3 Extractivisms

Tendencies and consequences

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Extractivisms such as mining, oil or agricultural exploitation have taken on a major role in South America. Extractivism in its diverse forms is presented as an indispensable means of promoting development, but at the same time it is the object of growing questioning and resistance by citizens, popular sector organizations and social movements for its negative impacts. Thus the need to clarify the concept of extractivism and to systematize its diverse dynamics and impacts. The purpose of this chapter is to offer a summary of the most recent advances in this subject, with a central focus on issues that are presently widely debated in South America.

The concept of extractivism

The term extractivism can be traced back at least as far as the 1970s as a means of describing developments in the mining and oil export sectors. It was promoted by large transnational corporations, multilateral banks and governments, while those who opposed it from within civil society and the popular sector also used the term. This scenario became more complex in South America as of the mid-2000s when a series of so-called 'progressive regimes' – post-neoliberal regimes formed in what has been described as a 'progressive cycle' in Latin American politics – also opted for the extraction of minerals and metals, hydrocarbons (oil and gas) and agro-food products, and the export of these 'natural resources' in primary commodity form. This promoted a conceptual discussion that began in the Andean countries in 2008, which sought a definition that was clear, rigorous, robust and with precise categories that allowed for a scientific predictive analysis (the first definition was discussed in Ecuador in 2009; see Gudynas, 2015).

The concept has had a documented history, linked directly to mining and oil export sectors, made by actors who promoted it, companies that profited from the exploitation and export of primary commodities, and by those who resisted it in the form of citizen networks. However, since the proponents of extractivism maintain that it is an activity of appropriation of natural resources like any other, for example, peasant agriculture, there

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is a need for a more rigorous and systematic study of it. It is obvious that 'extractivism' (appropriation of natural resources) takes diverse forms with very different dynamics and impacts, thus it is essential to differentiate them.

Different types of natural resource appropriations can be distinguished along two dimensions: the destination of resources (depending on whether domestic or external markets prevail), and the volume or intensity of their extraction. Table 3.1 illustrates the resulting different situations. In terms of destination, natural resources can be processed and consumed locally (e.g., food agriculture for local consumption), within the country (such as minerals used by domestic industry) or exported (as in the case of fossil fuels or hydrocarbons).

To address the issue of volume, indicators of physical appropriation of resources should be used (for example, measured in tonnes). This evaluation not only considers the final resource, but also its 'ecological backpack' (an indicator of intensity in the use of matter per service unit). For example, for every tonne of copper exported, the country has an average of 348 tonnes of rock, soil and other materials. The extracted volume considers the total of all resources removed.

Intensity refers to the environmental effects of the extraction, such as ecotoxicity, the generation of pollutants, use of explosives, etc. The most well-known case in South America is alluvial gold mining that is highly polluting because of the use of mercury and cyanide.

The systematization of the different types of appropriation of natural resources results in the recognition of extractivism as a particular case (Table 3.1). As such it can be defined as the appropriation of natural resources in large volumes and/or high intensity, where half or more are exported as raw materials, without industrial processing or with limited processing.

Table 3.1 Types of extraction and the destination of natural resources

Destination	*Volume/intensity of extraction*		
	Low	*Medium*	*High*
Local	Peasant cultivation for subsistence	Felling of trees for firewood	Capture of water for irrigation or domestic use
National	Vegetable fibre for basketmaking, roofing materials, etc.	Conventional fruit and vegetables for national markets	Quarried stone for construction
Export	Organic food	Flowers for greenhouses	EXTRACTIVISMS Minerals Hydrocarbons Export crops

Source: Gudynas (2015).

The threshold selected to indicate that the destination of the extracted resource is an exporter has been set at 50 percent as a working criterion. It also states that the resources exported correspond to so-called primary products, commodities or commodities, as defined by the United Nations Statistics Division (based on the SITC classification), and accepted by the South American governments. Under this definition extractivisms are actually plural, including the classic form of mining, drilling for oil and gas, and harvesting of agricultural food products (and energy products in the case of soybean and ethanol). But other activities are also exposed as extractivist. These are the cases of alluvial gold mining, various agricultural sectors (coffee, bananas, etc.), logging and activities such as shrimp farms, salmon farms and intensive fishmeal fishery.

It should be noted that there are undoubtedly other ways of appropriating natural resources that have high social and environmental impacts, but that are not regarded as extractives because they do not meet conditions such as an export destination. It is necessary to keep this in mind so as not to fall into exaggerations, extending the definition of the concept to any activity with serious impacts. This happens with some frequency. And there are also those who use it to describe all development strategies, or to refer to financial extractivisms. This is not useful since in becoming increasingly diffuse the term loses its descriptive and analytical attributes, and with this the search for alternatives is undermined.

Extractivism is not an industry, since there is no industrial transformation involved. The insistence on qualifying it as an industry is to appeal to the imaginary of large factories with many workers, as a means of seeking broad support within the citizenry. For this reason, the term 'extractive industry or industries'[1] must be abandoned, both for its conceptual limitations and for its political implications. In the same way, it is incorrect to say that there is a 'production' of minerals, hydrocarbons or grains. In extractivism nothing is produced but everything is extracted (it is a net loss of natural heritage).

Extractivisms are always local, while the removal of natural resources is anchored in specific sites, but at the same time they are tied to globalization, because they are the first link in international marketing and production chains. Prices and demands are determined globally, following rules and structures of international governance.

Extractivisms can be ordered in different 'generations' according to the volumes and intensity in the removal of the natural resources, the technological uses and the balance of energy, water and matter consumed in it (Gudynas, 2015). In this way, first and second generation extractivisms were based mainly on human labor or limited technological equipment.

Nowadays, third generation and fourth generation extractives, intensive machining, large requirements in energy, water and materials to extract the resources, to achieve higher volumes of extraction, prevail. Open-pit mining is an example of third generation extractivism. Fracking, which

requires even more energy, is an example of a fourth generation. In these extreme cases efficiency is falling more and more, because for the removal of each unit of natural resource one needs to apply even more energy, matter or water.

Trends and organization

South American extractives have diversified into different sectors, taking advantage of the past phase of high prices and increased demand for commodities, especially since 2002. The countries deepened their activities in these sectors, expanding them to new areas (including attempts to start mining operations in countries that were not traditionally mining), expanded the search for hydrocarbons and promoted export crops. The total volume exported grew significantly in agricultural products, hydrocarbons and especially in minerals. Brazil became the largest extractivist on the continent, reaching for example the level of 440 million tons of minerals (90 percent correspond to iron ores), and 95.5 million tons of soybean (data for 2014/15) (see also the Essays in Haslam and Heidrich, 2016).

Two recent trends in the organization of extractivism can be identified: readjusted conservatives (or pragmatic neoliberals as in Colombia, Chile, Paraguay and Peru), or progressives (under that type of government at different times in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Uruguay and Venezuela (Gudynas, 2015). The differences are in their economic structuring, the role of the State, the uses of surpluses and their political legitimations. Conservatives continue to play a central role in business and the market, while attempting some adjustments, especially through voluntary corporate accountability measures. Progressives give greater roles to state regulation, including tax reforms in some sectors and direct involvement of state-owned enterprises.

The term neo-extractivism that has become popular in its original sense was an abbreviation of the new extractivisms of progressivism. In a sense, it is an often-repeated error to describe as ‘neo’ extractivism in the recent experience of Colombia or Peru, when in reality these regimes are not progressive and indeed correspond to conservative strategies.

Extractivisms can also be organized under different ownership regimes. Among the most common are private companies (transnational, regional or national), state companies (oil companies are the best-known examples), joint ventures (such as Brazil’s Petrobras), formally private companies controlled by the state or groups close to the government (as with the mining company Vale), cooperatives (mining or agricultural), small or individual enterprises (from small agricultural enterprises to illegal mining).

In extractivism where the state character or agency is emphasized, as in the case of petroleum, the national companies generally subcontract or associate with transnational corporations, which in the end control the commercialization of the resource, and in practice they are the ones that in

most cases actually extract it. In the soy farming sector, a model has been expanded whereby landowners make rental or joint venture agreements with companies that provide technology, inputs and machinery, as well as commercialization of the crop. These companies behave more like corporate logistics actors and are not interested in owning the land but in controlling its uses (the Los Grobo group in Argentina is an example).

It is necessary to distinguish between access and ownership. The first is the capacity to benefit from the resources, and the second refers to rights or faculties over resources, including possession and domain attributes (Ribot and Peluso, 2003). It is about the access that different entrepreneurs now operate to control the ways of extracting natural resources and how they are inserted into trade and production networks. For this reason, large transnationals increasingly accept that the initial phase of extraction is carried out by the State, and there are some that even prefer that this happens because that way they avoid the problems associated with concessions or conflicts with local communities. In this way, different levels of nationalism over ownership are accepted, but the corporations insist on ensuring their control over access to the resource.

Local impacts

The information available for each type of impact on each variety of extractivism is enormous, and space constraints prevent them from being reviewed in detail. But it is important to at least mention some emerging patterns. Environmental effects such as the disappearance of natural areas, reduction of biodiversity (notably deforestation), contamination of soils, water and air, deterioration of soils (including compaction and erosion), loss of water bodies, etc. undoubtedly exist. (See for example MMSD-AS, 2002; Garay Salamanca, 2014; Gudynas, 2015). There are also territorial effects, highlighting the forced implementation of mining or oil concessions on previously existing territorialities such as the peasants or indigenous.

In the case of open-pit mega-mining, it must be recognized that it is actually an ecological amputation, in the sense that it is a physical removal of ecosystems. That happens with farms that cover large areas and remove millions of tonnes of rock per year (for example, the Yanacocha gold miner in northern Peru extracts 180 million tonnes per year).

Multiple social impacts, such as the displacement of local communities, ruptures in community relations, erosion of indigenous worldviews, increased violence with greater criminality, prostitution, networks of corruption, smuggling, have been identified. There are also economic effects, such as the rupture in trade and local production, increased asymmetries in wage income, etc. At the same time, as many of these enterprises generate different types of resistance, social conflicts are unleashed (examples of social problems in the compilations of Hoetmer *et al.*, 2013 for Peru, Toro Pérez *et al.*, 2012 for Argentina, and Svampa and Viale, 2014, for Argentina).

The local impacts (and the spill-over effects described below) are repeated under all property regimes involved in extractivism, whether private, state or mixed. It cannot be said that state enterprises have a better environmental or social performance than private enterprises (as is well known in the case of oil companies). In different ways, the very nature of the extractivist economy and trade imposes a certain type of business performance even on state-owned companies. All of them seek to increase their profitability and therefore outsource their social and environmental impacts.

The promoters of extractivism highlight local impacts that qualify as positive (including access to jobs with higher wages, increase in local consumption, generation of indirect jobs, etc.).

Extractivism is currently creating the most serious environmental problems of the continent, considering its environmental impacts and its extensive territorial affections. In addition, it is a problem that is strongly conditioned by globalization, seriously limiting the options of countries to handle it otherwise. Precisely this combination of factors puts it well above other continental environmental problems.

Spill effects

Parallel to local impacts, 'spill' effects can be seen. These are the conditions and transformations that are generated beyond a specific undertaking, the particular site where it is located or the political measures that make it possible. This occurs, for example, when in order to carry out an extractive activity an environmental regulation is modified, but the effect of this measure is not restricted to that project but affects all environmental management throughout the territory. In this way, the push of extractivism has consequences for the rest of the country, such as changes in public policies, in the functioning of the economy, in the understanding of justice and democracy or in the conception of Nature.

These spill-over effects have not received the necessary attention since concern about local impacts prevails. But the progress of extractivism has generated a cataract of spills that is altering the entire framework of national public policies. Following the example above, when environmental flexibility is applied to allow an extractive undertaking in a site, that reduction is also used by other projects in other areas and in other places in the country. The result is a reduction in environmental quality across the nation and across all sectors.

The different effects of these spills are intertwined (linked to each other) with an enhanced overall impact, and are multidimensional (covering social, environmental, economic and territorial aspects). While all these effects are linked, they will be summarily described below separately.

Environmental, territorial and social spills

Extractivisms reinforce the commodification of nature, presenting it as a mere aggregate of resources, such as minerals or hydrocarbons in the subsoil. A utilitarian perspective predominates where these resources are understood as merchandize with an economic value. This spill-over effect impedes the organicist understandings of Nature and the recognition of other non-utilitarian values, and from there the environmental impacts are minimized.

On the one hand, an increasingly frequent spill-over effect is the reduction or weakening of environmental regulations and their enforcement, which is expressed as 'flexibility.' This situation is similar to 'labor flexibility,' but in the environmental case they originate in measures of the governments to favor or allow a specific extractivist enterprise. It has become more common to accept environmental defaults or to weaken the agencies' enforcement to favor some extractivist enterprise, and this is taken advantage of by other ventures, even non-extractivists, and throughout the country.

This happened early in Brazil under the administration of Lula da Silva, with its pressures and measures on its environmental agency IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of the Environment). The most well-known recent examples are the 'express' environmental permits in Colombia and the so-called 'big environmental packet' in Peru. Its purpose was to accelerate the granting of environmental permits and to present the rules as obstacles to investment. In a very similar way, in Bolivia the government of Evo Morales in 2015 approved reforms that cut environmental assessments and consultations in protected areas and indigenous lands to allow the entry of oil companies, reformed the mining regulations and allowed for the expansion of the agricultural frontier (see Jiménez, 2015).

At the same time, extractive activities involve deep territorial changes through mining and oil concessions, permits for the expansion of the agricultural frontier, etc. In this case spills are the new extractivist territorialities that are imposed on pre-existing territorialities such as indigenous territories, peasant communities, administrative divisions such as municipalities or departments, or protected areas.

With these spills, safeguards or autonomies over some types of territories are suspended or unknown (a problem that affects mainly the indigenous population). A new 'stained' geography is generated with sites under extractivism that are linked to globalization and heavily protected by the State, and other areas where rights coverage and basic services are weak or absent.

New extractive geographies are spreading that can occupy much of the surface of each country. For example, mining concessions in Peru have continued to grow, accounting for 21.02 percent of the country's land area in 2013, while oil blocks already cover approximately 75 percent of the

Amazon region. This situation mainly impacts peasant communities, since it is estimated that 45 percent of their territories have been concessioned to mining (Gudynas, 2015).

Multiple spills have been registered in the social dimension. For example, it is common for governments to tolerate labor ‘flexibilization’ to support extractive enterprises (e.g., low standards of workplace safety or quality, cutbacks or breaches of trade union rights, etc.).

Other spills are expressed in various social impairments tolerated to support extractivism. These include, for example, labor flexibility, poor sanitation in workplaces, tolerance or concealment of local violence, prostitution and trafficking of women, etc. All these effects show that different human rights are violated to make possible the extractivist undertakings.

At the same time, these social spills penetrate the cultural fabric, celebrating the domination of nature, or insisting on myths, such as ‘we are a mining country,’ as if it were genetically determined throughout the population. The spill here is the reinforcement of a cultural structure that accepts, and even desires extractivism, and which, at the same time, resists seeking alternatives.

Illegality, allegations, corruption and rights

Many local impacts such as various spill-over effects progress in part by an articulation between illegal practices and allegative allegality. Cases of illegality refer, for example, to obtaining extractive concessions or to preventing investigations of social or environmental impacts by means of bribes. The cases of allegalities refer to formal legal practices but take advantage of the gaps or limitations of the rules that work against the spirit of the legal framework. The best known here are the maneuvers to avoid paying taxes or take advantage of gaps in environmental quality standards to maintain pollution.

Both allegories and illegalities themselves become spill-over effects as extractivisms repeatedly take advantage of them and governments and other key players tolerate them. This allows us to understand the proliferation of cases of corruption around extractivist enterprises. Cases have been recorded in all South American countries, for all varieties of extractivism and under all property regimes (state, private, mixed). In the cases investigated, the participation of all kinds of social actors, including citizen leaders, was found.

Under this complex framework violations of the rights of people and Nature are common. Therefore, there is a spill that is becoming widespread in several countries where, in order to implement an enterprise or to receive an extractive investment, a reduction in the coverage of some rights or the non-compliance of others is tolerated. Violations of all kinds are accepted regarding the quality of the environment and local conditions; corruption is tolerated and it is possible to criminalize and repress social

movements. Extreme cases lead to violence against people, such as the death of demonstrators by public or private security forces (as in Peru) or the assassination of local leaders (in several cases perpetrated by assassins, as has been denounced in Brazil and Colombia).

The spill exists in that governments rarely investigate and penalize such violations, and in some cases are accomplices (as in police participation in violence against demonstrators). It is a spill where human rights conceptions are cut or weakened, or do not necessarily have to be fulfilled in rural areas.

In this way it ends in a condition that has been called 'extrahección.' This new term comes from the Latin word *extraher*, which means 'to pluck with violence.' Therefore, extractions (*extrahecciones*) are cases of extractivism where the rights of people and nature are violated, especially when it is done with violence.

Extractions are not isolated cases or 'accidents' in the implementation of a project, but are a necessary, prior and frequent condition to carrying out large-scale or very intensive ventures. In effect, third and fourth generation extractivisms have such acute effects that if communities were adequately informed, environmental impact studies were rigorous or all their hidden economic costs were actually accounted for, they would almost never be approved. Therefore, it is necessary to weaken and reduce the coverage of rights to impose these type of activities, leading to a spill that expands across all areas.

Economy and disputes over the surplus

The imposition of extractivism has multiple spills on the national economy. The role of the countries as raw material suppliers was accentuated and during the phase of high prices several distortions were generated, such as the revaluation of national currencies, deindustrialization, etc. 'Enclave economies,' linked directly to globalization (receiving capital, technology, specialized personnel, and exporting raw materials and transferring their profits), but with little relation to the rest of the national economy, and in general without articulation with national industry. These type of effects have been analyzed, for example, as a natural resources curse (described for Ecuador by Acosta, 2009) or as varieties of the 'Dutch disease' (for example, discussed as 'Cholo disease' in Peru by Monge, 2012).

Extractivist proliferation further increased the share of raw materials in total exports. Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela reached extremes as commodities reached 90 percent of exports and were concentrated in a single product (hydrocarbons). Even in Brazil the industry lost its share during this period.

The economic contributions of extractivism to national economies became one of the main arguments to defend them (especially by linking them to anti-poverty programs). It is common that in these type of

evaluations, the concept of income is used, an approach that has limitations. As an alternative, the concept of surplus is used as an umbrella that covers several components (these ideas are inspired by Paul Baran, 1973, and reformulated in Gudynas, 2015).

On the one hand, there are components that express the appropriation of the work and the time of the people, and the transformation in economic valuation from many other different types of values, and that corresponds to the profits, the interests and the surplus value. On the other hand, there are components of the extractivist surplus that result from losing natural heritage to convert it into capital. In some situations this operates on natural resources that are renewable (for example in agricultural extractivisms), and in others it takes place over resources that are not renewable (as is the case with minerals and hydrocarbons). In the first case, some recovery of the heritage (for example, by a good management of the ground or soil) is possible, whereas in the second circumstance there is a net and irreversible loss (as with the extraction of petroleum, since it is not possible to regenerate it).

And although the traditional use of the concept of income has been focused on the first type of benefit (as agricultural rent), it has been extended to the second type (for example, oil rent), when it is evident that they are very different. In addition, much of the surplus is not economically valued (for example, as in the case of ecological backup or the social and environmental impacts of extractivism), and others cannot even be adequately expressed on an economic scale (as is the case of biodiversity wealth), and thus escape the traditional view of rent.

The category of surplus seeks to maintain both the components that can be expressed in an economic metric and those other social and ecological aspects that are not or cannot be measured. From this perspective, extractivisms are immersed in a multidimensional economic, social and environmental surplus. Spills begin to operate as only those that can be counted in an economic metric (expressed in the form of traditional ground rent), while the other forms of surplus, such as those involved in social and environmental impacts, are ignored or displaced. The spill lies in imposing and legitimizing positions that only exhibit the positive incomes of the extractivisms while actively overriding or concealing other processes, such as the transfer of the patrimonial loss and the impacts of socio-environmental costs.

This also allows us to recognize that some conflicts are actually disputes over the surplus, in which some actors wish to appropriate greater economic benefits and to transfer the negative impacts to others. We find, for example, the maneuvers of companies to reduce wages or benefits for mining workers, or the cost savings of oil companies, by neglecting the ecological management in their wells or the loss of fertile soil through the practice of monocultures. There are also governments and local actors that are actively engaged in disputing the economic surplus, but actively avoid

those that involve social and environmental damage. This includes the position of some governments to tax the extraction of some natural resources, such as the demands of local organizations to receive direct payments from the extractive companies.

International subordination

Extractivisms have different global articulations. Their demand and price depends on the needs of the global trade and production networks in which they are inserted. For much of the 2000s, high demand in these global markets, high prices and availability of investments under the well-known 'super-cycle' of commodities, represented external factors that contributed to the hypertrophy of these sectors. For example, Latin America was the number one recipient of mining investment in the world (for these and other data see Echave, 2011).

These factors were instrumental in accentuating the role of South America as a supplier of raw materials, and all countries further prized their exports. The price of these commodities is determined from outside Latin America and is obviously undervalued, since the economic costs due to social and environmental impacts are not included.

At the same time, commodity trade has brought about a huge trade asymmetry. The new physical trade balance indicators (exports of resources) confirm a huge deficit between exports and imports of matter (biomass, minerals or hydrocarbons) for the region. There is a net outflow of resources to large-scale global markets (a net result in the order of 700 million tonnes in 2005, according to UNEP, 2013). The largest physical trade deficit in Latin America was reached in Brazil, with more than 400 million tonnes in 2012 (Samaniego *et al.*, 2017). But the asymmetry in physical trade was higher in Argentina (the country needs to export more than three tonnes for each one of imported goods) (Samaniego *et al.*, 2017). The impact of that extraction is even greater since the 'ecological backup' of each commodity should be added. For these type of factors, extractivisms generate a spill to deepen an economically and ecologically asymmetric and unequal trade.

On the other hand, the need to export these commodities determined that the countries of the continent should accept all the rules and institutions of global governance on trade and finance (such as the WTO). Beyond the rhetoric of integration within Latin America, for example under UNASUR (South American Union of Nations) or MERCOSUR (the Common Market of the Southern Cone), countries were unable to coordinate supply management and prices of commodities, or use them in their own industrial processes. On the contrary, countries competed with each other for exporting natural resources and attracting foreign investment. The alternative to a south-south linkage, especially with China, further contributed to an asymmetric relationship, where South American

nations provided raw materials in exchange for a flood of Chinese manufactures. The subordination to globalization and the extractivist emphasis became barriers to South American integration.

Finally, South American extractivisms are inserted in global trade and production networks that tend to be concentrated in a few large companies, which can be described as 'global oligopolies in natural resources.' Examples include mining companies such as BHP Billiton, Vale, Glencore, Xstrata, Rio Tinto, Newmont and Anglo American. Among the oil companies are Exxon, Shell, Chevron, British Petroleum, Petrobras, Total and China's PetroChina and Sinopec. In the case of agri-foods, well-known examples of this concentration are ADM (Archer Daniels Midland), Bunge, Cargill and Louis Dreyfus.

The shrinking of justice

As is well known, the new progressive extractivisms defend these enterprises as sources of financing for programs to assist the poorest. This includes economic compensation to local communities, such as direct payments or infrastructure construction, as well as general instruments such as cash transfers that are monthly payments to people living in poverty throughout the country. Among the best-known examples of these are the human development coupon in Ecuador or the Family Bonus of the Worker's Party government in Brazil. Similarly, some financial assistance to citizen organizations to assuage their demands (as in Bolivia with the gifts of buildings and automobiles to unions and mining cooperatives) similarly operate.

This connection has many problems. On the one hand, the collection from extractivism is not always directed directly toward poverty reduction programs (an example is the detailed Jubilee study, 2012, for Bolivia). On the other hand, the poverty reductions that have been registered in South America are mainly due to other factors, such as access to employment, formalization of employment or coverage of social security.

But beyond these debates, the spill-over effect in this case refers to spreading the position that the extractivisms become tolerable to the extent that compensations are granted in money, either to local communities or to the whole of society. This reinforces that social and environmental impacts can be compensated by means of monetarized instruments. Put in a very schematic way, it promotes positions like 'I contaminate you, but I pay you.' This clearly reinforces the commodification of nature and society.

That spill has several consequences. Among them is that many social conflicts are increasingly focused on economic compensation rather than extractive activities per se. There are disputes in which the different actors bid to receive as much money as possible, either directly from private enterprises or from those intermediated by the State.

At the same time, it is under pressure to redefine justice, instead of conceiving it as a wide range of dimensions, rooted in different rights (such as education, housing, health, etc.); all economic, focused on consumption and monetary compensations. It reinforces a capitalism that on the one hand extracts enormous volumes of resources and on the other, in the case of progressives, tries to present itself as compassionate.

Compensatory state

Extractivisms promote and need a certain type of state that is functional to this mode of appropriation of natural resources. In conservative administrations this is expressed by well-known situations, such as subordination to transnational corporations, deregulation of investments and exports, etc. In the case of progressive governments these spill-over effects are more complex, since on the one hand they try to impose some limits on capital (for example, certain regulations in the market, presence of state companies, changes in taxes, etc.). But on the other hand, many concessions are made to maintain the export of commodities (including protection of foreign investment, securing territorial concessions, supporting exports, etc.). The description of 'rentier status' for these cases is inadequate, since at least in South America they do not correspond to the original definition of the concept, nor to the political and economic complexity of the governments.

In fact, progressive administrations have attempted to strike a balance between these regulations and concessions to capital. As on the one hand the extractivism was promoted, which fed resistance and citizens, on the other hand, it became increasingly important for the compensations to cushion or annul this conflict and at the same time to gain electoral adhesion.

This results in what can be defined as a 'compensatory state' that accepts capitalist development strategies, balancing concessions and limits on capital, tolerating social and environmental impacts, but offering compensations in exchange (Gudynas, 2016). These balances are very unstable and could be maintained with relative success during the phase of high commodity prices, but are increasingly restricted in the current situation of low prices. This explains the escalation of public unrest in several countries and the deterioration of the electoral adherence of progressive political groups.

Politics and democracy

While all South American extractivisms are implanted under formally democratic regimes, they promote a political style that is directed toward delegative democracy, and within it toward hyper-presidentialism (O'Donnell, 2010). In several cases, the presidents are at the forefront of

the defense of extractivism and in attacking attempts at citizen consultations (whether local or national). For example, in Colombia the Santos administration has sought to prevent local mining consultations, and in Ecuador the Correa government has engaged in a national consultation on oil exploitation in Amazonia.

In this way spills are generated where the plurality of politics is weakened, democratic components linked to consultations and deliberations are annulled, to reinforce time and again the central government, and in particular the president. Extractivism likes direct negotiations, calls for confidential investment agreements (as it has done in Peru and Uruguay) and rejects mobilizations that seek to raise taxes or impose environmental and social controls (as is very evident in the case of miners and oil companies in Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador; see, for example, Gandarillas, 2015).

At the same time, there are mechanisms to control citizen organizations (especially indigenous, peasant or environmentalist organizations), such as some limitations in reporting or the prohibition of doing 'politics' (situation observed in Bolivia and Ecuador).

Permanencies, crises and alternatives

Extractivisms maintain a remarkable permanence. It can be argued that they have been present since colonial times, and that in their most recent expansion have contributed to consolidate conventional ideas about development as growth and Nature as a basket of natural resources to be exploited. It has been instrumented in a different way from conservative governments and from progressives, but that core remains.

Extractivisms also face a crisis due to falling prices and demand, which reduced their contributions to growth and limited the state's ability to renew consumption-based balances and trade-offs. They are also under increasing criticism for the multiplication of citizen questionings and resistance (several examples in essays in Gandarillas, 2014).

In any case, governments maintain this type of appropriation of nature, and even tried to overcome the fall in prices in order to increase the volume of exports. That has forced them to resort increasingly to controlling and harassing civil society. These contradictions undoubtedly joined others in promoting the present political exhaustion of progressives, especially in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela.

Despite all the evidence on negative impacts and the proliferation of citizen resistance, extractivism continues to be defended by governments, a large part of academia and citizens. Situations of enormous gravity, such as violations of the rights inherent in extractions, have become commonplace and are tolerated by governments (including progressives) and by much of the public. This shows that extractivism is an idea about development that is deeply engrained and beyond rational evidence or argument; it is a belief of faith and a situation peculiar to an extractivist theology.

Under this persistence the extractivisms continue, with their local impacts but also with their spill-over effects, which crystallize this type of development, together with the politics and institutionality necessary to sustain it.

The search for alternatives must consider both the permanencies and extractivist crises. The options for change cannot be based only on technological reforms or greater economic compensations to reduce the local impacts of extractivism, but also on a radical critique of development. No doubt local impacts must be tackled, but spills in all their dimensions must be addressed.

In this sense, they point to different reflections known as postextractivist transitions. In them it is proposed to reduce the extractivist dependence with a series of successive changes to reduce and to cancel the local impacts, and to overcome the spill effects. They involve a radical challenge to development in any of its varieties, and its horizon of change is located in *Buen Vivir*, which is to live well in social solidarity and harmony with nature (Acosta, 2011; Gudynas and Acosta, 2011).

The postextractivist transitions imagine a very different organization and dynamics in relation to nature and how to achieve a condition of 'living well' while simultaneously offering very pragmatic proposals of changes to move in that direction, for example in taxation, environmental assessment, a territorial ordering and citizen participation. This double condition is one of its strengths, and this surely explains why both business confederations (in Colombia and Peru) and governments (in Bolivia and Ecuador) consider postextractivism to be the biggest challenge they face.

Note

1 Note, for example, the journal *Extractive Industries and Society*.

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Author's corrections and notes:
page 68, 5 par, "allegories" should be "allegalities".
page 69, better translation of "extrahección" should be "extrahection".