused the protesters of holding the country

hostage, making an insidious distinction between “natives” and “Peruvians” in a statement to the press:

“Enough is enough. These peoples are not monarchy, they are not first-class citizens. Who are 400,000 natives to tell 28 million Peruvians that you have no right to come here? This is a grave error, and whoever thinks this way wants to lead us to irrationality and a retrograde primitivism.”⁶

Yet García's statements are only the most brazen expression of a continent-wide push to open up frontiers for extracting hydrocarbons, mining, producing biofuels, harvesting timber, and investing in agroindustry. The widening geographical and economic scope of these five sectors should be understood as linked to the Initiative for Integration of Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA), a project agreed to in 2000 at a presidential summit in Brasília, under which a network of inter-oceanic roads, ports, waterways, hydroelectric plants, pipelines, and other major pieces of infrastructure are being built in order to integrate (but also open up) the continent.

Hydrocarbons and mining in particular have recently seen significant hikes in capital investment. They have also triggered the most contentious arguments between the state, the private sector, and social movements over the territorial, environmental, and human implications of their

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expansion. The result for those who live near extractive enterprises has been tension and conflict.

“Under siege” may sound too strong, but in large parts of the continent, peoples and environments are increasingly being pressured from all sides. In the words of anthropologist Federica Barclay, who has spent a lifetime working on the Peruvian Amazon: “Everywhere there is increasing unrest. I have seen it in various places throughout the past two years. People are overwhelmed.”⁷

MUCH OF LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC AND social history could be read as a long engagement with extraction. At times the emphasis has been on escaping the limits of the extractive economy—an important theme in the region’s import-substitution industrialization policies that lasted from mid-century through to the 1980s. At other times, denouncing extraction has mattered most, as in Eduardo Galeano’s classic *Open Veins of Latin America* and a long list of social protests that have challenged the relations of exploitation and dispossession that underlie the extractive economy.⁸ Yet today, many governments of all political hues seem primarily concerned to make the very most of extraction.

Believing that with their different mixes of policies and politics they can escape the “resource curse”—i.e., the underperformance and pathologies said to accompany economic-development models that depend heavily on natural resources—governments as distinct as García’s in Peru and that of Evo Morales in Bolivia share an approach to extraction that can only be described as optimistic. Of course, the potential economic gains are very high, and more than one government in the region is financing its social policy with income from mining and hydrocarbons. But, as the recent violence in the Peruvian Amazon suggests, the human and political costs of such a development strategy can also be significant. Such costs, which rarely adorn the pages of environmental-impact statements, however important these may be, are the costs that come from rewriting the region’s political ecology.

To begin with, the extractive frontier is an aggressive one in all senses, not least the geographical. In Peru, some 64 hydrocarbon blocks (areas in which companies acquire the rights to explore for, and ultimately exploit, oil and gas) cover more than 70% of the country’s Amazonian territory. Eleven blocks overlay protected areas, 17 overlap reserves for indigenous peoples in voluntary iso-

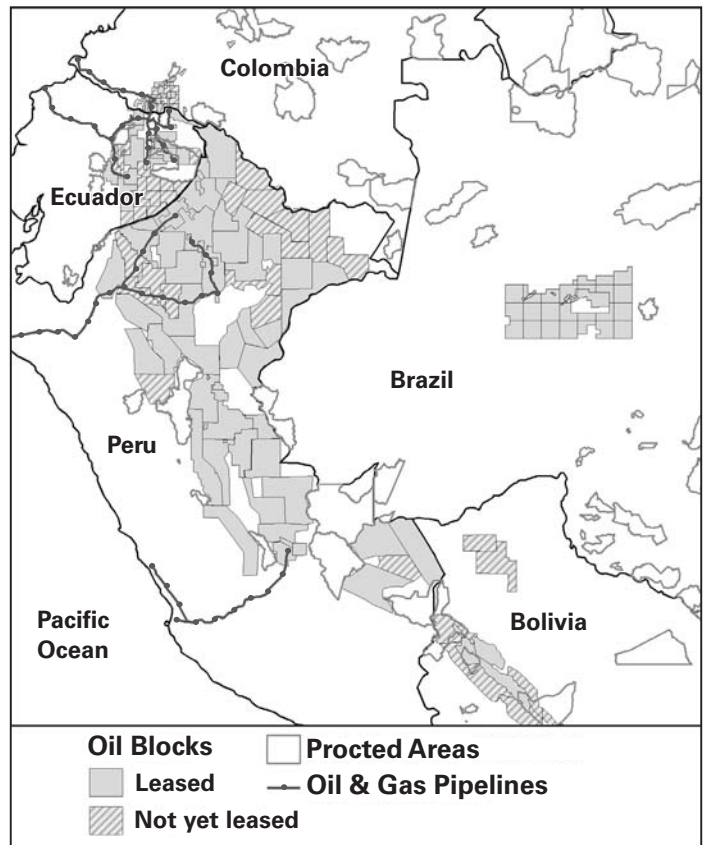


Figure 1: Hydrocarbon concessions in the Ecuadoran, Peruvian, and Bolivian Amazon

lation, and 58 overlap lands titled to indigenous peoples.⁹ In Ecuador about two thirds of the Amazon is zoned for hydrocarbon expansion. Meanwhile in Bolivia, although the area so far contracted is less, 55% of national territory is considered to be of potential hydrocarbon interest. Indeed, under the current Morales administration, hydrocarbon operations have significantly expanded in the country’s northern Amazon basin, generating consternation among indigenous groups and tensions between them and the government.

Figure 1 (above), drawn from a recent and influential inventory of hydrocarbon concessions and contracts in the western Amazon, shows the sheer physical extent of this process. Meanwhile, new hydrocarbon concessions have been carved out of the Central American isthmus, for example, in Mosquitia and the Pacific coast. Thus, García’s manifesto must be seen as part of a far larger set of policies and political commitments that have allowed this geographical transformation to occur. Likewise, Bagua has to be seen as part of a wider set of consequences and responses to this expansion—some of which have al-

ready occurred, many of which are yet to come, even as García and other presidents in the region argue that such protests are part of an international conspiracy rather than legitimate expressions of citizen concern.¹⁰

The image is similar for mining. At the beginning of the 1990s, Latin America received about 12% of global investment in mining; today the share is around one third.¹¹ Some estimate that more than half of Peru's peasant communities are affected by mining concessions, while up until mid-2008 the geography of mining concessions in Ecuador suggested something similar.¹² Investment and exploration have likewise grown in Argentina, with a 740% increase in foreign investment since 2003.¹³ The conflicts and socio-environmental preoccupations around the Marlin mine in Guatemala described in the interview with activist Gregoria Crisanta Pérez (see page 16) are part of this wider whole.

As with hydrocarbons, what matters about these mining concession geographies is not only their size but also the degree to which they overlap with other geographies. For example, they overlap with community and territorial claims, as well as with water resources. Many of the more promising mining concessions are located in headwaters. More generally, the granting of concessions and the strategic management of water resources seem to be two processes that, in many countries, move along parallel tracks. As a result, in Peru, between a quarter and two thirds of many of the country's main watersheds are covered by concessions. The three watersheds that supply greater metropolitan Lima, a chronically water-constrained metropolis of more than 8 million people, have 41%, 40%, and 30% of their area overlapped by mining concessions, respectively.¹⁴

This is a problem because modern mining requires large quantities of water for separating minerals from rock, a process that also often involves the use of toxic substances like cyanide. At the same time, by breaking up ground rock into far smaller parts, it increases the speed of naturally occurring chemical reactions that release toxic substances that can then be carried downstream in what is called acid mine drainage. The mining industry repeatedly insists that current technologies allow them to safely manage these hazardous materials and waste products, and thus protect water quality. It also insists that mining's water usage pales in comparison to that of agriculture, meaning that impacts on water quantity will not be great either.

Many people, however, remain unconvinced by these arguments, and concerns about water figure prominently in protests around mining. Indeed, while the issues of

land and territory are of primary concern to peasant and indigenous populations, water also mobilizes urban populations, significantly broadening the base of social protest around mining—while also complicating the challenge of building alliances within the broader socio-environmental movement.

THE EXTRACTIVE FRONTIER IS EXPANDING IN COUNTRIES whose governments reflect a range of political options: Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Nicaragua, and so on. At the same time, Latin America as a whole is an increasingly important source of foreign direct investment in extractive industries. This is most clearly the case for Brazil, home to both a hydrocarbons and a mining giant (Petrobras and Vale, respectively), but is also the case for Venezuela, whose state hydrocarbon company, PDVSA, entered into partnership with the Bolivian state company, YPF, to create a new joint venture called Petroandina in 2007.

This raises the question: How far does the ideological position of a government affect how relationships between extraction, environment, land, and territorial rights are handled? While approaches to the ownership of extractive industry clearly vary (witness recent efforts of Bolivia and Ecuador to increase the role and power of state-owned extractive enterprise), approaches to the environmental and social implications of extraction may be rather less different. Bolivia's and Ecuador's governments seem just as likely as Peru's to tell activists and indigenous groups to get out of the way of national priorities, just as likely to allow extractive industry into fragile and protected ecologies, and just as determined to convince indigenous peoples that extractive industry is good for them too, without fulfilling their right to free, prior, and informed consultation (much less full consent).

As in Peru, hydrocarbon concessions in Bolivia overlap with protected areas and indigenous territories. In the departments of La Paz, Beni, and Cochabamba, significant parts of the Madidi and Isiboro Securé National Parks and of the Pilon-Lajas Biosphere Reserve are covered by hydrocarbon contracts. In the Gran Chaco of Tarija, most of the Aguara Güe National Park—co-managed by the Consejo de Capitanes Guaraníes de Tarija, who also deem it Guaraní territory—has been affected by contracts given to Petrobras and Petroandina that allow for exploratory seismic testing and drilling, while the Chinese company Eastern Petrogas is set to operate in the park's buffer zone. Plans to increase gas production have intensified since the Morales administration took power, and the emphasis is clearly on expanding such operations, even though gov-

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ernment ministries have made overtures to the Guaraní, talking of remediating environmental damage caused by earlier periods of state-led oil extraction.

The Morales government's rationale for this expansion is that these resources belong to the nation and are needed to finance national social policy and cash-transfer programs for the poor, as well as broader public investment. In criticizing opposition to hydrocarbon expansion, Morales said in July:

"What, then, is Bolivia going to live off if some NGOs say 'Amazonia without oil'? They are saying, in other words, that the Bolivian people ought not have money, that there should be neither IDH [a direct tax on hydrocarbons used to fund government investments] nor royalties, and also that there should be no Juancito Pinto, Renta Dignidad nor Juana Azurduy [cash-transfer and social programs]."¹⁵

As Morales's sharp comments illustrate, gas is emerging as a source of tension and conflict between the gov-

Confronting Goldcorp: An Interview With a Guatemalan Activist

By James Rodríguez

Since 2004, Canadian mining giant Goldcorp has been extracting gold from the Guatemalan highlands. Operated by Goldcorp's local subsidiary, Montana Exploradora of Guatemala, the open-pit Marlin mine is located along the border between the municipalities of Sipakapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacán, in the westernmost department of San Marcos. Populated almost entirely by Mayan indigenous peoples, both municipalities have claimed a right to decide on the use of their land, as stipulated by the International Labor Organization's Convention 169, which Guatemala signed on to in 1997.

The Marlin project has helped spark a new wave of peasant protest in Guatemala. Local communities have overwhelmingly disapproved of the mine because of, among other things, irregularities in the company's land acquisition, the threat posed to the water supply by mining, and the very low profits for the local economy (0.5% go to the federal government, 0.5% to the local municipality, and 99% to Goldcorp shareholders). On May 22, hundreds of residents from San Miguel Ixtahuacán came to Guatemala City and marched on Montana Exploradora's office and the Canadian Embassy to protest the health, environmental, and social problems caused by the mine. The date coincided with the Goldcorp shareholders' meeting in Vancouver, Canada.

During the protest, independent photojournalist James Rodríguez interviewed grassroots leader Gregoria Crisanta Pérez. A single mother from the Agel hamlet just a few miles from the Marlin mine, Pérez has been accused by Goldcorp of sabotaging its electric lines. In June, local courts issued an arrest order for Pérez and seven other local women.

Since the interview took place, the conflict in San Miguel Ixtahuacán has sharpened. Hundreds of residents burned



down Goldcorp's machinery in June in response to its continuing expansion, which locals consider land usurpation. After receiving numerous death threats, Pérez and her four young children have at the time of this writing gone into hiding with the help of the local Catholic Church.

Why are you here today protesting in Guatemala City?

We are here today because right now, in Canada, the shareholders and directors are splitting their profits. Meanwhile, here in Guatemala, the people of San Miguel Ixtahuacán continue to live in poverty. We have come to demand our rights. And now, at last, the people of San Miguel Ixtahuacán are starting to wake up.

What is happening in San Miguel Ixtahuacán?

Since the arrival of Montana Exploradora, many problems have come up. For example, dozens of homes have large fissures along the walls due to the explosions from the mine. Our water sources and wells have dried up, and many people suffer from skin diseases, particularly welts, and some of the people who have worked for the company have died mysteriously.

These are some of the reasons we are so worried. This is why we have come today to protest in front of the Canadian Embassy. Today we are also visiting other offices here in the

ernment and different groups in Bolivian society. While the debates around the question of regional autonomy in 2007–8 reflected a (real) argument between Morales's party, the MAS, and regionalists in the eastern Media Luna zone over the control and distribution of resource rents, equally significant arguments are emerging between the MAS government and lowland indigenous movement organizations. Many of these organizations do not categorically oppose extractive industry in Bolivia, but they are

increasingly dismayed that their territorial concerns have been placed on the back burner while the government promotes extraction in precisely the areas where they have territorial claims.

In recent months, Morales and the Central de Pueblos Indígenas del Norte de La Paz exchanged harsh words when the latter requested a consultation process on Petroandina's proposed exploratory operations (FOBOMADE, the national environment and development forum, has

capital so that our voices may be heard, because many of our fundamental rights have been violated. We do not want the mining company to continue operating in San Miguel Ixtahuacán. We are here today because our rivers and wells have been contaminated. We are here also because of our natural resources. Montana is destroying our trees and forests. What we no longer want is for that company to continue damaging our communities in San Miguel Ixtahuacán.

In addition, Montana is buying more land, extending its territory. The people of San Miguel Ixtahuacán live with this tremendous worry. If these people [from the mining company] continue buying up our lands, where are we to go? As indigenous peoples, we live here! We do not want the company to continue buying our land, because if they do, we will be left with nothing. So here, today, in front of the Canadian Embassy, the people of San Miguel Ixtahuacán ask the mining company to leave.

How did the Canadian Embassy receive you?

We were able to meet only with the Canadian ambassador [Leann McKechnie]. From what I understood, they claim that our people were consulted and had asked if we, Maya Mam people, accepted the mining operations in our territory. But the truth is they never consulted us. That was the first of many violations of indigenous rights against the people of San Miguel Ixtahuacán. All of us here today are witnesses that the local people were never consulted.

Do you belong to any organization?

Well, we basically have a small organization without a name. We are just a very small group of women from the Agel hamlet who decided to organize ourselves for the sake of our children. We do this only when we have some spare time.

So are you now organizing others against the mining company?

Since the foreigners first came to take earth samples about 10 years ago, most of us in San Miguel Ixtahuacán did not want the mining company to operate. But mostly due to fear, we had not organized ourselves. Now, however, we are getting orga-

nized and carrying out small community consultations so that the company will cease its operations.

Have you received threats because of your activism?

Yes, I have received many threats. Even today I continue to receive direct threats from the mining company. If it weren't for Montana Exploradora, we would be very happy in our communities of San Miguel Ixtahuacán.

Why do some people in San Miguel Ixtahuacán support the company while others oppose it?

Montana is a very big company and has paid off many community leaders, as well as local auxiliary mayors. Also, there are the few who work for the company; obviously, they and their families support the company. Lately, Montana has also been paying off some key neighbors in order to divide us. In my community of Agel, I know for a fact that the company has paid them 35,000 quetzals [about \$4,300] in exchange for supporting the company's operations. This community division is the main reason that I have been a victim of violence. [*Pérez claims she has been harassed and threatened directly by neighbors who have been paid off by the company. In October 2008, when this interviewer visited Pérez at her home, a neighboring family threatened everyone present with rocks and sticks, and warned the journalist never to interview Pérez again.*]

What the majority of the population wants is for Montana Exploradora to leave San Miguel Ixtahuacán. We demand our rights because we do not want to be poisoned or killed violently by the mining company. We ask the government to please listen to our demands, because we are the legitimate owners of those territories. We are indigenous people, we were born there, and we should die there. But God, not the mining company, should decide our deaths. □

James Rodríguez is an independent Mexican-U.S. photo-journalist based in Guatemala. His work focuses on documenting regional struggles involving land tenure, indigenous rights, and impunity in Central America's post-war era (mimundo.org).

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also called for this right of consultation to be respected). Similarly, when the Asamblea de Pueblos Guaraní of Itika Guasu (whose lands are home to a massive gas field operated by a consortium led by the Spanish company Repsol YPF) wrote to the government complaining about its failure to address its concerns, the response from the Morales administration was less than supportive.

Meanwhile, in Aguarañe, Quintín Valeroso of the Asamblea Pueblo Guaraní Yaku Igua, based in Yacuiba, complained in May that the government had not recognized the APG Yaku Igua as the relevant indigenous organization for carrying out consultation processes. “There has been no consultation for any of these projects with indigenous people,” he said, adding: “We demand the government carry out the consultation process. We deserve respect.”¹⁶ Increasing tensions between the Guaraní and MAS, above all around extraction, have sparked discussions within the national Asamblea de Pueblos Guaraní reconsidering its political options prior to the elections in December—calling into question any automatic allegiance to MAS and Morales.¹⁷

These expressions of concern are not only localized. In April, Adolfo Chávez, the executive secretary of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB), a lowland indigenous organization headquartered in Santa Cruz, commented: “Now we have to talk about why it is that the permission of indigenous peoples is not being requested for hydrocarbons exploration in the Tierras Comunitarias de Origen.”¹⁸

In July, Bolivia’s principal national indigenous organizations met in La Paz for the First National Meeting of the Natural Resource Secretaries of Indigenous Campesino Organizations. Among the declarations of the meeting were that extractive activities in indigenous-campesino territories “violate our collective rights as recognized in the Political Constitution of the State (CPE), Laws and International Treaties,” and that this occurs because the ministries of hydrocarbons and mining do not allow for the “implementation of a process of prior, free, informed and obligatory consultation and participation.”

“We condemn the actions of the Ministry of Hydrocarbons in its visits to Mosen and Lecos communities,” the delegates resolved in yet stronger language, referring to the government’s overtures to gain local support for YPFB-Petroandina’s Lliquimuni oil-exploration project.¹⁹ Morales appears to interpret such issues as the effect of

NGO manipulation: “Unfortunately some NGOs use some union leaders in order to oppose and obstruct the environmental licenses required to increase the number of wells and pump more oil.”²⁰

Meanwhile, in Ecuador, environmentalists and the indigenous movement have likewise found themselves increasingly on the receiving end of harsh words and occasional police force, even though they had supported the electoral campaign of President Rafael Correa, as well as his campaign for constitutional change. Since passing in April 2008 a Constituent Decree on mining (the so-called Mining Law), which the environmental movement initially welcomed for the increased and stringent controls it would place on large-scale mining, the government has worked closely with the industry (in this case dominated by Canadian companies) in the process of drawing up new legislation to replace the mandate.

Socio-environmental movement organizations felt largely excluded from this process—which culminated in a new mining law (passed in January) that they feel favors transnational companies and large-scale projects (see “Correa vs. Social Movements,” page 21). Meanwhile, Correa’s public position has shifted, and he increasingly lauds the benefits of socially responsible, large-scale mining, emphasizing that the revenues generated can

be used for social development.²¹ At the same time, his attacks on environmentalists have become sharper; he has referred to them variously as “extortionists,” “terrorists,” “infantile leftists and romantic ecologists.”²² Echoing Morales’s association of extraction with national need, Correa has vowed that mining critics will not “impede the exploitation of the resources that the country needs.”

“It’s absurd to be sitting on top of hundreds of thousands of millions of dollars, and to say no to mining because of romanticisms, stories, obsessions, or who knows what,” he said in October 2008.²³

Yet movement organizations’ dissent does not necessarily mean that they oppose all forms of extractive industry. In many instances their primary concerns are about *how* the expansion of mining and hydrocarbon activities is occurring—about the problems of rights, transparency, citizenship, environmental governance, and development raised in the process of expansion. By casting such dissent as forms of “terrorism,” “extortion,” or “neocolonialism,” which are inherently “anti-mining” and “anti-oil,” these presidents evade having to answer questions about

Many social movement organizations do not categorically oppose extractive industry. Their primary concerns often center on how the expansion of hydrocarbon drilling and mining is occurring.

their own arguably authoritarian political styles, at least on the question of extraction.

In sum, the García, Morales, and Correa governments each approach the domestic political ecology of extraction in a remarkably similar way. Put simply: *These resources belong to the nation, not to local or indigenous populations. They will be developed, consultation will be a managed process, and dissent will not be brooked.*

YET DISSENT SHOWS NO SIGN OF GOING AWAY. The big question, then, is what will it achieve? What seems certain is that the conflicts around extractive industry have placed the relationships between economic development, environmental quality, territory, and human rights on the public agenda in new and powerful ways. Indeed, in the figure of Father Marco Arana, conflicts over mining in Peru have produced a potential presidential candidate for the 2011 elections, one whose platform draws heavily on his long history of work on environmental justice and mining.

This increased visibility of socio-environmental issues increases the possibility that various Latin American societies will begin a more inclusive debate on the relationships between the environment, economy, plurinationality, and social democracy (with or without extractive industry). Such a debate must address how well these countries are served by the mixture of large-scale infrastructure, private investment, export-oriented primary production, and modern technology that characterizes the elite-led development model embodied in initiatives like IIRSA.

Furthermore, this new debate must consider in practical, and not merely discursive, terms what other models of development might *feasibly* better serve Latin American societies—bearing in mind the fiscal constraints that limit governments' room for maneuver, regardless of how relatively progressive their platforms may be.

The need for such debate is not trivial. IIRSA has been a massive initiative agreed to by presidents and international financial institutions with scarcely any public or parliamentary debate at all. With just a few exceptions (such as the Bank Information Center), social movements, NGOs, academics, and others became aware of it only very late in the day, in much the same way as the expansion of oil, gas, and mining concessions has crept up behind them. It was only in 2008 that the Andean Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations (CAOI), together with the Bolivian NGO CEADESC, presented a strategy for reorganizing IIRSA, eight years after it was launched.

Yet it remains unclear whether the sum of all this

dissent constitutes an articulated socio-environmental movement, since one encounters a range of positions on the relationships between environment, rights, and development. We can divide these positions into five general currents: Some are motivated by (1) conservationist environmentalism and are concerned primarily about the impacts of extraction on biodiversity and environmental quality. Others express concerns that trace roots to (2) deep ecology, concerns that are also conservationist in intent, but are based on different reasons (a belief in the rights of the environment) and are wont to employ more radical political strategies (e.g., direct action).

Moving away from these more conservationist currents, other environmentalisms in the region draw their energy from commitments that are more social in character. Environmental justice (3), with its roots in human rights and social justice thought, emphasizes inequalities in how different social groups are exposed to environmental costs, risks, and benefits, and insists that there is a set of inalienable human and other rights that should be guaranteed prior to any development strategy based on exploiting natural resources. This position is related to, though differs from what the economist Joan Martínez Alier calls the environmentalism of the poor (4), in which the emphasis is on sustaining environments that in turn sustain lives and livelihoods.²⁴

A final environmentalist current is concerned primarily with increased state access to and control over natural resources and the benefit streams they produce. This resource-nationalist environmentalism (5) critiques the foreign and private control of natural resources rather than extraction *per se*, and under certain circumstances (e.g., nationalized control over extractive industry) can accept that certain rights are infringed and some livelihoods threatened if the nation as a whole benefits. Finally, within these same mobilizations, there are also currents of thought that are not environmentalist at all, but rather emphasize the need for much more progressive redistribution of the benefits generated by extraction.

We have, then, a tangle of currents that coexist within socio-environmental protests, and they can and do pull movements in different directions. The tensions between the first two, more conservation-minded environmentalisms and latter three, more socially concerned positions are clear. Perhaps more thorny are the tensions that exist among the latter three, all of which might be associated with a broad "left" position in the region; while none is intrinsically opposed to extraction on environmental grounds, each allows for quite different trade-offs among environment, rights, and development, as well as

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between the local and the national. Arguably the fifth current, resource nationalism, is the most clearly expressed among the broad social bases of Correa's Alianza País and Morales's MAS. Conversely, indigenous and human rights movements tend to express positions that are far closer to the ideas that underlie environmental justice and the environmentalism of the poor.

How these differences are negotiated is critical. In some cases, negotiation has occurred through co-optation and corruption—movement leaders take favors of some sort and tone down their positions in return. Indeed, any commitment to these movements should not obscure a recognition that such corruption is serious and has affected how, for instance, the gas fields of Peru's Camisea and Bolivia's Chaco have developed. In other cases, negotiation is conducted through compensation—a similar mechanism to the first, except that benefits are transferred to a broader group than just the movement leadership. These mechanisms help neither to consolidate democracy nor to bring about institutions that could allow any sustained resolution of political difference surrounding the relationships between extraction, environment, and rights. In yet other cases, of which Bagua is an extreme example, “negotiation” occurs through violent conflict.

Ironically, one country where there has been some institutional innovation appears to be Peru—the least likely candidate on the face of things. The state has begun to take faltering steps toward stronger environmental regulation, while some regional governments and NGOs have begun to experiment with ecologically based land-use planning, and, following the tragedy in Bagua and other conflicts, conditions may now be in place for a more systematic debate on the rights of local populations to free prior and informed consent regarding economic activities on their lands and territories and for the passing of legislation to protect these rights. Indeed, the Bagua incident took place just as the Ombudsman's office was pushing for such a debate.

Four factors seem to have made these inklings of “progress” possible. The first has been conflict itself, which has been sufficiently sustained to force government and industry to respond. While some responses have involved the use of force and ridicule, others have been more constructive. Indeed, all the evidence suggests that without popular mobilization and conflict, the rules of the game governing relationships between development and environment do not change, least of all when extractive industry is in ques-

tion. Second, the mobilizations around García's decrees of June 2008 appear to have contributed to a deepened sense of shared Amazonian and indigenous identities and rights, as well as to greater awareness among the non-indigenous population that these issues cannot be ignored. Third, a strong, independent, and professional government Ombudsman's office (La Defensoría del Pueblo) has played a vital role in converting loosely stated and sometimes inchoate positions expressed during protest into concrete

New environmental debates must consider in practical terms what other development models might feasibly better serve Latin America, bearing in mind governments' fiscal constraints.

positions on how government policy and practice should change. To play this role, however, the Ombudsman must be autonomous of the executive and utterly committed to the constitution: Co-opted Ombudsman's offices do not help. And fourth, there must be civil society organizations that can support both the Ombudsman and socio-environmental movements in elaborating strategies and proposals.

In the end, whether such steps toward institutional change progress far will depend considerably on the geopolitical relationships in which the extractive economy is embedded. In Peru, the position that the

United States takes on whether the decrees being protested in Bagua really *were* necessary to satisfy the government's free trade agreement with the United States will matter. Even if the Peruvian government's motivations are simply to facilitate extractive investment, it has used the free trade agreement to assert the need for some of these decrees (interestingly, a prestigious consultancy in Peru, Apoyo, issued a report in June suggesting that the decrees could be repealed without threatening the trade agreement).²⁵ Elsewhere the geopolitical weight of the United States is declining, as extraction becomes an increasingly important element of relationships with China, Russia, Brazil, India, Venezuela, and Canada. If, and how far, these governments worry about the environmental and social consequences of extraction will go a long way in determining the scope of progressive change.

The human cost of the Bagua incident was, of course, immense. Many hope, however, that the lives lost and rights violated will force the Peruvian government and industry to accept the need for legal and policy changes that give greater guarantees to human rights, self-determination, and environmental quality in territories where extractive industry takes place. If this is the final effect of Bagua, the question is whether the same sort of change can be secured elsewhere in the region—without any more Baguas. ■

70, a retired bank manager and lifelong resident, quipped, "I'm happy to have Americans here. I say, welcome to Vieques! Come share our contamination with us!"

Claudio Encarnación Solís, a 60-year-old former laborer and artist, puzzled over the seeming indifference of North American investors to health concerns. "Their interest in acquiring land and money affects their minds," he said. "Those who don't have to worry about cancer can concentrate on palaces, development, and factories. [The North Americans] don't worry about health. For us *viequesenses*, who are experiencing this crisis and illness, we are preoccupied not with money but with health. You have to have good health first to be able to enjoy everything else."

Faced with multiple challenges posed by environmental contamination, the wildlife refuge, and gentrification, islanders continue to rely on social mobilization to hold the military and state accountable for cleanup and sustainable development. Since 2003, activists have organized numerous acts of civil disobedience, including marches and setting up encampments on restricted beaches in eastern Vieques, demanding that the federal government clean up the area and return it to residents.

These acts of civil disobedience have had a demonstrable effect on the cleanup process. The navy initially devoted itself to removing ordnance only from the western side of Vieques, a smaller, more manageable operation than addressing the catastrophic mess in the east. Protesters' continued defiance, however, in entering into restricted eastern lands, demonstrated that the land was meant to be used by people, not just pelicans. This forced the navy to shift gears and begin cleaning up in the east. In addition, activists' continued opposition to the open detonation of ordnance in the cleanup process forced the EPA to set up an air-monitoring station.

As Vieques residents struggle for access to land and participation in local decision making, they confront broader questions of political authority, control over natural resources, definitions of common property rights—in sum, the rights and privileges of citizenship. The struggle of Vieques remains fundamentally about unequal power relations between the United States and Puerto Rico and the island's lack of sovereignty. As Vieques residents demand a voice in the future of the island, however, as they struggle for accountability and environmental remediation, they lay the groundwork for self-determination. ■

NOTES

The New Extraction

1. This essay draws on research conducted during a fellowship on territories, conflict, and development funded by the U.K.'s Economic and Social Research Council (www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/andes). It owes a great debt to a long-standing collaboration with Denise Humphreys Bebbington and to the comments of María Luisa Burneo, Guido Cortéz, Fernando Eguren, Jennifer Moore, Francisco Rhon, Cynthia Sanborn, and Martin Scurrah.
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