



Transitions towards post-extractive societies in Latin America

An answer to the EU Raw Materials Initiative
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Introduction

This paper aims to serve as an introduction for those who are interested in studying the impact of the current international demand for raw materials. EU policies are partly responsible for new social-environmental conflicts in places such as Latin America. It goes on to provide details of some innovative initiatives based around implementing social alternatives which depend less on extractive industries.

Despite a long period of extractive policies which started with the Spanish and Portuguese conquest and colonisation of the Americas, it is remarkable that the growing demand for raw materials is not coming from those countries who have them in abundance but from those vying for global hegemony.

It is well known that the EU's integrated strategy on Raw Materials (2008), brings together a number of policies focused on securing EU access to raw materials in the international markets, and consequently guaranteeing a more intensive exploitation of raw materials and reducing the current dependency by local industry on the importation of strategic raw materials. As a strategy, it reflects the EU's increasing tendency to link investment to international trade negotiations and European policies of growth and employment. In this context, practices such as so called "sustainable mining" are quickly abandoned in favour of a strategy whose explicit goal is to guarantee competitiveness and growth of the European economy without any regard for the social and environmental impact of those measures in other countries.

These policies are very telling of the politics of the EU authorities, giving a strong backing to multinational companies operating in resource rich countries in order to guarantee access to key raw materials.

Over the last years several communities in Latin America have been suffering from the devastating impact of extractive activities, whether through the direct effect of companies or through the support of governments who promote intensive extraction of natural resources as a way to attract investment. A new political and social environment and above all, the determined mobilisation of local communities, have helped develop alternative proposals and ideas to this extractive type of development. This paper intends to highlight some of the characteristics of the current extractive models in order to support a debate around development models, and EU trade and investment policies. It attempts to broaden the post-extractive debate towards the development of a framework which supports alternative democratic and autonomous societies that respect the cultural and biological diversity so necessary for the well being and survival of our planet.

A. INCREASING PRESSURE FOR RAW MATERIALS AND THE ROLE OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Large scale extractive activities are not new to Latin America. They can be traced back to the Conquest and Colonial periods that began towards the end of the 15th Century. The historical competition for natural resources, and more specifically for precious metals such as gold, has left a trail of destruction and brutality which continues to leave a mark on its population and environment to this day.

The result has been devastation and injustice, and the presence of an ecological debt unrecognised by the vast majority of developed nations (see Box 1). Intensification of extractive activities has been fed by global market demands and the rising prices of minerals and hydrocarbons during the last decade.

As a consequence, the majority of Latin American countries have been specialising in raw material exports, as shown by the increase of these in terms of exports and the growth of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the area of natural resources, which reached 43% in 2010 according to ECLAC¹, 2010. See Box 2 for further details.

BOX 1: ENVIRONMENTAL DEBT TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH

“Environmental Debt is about the historical demand of the debt that industrialised countries in the Global North have to developing countries because of the plunder, destruction and devastation that the former countries caused since the invasion, conquest and subsequent period of colonisation of the latter. In colonial times, European countries exploited minerals such as gold, silver, precious stones, timber and genetic resources, which were looted from American colonies. On top of this, tax was imposed on local populations by European conquistadores. They also imposed models of extraction and production based on the needs of the European economy, which made the Industrial Revolution possible. All this happened at the expense of the death and enslavement of the native population. At the time of the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores, it is estimated that the American continent had 70 million inhabitants. A mere century and a half later, it only had 3.5 million. On the other hand, it is estimated that slave traders captured some 70 million people, of which only 10 million reached the American continent. Conquest was rooted in violence and domination, in the desecration of life.”

Source: Southern People’s Ecological Debt Creditors Alliance (2012)

BOX 2: FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND NEO-EXTRACTIVISM IN SOUTH AMERICA

In 2010, the oil and gas sector in Brazil amounted to 22% of total FDI, and metal mining 14%. In Chile, about 41% was concentrated on mining, and in Bolivia, between 2004 and 2008, extractive activities accounted for 56% of FDI – exploitation and prospecting of mines and quarries (34%), the exploitation and prospecting of crude oil and natural gas (22%). In Colombia, the oil industry (42%) and mining (30%) represented 74% of the FDI (ECLAC, 2010).

¹ The UN Commission for Latin America, 2010

The EU

The statistics show an important correlation between foreign investment, trade and intensive exploitation of natural resources, with a remarkable presence of European companies in the oil, energy and service sectors. In an effort to secure economic growth and the competitiveness of European industry globally, the European Commission (EC) has designed an integrated strategy for raw materials (also known as the Raw Materials Initiative, RMI) based on three pillars:

- Secure access to raw materials in international markets
- Set conditions for a better use of raw materials of European origin
- Reduce the consumption of raw materials as a way to limit dependency on key imports (EC, 2008).

It expresses real concern that over half of the known sources of minerals are located in countries which have deficient infrastructure and which suffer from extreme poverty and violence. In many of those countries, investment and trade with the EU is already taking place, through diverse mechanisms, such as investment and association agreements, or what is often called “raw materials diplomacy”. In practice, this means policies are being effectively coordinated for the use and direct exploitation of available resources, without taking into account the social and environmental cost in those countries where the extractive activities take place.

The RMI identifies that Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and Mexico are turning into key providers of strategic minerals, as mentioned in the list of 14 raw materials considered to be vital by the EU². It is therefore not a coincidence that in the face of this scenario, Brazil appears as the biggest destination for FDI in Latin America, thanks to the discovery of the Pré-Sal oil fields and to the fact that it is the biggest exporter of iron in the region (see Box 3). Brazil receives 43% of the total FDI in the region (US\$48 million), followed by Mexico, Chile, Peru and Colombia, who all have Trade Agreements with the EU and an increasingly important extractive sector in their economy.

BOX 3: DISCOVERY OF PRÉ-SAL: AN URGENT DEBATE IN BRAZIL

The discovery of massive oil deposits (the biggest such discovery in the world for the past decade) in the South-East coast of Brazil, has created great national and regional expectation because of what it means in terms of income and investment. Chinese and Norwegian companies such as Statoil are already part of a joint venture with Petrobras in the area of prospecting. The first shipment was sent to Chile in April 2011 from this so called “Lula Field” operated by a consortium between Petrobras, BG Group (UK) and Galp Energia (Portugal).

Until now, the national debate has been centred on issues such as royalties, and little attention has been paid to the social and environmental impact of the escalation of extractive activities in Brazilian society (Mineiro & de Lourdes Deloupy, 2012).

The intensification of extractive activities in Latin America, mostly in mining, oil and gas is increasing the pressure over resources and redefining the role of the State. Thus, countries such as Ecuador and Mexico have advanced the renegotiation of oil contracts or the approval of contracts for operational services with incentives. Some other governments have focused more on discussing the distribution of income created by extractive activities, such as those of Brazil, Chile and Colombia. Others such as Venezuela or Bolivia have implemented a greater involvement of the State in defining the scope of extractive industries, putting in practice programmes of profit transfer.

Generally speaking, debates around these neoextractive activities are focused on plans by these governments to obtain a bigger share of the profits created by the high prices of raw materials in the international markets. This, of course, has a lasting impact on governance policies and social cohesion.

On the other hand, it needs to be taken into account that this increasing exploitation of natural resources takes place in deeply unequal countries, with high levels of unemployment and hunger, and where insufficient spending in public services directed towards eradicating poverty are at the heart of escalating social conflicts caused by territorial fragmentation and impact of projects of investment in extractive sectors such as agriculture, fishing, natural resources and other national industries. This model of development therefore creates new unresolved conflicts.

² According to the EC (2008) report the EU is highly dependant on imports of metals (especially those required in high tech such as cobalt, platinum, rare earth and titanium), and has a very high dependency on secondary raw materials.

B. LATIN AMERICAN EXTRACTIVE ACTIVITIES AND NEW SOCIAL-ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS

In Latin America, governments have implemented differentiated strategies in relation to extractive industries. There are some governments that have followed the pattern that natural resources should be granted on concession to multinational companies, as a means to significantly increase national income, such as Peru and Colombia.

This is why there is an increasing number of conflicts with local communities – mostly indigenous groups – trying to prevent the destruction of their livelihoods. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which demands that states ratify and apply Convention 176 on Health and Safety in the Mining Industry, this industry has just 1% of the world's workforce, and yet it is responsible

BOX 4: MAIN FEATURES OF LATIN AMERICAN NEO-EXTRACTIVISM

- I. It reinforces the extractive area of economy as fundamental to a predatory development model, based on raw materials exports.
- II. It combines elements of an intensive and multinational model of extractivism, with strategies aimed at attracting foreign investment to the exploitation of natural resources.
- III. In some cases, it does not exclude nationalisation of resources and legislation –often fiscal – in order to intensify the presence of the State in extractive enterprises mostly as joint-ventures.
- IV. It is part of a model of economic growth and development based on the notion of an unlimited availability of natural resources.
- V. It has a strategic importance for the “developmentalist” and clientelist agenda of Latin American governments, making it difficult to debate about conflict and the social and environmental impact of this policy. Additionally, it is difficult to debate its impact on public policies in relation to poverty eradication.
- VI. It deals with conflict by criminalising communities and social movements.
- VII. It promotes a form of insertion in the world market of highly dependent economies, weakening autonomous projects of regional integration.

for 8% of deaths in the workplace, thus being one of the most dangerous industries in the world. It goes without saying that people are often employed informally, without social protection and without meeting proper safety standards. According to the official figures provided by the Colombian government, over the last three years there have been 216 victims in 23 mining accidents.

On the other hand, so called ‘neoextractivism’ refers to new policies which strengthen the role of the state in the exploitation and ownership of resources, while at the same time developing public policy addressing problems such as poverty and inequality, as is the the case with countries such as Bolivia and Venezuela.

Both examples can contribute towards understanding new social and environmental conflicts and new proposed transition alternatives towards societies which depend less on the exploitation and export of raw materials (see Box 4).

Over the last number of years, Latin American neoextractivism has demonstrated the limitations of

this model of expecting exports and foreign investment to solve historical and structural problems of inequality, inequity, and above all, the destruction of the environment. Other than stimulate and intensify social and environmental conflicts, this model does not create jobs, and does not solve food and justice related issues for communities in the affected territories.

A strong case study for examining conflict between foreign investment and indigenous communities, is Peru, where the Public Ombudsman wrote a report in mid 2011, recording at least 227 conflicts, the vast majority of them due to environmental and social causes (Peru Indigenous and Civil Society Organisations, 2011). This is further discussed in Box 5.

In most cases, the nationalisation of investments and / or industries, currently being promoted in several Latin American countries, is reinforcing dependency patterns and a tendency towards repression of the people. It is also increasing the social and environmental cost of the model, displacing communities, polluting and

BOX 5: THE GAS WAR IN PERU (THE CAMISEA CASE)

One of the most important gas sources in Latin America is to be found in the fields of San Martín and Cashirari in Peru. The project, known as CAMISEA is being exploited by a holding company called Peru LNG which has companies from the US, Europe (REPSOL) Korea and Japan. It is estimated to be in operation for 40 years. Even though this project has been praised as a source of employment and was originally thought as a way to cover the gas needs of industries in Lima and Callao – through the construction of a gas pipeline of more than 60 kms – further negotiations identified that the main aim of this project would be gas supply to external markets such as Mexico and the USA.

Over the last three years, more than 7 communities in Vinchos and Ayacucho, have been protesting over their lands being affected by the

pipeline of the project CAMISEA II. In April 2011, a peasant delegation went to Lima seeking dialogue with the company and government officials in the Ministry of Mining and Energy. After months of fruitless negotiations however, new clashes with the police erupted in November, which left three peasants wounded and eleven arrested.

In 2010, conflict with communities in Cusco caused more than 18 wounded and a general strike in Quillabamba. The locals were protesting against the export of gas which was badly needed by local communities. Currently the Peruvian government and the holding company are in negotiations to make sure that the gas from that field will be used exclusively for the internal market so that exports by companies such as REPSOL are reduced.

destroying water sources, while also having an impact on the pattern of undue appropriation of public funds by national authorities and foreign companies.

The main reason for this fragility lies in the fact that current strategies of development do not solve traditional sources of conflict; they even create new ones, as transnational mining in Central America has done. It also makes local communities pay for the environmental and social costs of extractive activities, while reinforcing a very dangerous type of development that is dependent on exports and income derived from extractive activities. This is why the nationalisation of companies and the implementation of focused public policies are not enough to promote an alternative model which can strengthen an autonomous political space and a regional process of integration based on ideas of equality and justice.³

C. TRANSITION TO POST-EXTRACTIVISM: A LATIN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLOBAL DEBATE ON RAW MATERIALS AND DEVELOPMENT

This criticism and questioning of the current extractive cycle in Latin America is coexistent with interesting debates in many countries on the potential impact and the sustainability of development strategies which rely on economic growth increasingly based on the export of raw materials and foreign investment in areas linked to the exploitation of natural resources. There is growing concern about the current forms of extractive industries in the region and their relation to social and environmental conflicts.

Latin American post-extractivism stands, in this light, for the very possibility of thinking of strategies that go beyond the predominant western economic model, giving thought to the serious social and environmental consequences caused by an economic model dependent on the development of extractive industries. Post-extractivism is trying to articulate an alternative vision of Latin American societies in the face of limited resources, and build within its framework the rights of Nature and a new epistemic practice and understanding of “transitions towards alternatives to development” (Gudynas, 2011).

Such a transition aims to eradicate poverty and to concede rights to Nature, which necessarily means a reorientation of production to give priority to the ecosystem and to create regulations and public policies

³ All of this pressure, plus that from European Multinational Companies in the area of oil exploitation (REPSOL, SHELL), mining (Monterrico Metals) and natural resources, have been discussed and denounced by the Permanent Tribunal of the People (TPP) as politically incoherent with the discourse on trade and sustainability of the EU.

which deal with issues such as land tenure, disproportionate accumulation of wealth and use of the commons.

In Latin America this transition needs to be thought of in terms of at least three extractive models which are intertwined in the region. First of all, there is a form of predatory extractivism, usually large scale, which produces an enormous dependency on the income generated by activities which are highly polluting, risky and destructive to the environment. Usually, this form of extractivism combines an intensification of social problems related with displacement of communities, repression and systematic violation of social, economic and cultural rights, with environmental degradation. Predatory extractivism has especially negative impact on water sources (because of the use of highly toxic materials) and on the labour conditions of those communities close to the area of prospecting projects.

The exploitation of over 900,000 tonnes of limestone by the French company Lafarge in the region of Intag in Ecuador, is a good example of predatory extractivism. An environmental audit in 2010 blamed the company for risking the security and health of the population, particularly on the grounds of sonic and air pollution, but also for abandoning machinery on the banks of river Quinde and for poisoning its waters with fenol (a dangerous toxic waste). These types of projects have no effective mechanisms for social control or transparency, so communities tend to organise in order to defend their rights. For instance, the Association of Perugachi occupied the premises of the company to protest over its impact on their health, on the environment and on the archaeological legacy of the local communities.

Secondly, there is a form of moderate extractivism, which supposes a slightly more active form of control in terms of environmental and social legislation on the scope, risks and magnitude of extractive projects. They have effective mechanisms for citizens' participation for decision making and there are also up to date technologies in order to reduce the environmental impact. In some cases, the combination of these mechanisms of control can delay or suspend some extractive projects.

A recent case in Costa Rica which resulted in the permit to a company intending to exploit some 700,000 ounces of gold in the northern region of the country being suspended is a good example of how citizens' control can force a government to pass legislation against some forms of predatory mining. The final result, a reform to the Mining Law, declares the country free of open cast metal mining. Apart from the legal prohibition and the suspension of the rights of exploitation, the legal decision also demanded economic reparations from the multinational company for environmental damage

caused by clearing woods. These sorts of measures have a significant impact on other countries in Latin America, such as Peru and Argentina, where there are already debates going on about the risks of open cast mining.

Finally, we can also assume the existence of forms of extractivism which are linked to local and regional demands on resources and low intensity projects which control the social and environmental impact. Post-extractivism, thus, does not mean a total disappearance of extractive activities, but a reduction in their current intensity and scale, and attempts to control them beyond the global demand for raw materials. It means a possibility to think of extractivism in a broader framework of a diversified economy, with employment alternatives and a tax policy which can be applied in favour of systematic programmes for profit transfer in order to eradicate poverty. The idea is to break the cycle of specialisation in raw materials and the high cost in social and environmental terms for the communities.

Although the Ecuadorian government does not have a general perspective about this transition phase, maybe the most important debate at international level has been the attempt by its Energy and Mining Minister in 2007 not to allow the prospecting of oil in a part of the Yasuni National Park (the field of Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini).

Box 6 reviews the current extractive models and proposes a transition for Latin America. This proposal fits the parameters for the debate on post-extractive transitions we have developed for a number of reasons. Firstly, it questions the developmentalist logic of resource exploitation as we know it. Apart from the value of oil, it also acknowledges other values which are as or more important, such as nature, and cultural elements. The 'no exploitation' area advances the consolidation of a new alternative geography for extractive activities and the debate on the economic measures needed to compensate for the impacts on the potential diminishment of income and investment affecting those countries highly dependent on raw material exports⁴.

The Ecuadorian government's decision was also based on considerations further added to the Constitutional Body of the Reform of 2008, above all those related to "Nature Rights" and Good Living. Other than the

⁴ Some European governments promised financial support for this proposal. This was particularly the case of the German parliament in 2008 and the Norwegian government through the European Fund for the Reduction of Emissions by Deforestation and Erosion. Currently, there is over US\$100 million gathered through EU cooperation. A remarkable case is that of the Viva Yasuni Association in France, which collect funds from citizens while it puts pressure on the French government to commit internationally to this initiative. The region of Meurthe and Moselle has already funded the initiative with €40,000. There are similar efforts taking place in Spain and Italy.

BOX 6: EXTRACTIVE MODELS, PROPOSAL FOR A TRANSITION IN LATIN AMERICA

Model	Features	Impacts	Examples
Predatory Extractivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensively practised, large-scale • It creates an economy of enclaves • High level of dependence on foreign investment • No social control/transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution and destruction of water sources and forests • Displacement of communities • Source of rights violations (Convention 169 and 176 ILO) • Semi-slavery working conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opencast Mining • Soybeans Monoculture
Moderate Extractivism*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium to low scale activities • Existence of environmental, social and fiscal regulations • More adequate use of technologies • It has mechanisms to consult citizens and for their participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moratorium on the expansion of extractive activities • It links with local and regional industries in the productive process • Transparency in investment and social control over income created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative decree which forbids opencast mining in Costa Rica
Basic extractivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale extractive activities driven by local and regional market demand • Special regulation on health and employment • Strong fiscal and environmental legislation • Community participation and social control • Diversification of the economy and reinforcement of local and regional markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of the ecosystem • Decrease in labour accidents and poverty reduction • Diversified exports and investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative for not exploiting oil of ITT-Yasuni

Source: Gudnyas (2011)

**In the classification used by E. Gudnyas, moderate extractivism is defined as "Sensible". What we have called basic extractivism is defined as "Indispensable". This is a semantic difference which does not affect the content of the features and impacts described for each model.*

pragmatic value of this proposal, there is a need to take into consideration the important symbolic-political meaning of a measure that goes against the grain of current expansive tendencies towards predatory extractivism.

Secondly, the initiative is an alert sent out about the limits of an economic growth model based on the increasing use of raw materials and an open debate on dogmatic conceptions ranging from neoliberalism to

modern tendencies of the green economy. It represents a differentiated understanding on public policies and the constitutional-regulatory framework towards a balanced view on social and environmental justice.

Thirdly, the proposal being on a geographic region in the Amazon basin represents the chance of strengthening those regional instruments (such as the Amazon Cooperation Treaty) from a different angle to that of the neo-developmental projects of the Brazilian

government and the attempts at regional integration through mega-projects.

The transition proposals are not at all a novelty developed in the context of Latin America's dependant type of capitalist development, but have also been spurred on by the climate crisis and the rise in the price of commodities in international markets. There are certainly strong economic components, derived from the debate on growth and on the use of resources from extractive activities experienced over the last years, but it also takes into account important public policy debates and political factors, above all in relation to the most recent political transformations happening in some Latin American states⁵.

In the political-cultural front, other world views, which we could call peripheral or subdued to a dominant Eurocentric vision, have started to dispute the hegemony of the Western modern paradigm of progress. The emergence of proposals from the Andean and Amazonic peoples has led even to the change of legal and constitutional frameworks, such as in the case of Bolivia and Ecuador.

New ways of thought such as the Sumak Kawsay or Sumaq Qamaña⁶, to mention but two most debated proposals in a Latin American context, are revealing alternative understandings in the face of developmentalist paradigms, particularly in areas such as the relationship with nature and territorial-community based proposals of autonomy. These worldviews integrate elements that question the paradigm of economic growth and progress as understood in modern Eurocentric views. For instance, they integrate elements of community life and a new relationship with nature, which are impossible to guarantee according to the prevalent framework of extractive development. They have a strong emphasis on the value of territory as the basis of life and integrate the relationship between the spiritual and material, as opposed to the binary concept which views them as opposites. Its foundation is satisfaction and harmony with life, and supposes dignity and respect for biological and cultural diversity.

All of this, plus mass mobilisations of communities, provide the ground for demands of autonomy and the emergence of new paradigms to face the challenge of development and its impact over nature. In some

Peruvian communities, local governments are working on participation in decision making that have a huge impact on the lives of local populations, for instance, when it comes to water sources or in terms of agricultural and fishing activities. In Cerro Escalera, the local government of San Martín stopped an oil concession on the banks of the main river; in Panama the indigenous and peasant communities have carried mass protests throughout 2011 to stop the reform of the Mining Code which was aimed at expanding mining exploitation in the country.

Other Latin American countries, such as Argentina, have developed legislation in order to protect the glaciers and their surrounding environments in the Andes. From March 2011 there has been in effect a government decree for the protection of the glaciers that has served as a wall of containment against the Chile-Argentina binational mining project of Pascual Lama.

The legal framework still is insufficient, but they prove a growing awareness about extractive activities at a hemispheric level. It is more and more evident that there's a need to radically question current extractive strategies, promoting alternatives in order to diversify production and to advance proposals towards food sovereignty and energy sovereignty.

There are new urgent challenges to connect these proposals and alternatives of regional autonomous integration with ideas of balance between regional biodiversity and the material and cultural needs of the people. Particularly, the debate on the sources of energy and the relationship between the urban and the rural worlds in a context of geographic fragmentation promoted by the logic of new patterns of capital accumulation and distribution. The urban context being produced as a result of the displacement of communities, the destruction of woods and native species and the increasing demand of energy and resources such as water, is creating a new geography of conflict, where the battle is being led by those social sectors who are the most vulnerable to social and environmental crises.

This is a warfare for access to resources which perversely pits the impoverished urban inhabitants against the displaced and dispossessed inhabitants from the countryside. It is derived from the way in which the extractive industries work and their logic of employment.

Because of the way the system works, it needs to be structured from a local and regional level in a way which allows for employment and income sources which do not depend exclusively on extractive activities. They compete in some regions for access to biodiversity and territory used by the peasantry, indigenous communities and Afro descendants. This pressure for resources has

⁵ Maybe the most interesting element of the debate is that of Multinational Status which has been started in the Andean region.

⁶ These aspects of the Quechua and Aymara view of the World in the Andes have been translated as Good Living. This translation is inaccurate for political-cultural purposes, for it drains of content the history and meaning of potentially revolutionary expressions which exist in alternative culture. However, this cultural appropriation has produced new understandings and elements that are to be found today in constitutional and social policy. In these cases, the expression Good Living has been widely used.

also pushed forward the debate on new forms of local and regional autonomy, with proposals ranging from Multinational States to the autonomy of indigenous communities in the Amazon basin.

There is a need for effective legislation in order to exercise rights such as consultation (informed and prior) or new regional powers to rearrange production in extractive areas.

As has already been stated, the debate on post-extractive alternatives should begin with a recognition and analysis of the impact that development policies, based on the dogma of progress and the endless availability of natural resources, have had on the current world map of access and use of natural resources. The type of territorial fragmentation promoted by the advance of particular economic interests over the commons is destroying any chance of regional integration based on a multi-dimensional view of geography (local-regional) that makes the best use of the enormous riches in terms of ecosystems and biomes which exists in regions such as Latin America.

The main concern of governments should be to address the imbalances caused by the hegemony of multinational corporations and the vulnerability of communities and countries in the face of the social and environmental impact of extractive activities. There can be no meaningful proposals for social inclusion without a greater involvement and participation by organised communities, or without reinforcing their mechanisms of cohesion and advocacy in the face of the prevalent global logic of appropriation of the commons and life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are proposals for a bioregional cooperation between the EU and Latin America in the face of the current extractivist model:

- To advance the preparation of case studies and the creation of proposals to deconstruct the “development discourse” based on increased exports of raw materials and direct investment in natural resources.
- Apply pressure to create an international framework of legislation, control and transparency of national and multinational companies involved in extractive activities, and of foreign investment (not only during the phase of the actual extractive process, but from the environmental and social impact assessment of the projects through all of the production process).
- To create an international campaign to dissociate raw materials from Stock Exchange speculation and to move towards global agreements on fair prices, equitable use of resources according to global needs of food, health and environment protection.
- To establish a mechanism to monitor and denounce those EU trade, investment and cooperation practices (including in the Association Agreements) in relation to Latin American countries which do not respect basic principles of human rights, Nature rights and of poverty eradication policies.
- To prepare an annual bi-regional report on direct investment (or private-public partnerships) and environmental and labour practices of extractive companies in Latin America and Europe. This report is to be discussed with the authorities at EC and European Parliament levels, as well as with the international media.
- To promote a debate and to come up with proposals for a post-extractivist society, considering the knowledge and practice developed in other regions including Europe, Asia and Africa. The promotion of diverse regional spaces for debate can be the basis for enhanced proposals, based on concrete experiences, on the road to a transition model.
- To promote and support citizens’ and community referendums, as well as the ratification and adequate implementation by States of the Conventions 169 and 176 of the ILO, dealing with indigenous territories and health and safety issues related to the mining industry.

- To promote regional policies to reinforce policies on energy, gas and food. This is essential for a strategy of South American and European integration. Currently, there are budding markets in South America but they are still unconnected from broader proposals which include a multi-dimensional approach to the use of resources, ecosystems and biomass in the region. The same is also true for the EU.
- Finally, every effort at mobilisation and information is vital to move forward in the coordination and strengthening of community and citizen initiatives against the power of multinational corporations. Since these are global problems, we need to put in place mechanisms to allow the creation of organisational and epistemic bridges for a new understanding of what kind of life we aspire to in this planet, without losing our difference in the process, since this enriches our human diversity and the environment.

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