Cartilla.

PACHA: DEFENDING THE LAND. Extractivism, conflicts, and alternatives in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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PACHA: DEFENDING THE LAND

Extractivism, conflicts, and alternatives in Latin America and the Caribbean

Grisul

Grupo de Relações Internacionais e Sul Global

Development and social movements in Latin America and the Caribbean

Ever since colonization, Latin America and the Caribbean have been – in comparison to the developed countries - internationally inserted under unequal conditions. While periphery, the function of the region was to produce and to export necessary raw materials to the development of rich countries. During the consolidation of national States, this primary-exporter model of production fortified itself, and, although the transformations, the region is currently one of the main raw material exporters in the world. In this process, it is fundamental to understand the role of extractivism understood as a form of accumulation and exploration of natural resources that doesn't consider its limits nor the sustainability of the utilized techniques. Today, Latin America and the Caribbean stand as the region of the world with more murdered land rights defenders and environmentalists. According to Global Witness, of the 197 environmentalists assassinated in the entire world in 2017, 116 have died in this region. These activists and social leaderships were assassinated for denouncing and facing governments and companies who appropriated their lands and contaminated the environment. Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru are the most affected countries in the region; nevertheless, the neighbouring States also registered different forms of violence against them. And this is only one of many extreme means utilized to silence the denouncing voices who act in defence of their land. These people face different forms of criminalization of protests, such as threats, physical and sexual violence, and aggressive legal actions. 60% of murders are related to the agribusiness and the extractivism entailed to mining activities.

The violence and murders of social and environmental leaderships in Latin America and the Caribbean are a result of all the disputes for land and resources: in general terms is a dispute for the model of development itself. According to FAO, land distribution on the region is the most unequal in the entire planet. Over half of productive lands are concentrated in 1% of properties with bigger extension, and only the richest 10% portion of the regional population possesses 71% of its wealth and patrimony. Land at the hands of small proprietors, families, and women diminishes each passing year and many of the natural resources are in indigenous and quilombolas areas threatened by land invasion by governments or transnational companies. So, in this scenery of constant dispute, why do the conflicts, players and alternatives to the extractivism model of development should be made visible? Contrary to considering the people as "targets" or "victims" of development, we wish to emphasize the agency of collective and individual effort in defending the land and their traditional means of life. We consider conflicted players, on one hand, the public and private players- generally, partners in public-private development projects – on the other, the social players who, when in defence of their territories and resources, tend to be criminalized by the system. We understand the fighting and resistance of social players as part of an ampler movement of global nature called Environmentalism of the Poor, also known as Global Movement of Environmental Justice, as Joan Martinez Alier defends. We also believe the actions of protest and opposition by the extractivism affected communities cannot be defined simply as reactions, but as questionings of the current model of development, which comes from an extractivist and occidental matrix. This model places the economy as the priority and promotes modernization and economic growth without considering the negative costs and effects. In contrast, the Environmentalism of the Poor not only criticizes the colonial, ethnocentric and patriarchal roots of this model but also promotes alternatives to it.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the ones that formulate alternatives to the hegemonic model of development are the social movements and the affected communities, women, indigenous and afro-descendant. However, power in this region is continuously exerted from the urban and central zones over the rural territories, by white and "mestizo" elites that dominate and control the resources. These elites govern, discriminate and explore all the inhabitants, especially rural and farming populations, consisting of indigenous and Afro-descendant people. Therefore, the fighting and resistance of these people are rejected or not considered of central importance. In a similar way to women, although protagonists in the fighting and resistance processes, they are also made invisible and are frequently considered only victims.

In the next few pages, we will illustrate the negative impacts of the extractivist model of development, especially focusing our attention on mining activities, stemmed from registered cases in the Environmental Justice Atlases (Ejatlas) database. Although this database registers conflicts from the second half of the XX century, we will not specify an accurate date, in view of the historical and structural nature of many conflicts, that may exist for decades now, taking different shapes throughout time. Therefore, the map includes recent and older conflicts, with lingering ramifications to today. In the elaboration of the booklet, we favoured 259 cases, expanding on 10 examples that illustrate each of the studied themes. This way, the impacts of the extractivism – on the environment and on the fighting and resistance of women, indigenous groups and Afro-descendants - will be made visible, as well as the actions of transnational companies as Vale. We will also show some examples of the forced displacement and criminalization of social movements, as we will analyse the alternatives formulated by the cosmovision of the people of Latin America and the Caribbean. Recovering the proposals of defence of land and Good Living, formulated by the Andean peoples, we decided to commemorate their fights choosing for the booklet the term Pacha, a quéchua word meaning nature, earth, world, and universe, that has inspired the fights in defence of our mother earth, the Pacha Mama.

LEARN MORE:

Environmental Justice Atlas – EJATLAS(http://ejatlas.org/)

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations: (http://www.fao.org)

Global Witness (https://www.globalwitness.org/en/blog/new-data-reveals-197-land-and-environmental-defenders-murdered-2017/)

CONFLICTS FOR MINING AND EXTRACTIVISM IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Source: Own elaboration based on the Environmental Justice Atlas (https://ejatlas.org/featured/mining-latam), 2018.

LEARN MORE:

Extractivism: it is a model of appropriation of natural resources that includes diverse sectors such as mining, oil exploration, and agriculture. The appropriation of these resources happens through intensive practices and with the objective of exporting raw materials to the global markets. Therefore, the limits of resources are not calculated nor the consequences that the extractive processes cause on the lives of the people and the territories affected.

Environmental Justice: Principle and global movement constituted by the struggles of social actors who suffer the consequences of the current model of capitalist development, based on economic growth and the depletion of natural resources. In this process, the equitable distribution of the cost of development self-determination and popular sovereignty is defended and, from other knowledge and worldviews, alternative models are proposed. The book by Joan Martínez Alier, The environmentalism of the Poor is a reference in this field.

Good Living: also called Sumak Kawsay, good living is an alternative formulation to development that derives from the Andean region. Contrary to the classical concept of development that prioritizes economics, this approach to well-being is a reaction to the materialization of life and people and includes concepts such as happiness, the rights of nature, solidarity, and cooperation between individuals and collectives.

Impacts of extractivism on the environment

It's the seventh downwards: with the ground, you step on,
from where it will come to your livelihood.
If you cause either the storm or the drought, if the ground
either dry or tremble, there won't be complete peace.

The Seven Types of Peace – Aymará Philosophy

Why the environment?

Activities derived from extractivism – be it by mining, oil drilling or a monoculture of primary products like soy and sugar cane –, by not considering the techniques and natural resources limits, have profound impacts over the environment. These impacts have become especially visible in cases of "environmental accidents", such as the dam collapse of Mariana in Minas Gerais; yet have been constantly contributing to the increase in problems as carbon dioxide gas emission and global heating. By contaminating water, air, and land, the ecological destruction that these projects promote is not only high but, in some cases, total. As demonstrated by the 10 examples represented in the map, effects between one project and another one vary, however, they generally result in loss of biodiversity, vital environmental pollution of vital resources, and toxic chemical leaks with serious consequences over the affected community's public health. These impacts run contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which establishes that all people have the right to a fulfilling quality of life suitable for their life. Impacts of extractivism over the environment, with more or less intensity, happen in all of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially reaching women, rural population, indigenous people and Afro-descendants. In order to dig deep into this phenomenon, we will present an emblematic case, registered in one of the most affected countries of the region: Peru.

Santa Ana mine in Peru: The Bear Creek corporation case

Located at the southern region of Puno, next to the Bolivian border, lies the Santa Ana opencast mine. Back in 2004, the exploration of the region, which is rich in silver, was taken charge by Canadian company Bear Creek, that, years later, would get the concession rights to explore it, programming the beginning of activities for 2012.

Back in 2011, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) yielded results that brought fear about the possibility of contamination of rivers and lakes around the region – such as the Callacami and Desaguadero rivers and, especially, the Titicaca lake, considered the larger of Latin America in the volume of water. The study noted still that the mining concession not only ignored article 71 of the Peruvian Constitution, that prohibits mining activities in border crossings but would also invade the reservation area of Aymará-Lupaca, causing irreparable environmental and sociocultural damages, as the area (existing since 1996) was created to preserve the region's biological, cultural and scenic diversity. In this context, lectures were made towards the involved population, directly affected by the endeavour, in which Bear Creek supported the would-be benefits of mining activities to the region. It should be noted that Bear Creek also tried to weaken the EIA results, arguing that the said report was technical, unclear and elaborated solely in English.

Not convinced by those arguments, leaders of the Aymará community mobilized themselves and organized a series of protests and manifestations against the Santa Ana mine exploitation in 2011. These events were carried out by members of the affected community, with the intention to hinder said mining project, were later known as "Aymarazo". The ones with greater impact occurred between May and June of that same year when marches were conducted around Puno region, roadblocks were made - among them in Desaguero, connecting Peru to Bolivia – and attacks against police officers, as well occupation of their stations. By the end of these confrontations, millions of dollars were registered in material damage, as over thirty people wounded and 6 deaths.

In the presented case, it can be noted that the mining exploration project did not respect either the integrity of those involved or the local ecosystem. The significate mobilization led by the Aymará achieved the decided outcome: in June of 2011, by the Peruvian president Alan García revoked the concession and prohibited further exploitations of the Santa Ana mine. However, eighteen leaders of the Aymará community were criminally indicted for obstruction of public services, peace disturbance, and aggravated extortion. Although the prosecutor in charge has dropped the charges against eight of them for lack of evidence and, after trial, nine others were acquitted, on July 6 of 2017, the leader and human rights defender Walter Aduviri Calizaya was convicted to seven years of prison and a fine of over 300 million dollars. The plaintiff may still appeal against this decision and the non-profit organization Front Line Defender have been mobilizing a strong campaign in favour of his acquittal. In the end, this conflict may be considered successful, since the intense mobilizations halted for good the activities of the Bear Creek company.

LEARN MORE:

Indigenous people database – Aymara (http://bdpi.cultura.gob.pe/pueblo/aimara) e Aymarazo (http://rpp.pe/noticias/aymarazo)

Front Line Defenders – *Aymara Community leaders on trail* (https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/aymara-community-leaders-trial)

Aymarazo – http://rpp.pe/noticias/aymarazo

Constitution of Peru (1993) – http://www4.congreso.gob.pe/ntley/Imagenes/Constitu/Cons1993.pdf

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF EXTRACTIVISM

*Extractivism related conflicts and environmental impact, by site**

Minerals extraction at river Luisa
Tolima – Colombia

Minerals extraction at the river Luisa by a number of companies have generated important environmental conflicts. The main complaint being the river contamination, which threatens the existence of drinkable water and farming activities, beginning to affect local public health.

Threats to Cerro San Pedro
San Luis Potosí - Mexico

The exploitation of the San Luis de Potosí silver and gold mine, by the New Gold company, is placing in jeopardy the existence of Cerro de San Pedro, considered sacred by local communities, spawning the opposition of Frente Amplio Opositor against the impacts on water, environment and public health.

The Casa Pueblo Community resistance
Adjuntas, Utuado and Lares, Jayuya - Porto Rico

The Casa Pueblo resistance against mining operation has strengthened the local population participation and sensibility with the conservation of natural resources. Back in 2002, it received the International Goldman Environmental Prize for its 35 years of community self-management defending the water, forests, and people.

Lead contamination in Santo Amaro
Santo Amaro, Bahia - Brazil

The extraction of lead in the region, made by the Brazilian Lead Company, affected not only the atmosphere, rivers and soil, as well as public health, fauna, and tourism. Associations made by those impacted demand reparations for the heavy metals' contamination and it's economic, social, cultural and environmental consequences.

Mirador mining project on the Cordillera del Condor
El Pangui, Zamora-Chinchipe - Ecuador

The copper related exploitation project by Chinese company ECSA, located in a high biological diversity area but of extremely environmental fragility in the Amazon, inhabited by the Shuar indigenous community, was targeted by protests and resistance of social organization, united in the National March for Water, Life and Dignity of the People, organized by the Confederación Nacional de Comunidades Indígenas del Ecuador.

The fight against mining company Lisandro Proaño for contamination
San Mateo de Huanchor, Lima - Peru

Margarita Pérez Anchirayco is an important icon of this fight for community rights, given the sombre effects of the project on public health, especially children and women. The absence of a solution from national justice leads the case to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, that hamstrung the activities.
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Aratirí Project of iron extraction
Florida, Valentines – Uruguay

The Project has generated one of the most important environmental conflicts of Uruguay, due to the devastation of the original ecosystem and the population displacement. It mobilized the population for the environment, water and health, with the Movement in favor of the Uruguayan National Plebiscite Free of Open-pit Metal Mining (Uruguay Libre).

The transnational Newmont contaminates the Desaguadero River
La Joya, Oruro - Bolivia

Newmont, one of the main gold mining companies in the world, ended its 15-year-old project, in light of the constant exposure by riverside communities of the river heavy metals contamination. Besides the closing of the mine, the impacted demand compensation for the environmental damage and for the use of their land.

Contamination of the Amanao River by the Alumbrera Mine
Belén, Catamarca - Argentina

The multinational Minera Alumbrera that exploit one of the ten biggest copper enterprises of the world has been denounced by several environmental organizations and investigated for possible spillage that is contaminating the Amanao river with chemical residues that harm the riverside populations crops.

Environmental Effects of the Pascua Lama Mines
Huasco – Chile

The Chilean-Argentinian extraction project of gold, silver, and copper resulted in a strong opposition of local residents and environmental associations, worried by the mining effects on the ecosystem. The mobilization leads to the freezing of all operations regarding the mine, due to serious environmental irregularities made by the company..

*We do not specify an exact date of the conflicts in view of the historical and structural character of some of them. Therefore, the map includes recent and old conflicts, but with consequences until today.

Labmundo, 2018

Source: Own elaboration based on the Environmental Justice Atlas (https://ejatlas.org/featured/mining-latam), 2018.

Extractivism and forced displacements

Today, we come here to order the closure of Pascua Lama.(...) We are here to tell you again that we do not need your money to develop and we are not seeking compensation, because there is no fair compensation for the death of our Mother. We just ask you to leave our lands and allow us to live in peace.
Statement of the Diaguita Huascoaltinos Indigenous and Agricultural Community (Protest Barrick).

Why the forced displacements?

Mining activities, as part of extractivism in Latin America and the Caribbean, in addition to renewing and reproducing dependency relationships, create negative consequences in different areas, because they represent a direct impact on socioeconomic reality, health and the environmental area of the affected communities. With the contamination of natural resources, the affected communities are deprived of the minimum subsistence conditions and often, as in the case of indigenous and Afro-descendant maroons, are expelled from their traditional territories, in violation of their collective property rights recognized in international instruments. The forced exit of the affected communities is also the result of factors such as illegal occupation or the large-scale purchase of lands, evictions, limits on freedom and the criminalization of protests, as well as actions against extractivist projects that include various forms of threat, persecution, and psychological and physical violence, such as murder. The importance of forced displacements goes beyond an inconvenience of relocation, because it also means the destruction of traditional practices and epistemologies, thus eliminating different ways of seeing and interpreting the world. Based on the ten cases represented on the map, it's clear that many of the forced displacement processes are created by extractivism in Latin America and the Caribbean's countries. In order to deepen this phenomenon, we present the emblematic case with binational effects in Argentina and Chile.

The Pascua Lama binational Project, from Barrick Gold company

The Pascua Lama project of the Canadian multinational company Barrick Gold, acting through its local subsidiary, Minera Nevada, sought the exploration of gold, silver, and copper in the valley of the Andes, at an altitude of 4,500 m, one of the highest in the world. This is a binational project because the mining is located on both sides of the border of Chile and Argentina. Both countries signed an agreement in 2007 to facilitate the extractive activity in the area. Since the beginning, the project has been accused of several human rights violations against the indigenous communities in the region, environmental contamination, and forced displacement. One of the first problems present in their initial projects was the proposal to relocate glaciers that were at the site of exploration. The relocation would be carried out through explosives to break the ice. This raised great questioning by environmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and local peasants who depend on the glaciers for the circulation of water in the region. To solve the problem, the company Barrick Gold redesigned the exploration space by leaving the glaciers outside the mining pit, claiming that they would not be affected by the mining. However, in 2009, Chilean government authorities identified "unforeseen impacts" which, thanks to the pressure of local activists and peasants, led to a conviction of a 16 million dollars fine to the company.

Since the beginning, the indigenous community in the area has had strong resistance towards the project implementation. The Diaguita Huascoaltinos Indigenous and Agricultural Community appealed to the national and international courts, because the project led to the pollution and reduction of the water cycle for agriculture, destructing livelihoods and lives of the communities and forced displacing people. The communities also suffered from the land confiscation by the company, forced displacing families to implement the project. In 2010, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) called this displacement process a "denial of justice" committed by the Chilean government against indigenous groups. In view of such allegations and the increasing costs of the project with penalties and fines, Barrick Gold suspended the project in 2013. The struggles maintained the progress of the agenda against mining in the region. Argentina passed a bill to protect the glaciers by imposing limits on mining and prohibiting mining in glacier regions. In Chile, Barrick Gold is still trying to save the project but faces strong resistance from the Supreme Court of Justice, which is not convinced of its environmental viability.

In this case and in similar examples in Uruguay, Brazil, and Mexico, it's important to highlight that the resistance of indigenous communities and the activism of environmental organizations stopped the mining and sensitize the Chilean and Argentine governments and the international community to the environmental impacts and forced displacements in the region. This whole situation also led to the development of collective action networks. However, although the Supreme Court of Chilean Justice has barred the possibility of signing a new permit to exploration in the region, the project can still be reopened.

LEARN MORE:
"El Oro de Pascua Lama" Documentary –
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzsNxaT2tTc)

Barrick Gold conflicts website/Chile –
(http://protestbarrick.net/-section.php@id=3.html)

IACHR – Inter-American Commission on Human Rights –
(http://www.oas.org/en/cidh/)

EXTRACTIVISM AND FORCED DISPLACEMENTS

*Conflicts caused by extractivism that displaced the population, by place**

Canadian Minefinders Usurp lands Huizopa
Chihuahua - Mexico

The open-air extraction project run by the Canadian company Minefinders is carried out illegally in the land of the community of Huizopa, whose claim that the company obtained the concession of 500 hectares, but occupies 3,458 hectares, invading its collective property. Besides the negative impacts on the environment and in the health conditions, the community has been suffering evictions, kidnapping, and violence by authorities in the service of the company.

Bauxite mining, deforestation and displacement
Oriximiná, Pará-Brazil

Since 1970, quilombolas communities have been fighting against mining and logging companies in the region, aiming to protect the integrity of their territories. The fight for legal titles in their territories and against the impacts caused by the companies received the support of local and national organizations. They reached important victories.

Bauxite mining force displacement
Juriti, Pará-Brazil

The urban population, the settlers and rivers of the municipality of Juruti suffer from the social and environmental impacts resulting from the bauxite mining by Omnia Minrios Ltda. (Alcoa Alumni S/A) in the region, which has caused their displacement.

Company Anglogold Ashanti from South Africa
Province of Nariño - Colombia

The Colombian Institute of Geology and Mines (INGEOMINAS) granted an exploitation permit to the multinational Anglogold Ashanti develop an open-air gold mining in several municipalities in the region. The local population questioned the presence of the company, whose economic activities have been causing their displacement.

The conflict caused by the activities of Consigo-Frontier, from Canada, in Taraira
Province of Vaupés - Colombia

The INGEOMINAS granted a gold exploitation permit in Taraira to the company Consigo-Frontier, which had already been requested by the Mining Association of Vaupés, but denied by the institute. Since 2008, there is a command to suspend the company's activities, which has not been fulfilled, because of the conflicts involving local miners and the local population displacement.

The Rio Tinto conflict in La Granja Querocoto Reserve
Chota - Peru

La Granja represents the largest copper reserve in Peru. Since the beginning of the project in 2008, the rural communities have been complaining about the lack of consultations, the land contamination and the lack of job offers by the responsible company, forcing several families to sell their land or leave the region.

Mariana disaster caused by the breakup of the dam of Samarco
Mariana, Minas Gerais - Brazil

The dam breaking of the mining company belonging to Vale and BHP Billiton was responsible for the deaths of dozens of people, animals and the heavy pollution in the river Doce. More than 800 people lost their homes and many others had to leave due to the contamination and environmental toxicity.

Mobilization against Pascua Lama mine, from the Canadian Barrick Gold
Alto Del Carmen, Huasco - Chile

The multinational Barrick Gold and its subsidiary Minera Nevada started a gold, silver, and copper extraction project that affected several communities by contamination, disease and forced displacement. Communities and environmental associations managed to paralyze the project in 2013.

Expulsions by the project Aratirí Iron Mining
Valentines, Florida - Uruguay

The project Aratirí, from the transnational Anglo-Swiss Zamin Ferrous, was responsible for a mining operation in the region, which lives 300 families linked to livestock. The building of dams expelled local families and caused the devastation of the original ecosystem.

Expropriation and threat to Cerro Rico, Humanity patrimony
Potosí, Province of Potosí - Bolivia

The Coeur d'Alene Mines project caused social and environmental problems, including the expropriation of 400 hectares of indigenous territory. Despite the economic compensation, the company continues to threaten the demarcation of indigenous territories, the preservation of Cerro Rico and the labour rights of 20,000 miners due to the possible collapses in the tunnels.

*We do not specify an exact date of the conflicts in view of the historical and structural character of some of them. Therefore, the map includes recent and old conflicts, but with consequences until today.

Labmundo, 2018

Source: Own elaboration based on the Environmental Justice Atlas (https://ejatlas.org/featured/mining-latam), 2018.

Women's struggles and resistances

We lived well in this place until the disgrace that came with the inauguration of the railroad and the companies. (...) We often wash clothes and later we have to wash it again because it fills with so much black particle that comes from the train and the smoke that comes out of the factories.
Francisca Souza, a resident of Piquiá de Baixo.

Why the women?

Things such as the militarization of territories, the contamination of natural resources and the disarticulation of local economies, are some of the consequence of the extractivism, which affects the lives, bodies, and territories of women. Extractivism projects also cause the increasing of prostitution, rape, health problems, restriction of freedom and forced displacements. By reinforcing the patriarchal culture existing in Latin America and the Caribbean, extractivism also contributes to consolidate traditional roles of gender and the masculinity hegemonic model. This phenomenon provokes the permanent mobilization, resistance, and struggle of women. They are in the front line in the struggle for land and the defence of natural resources. They also are the protagonists of numerous mobilizations, as shown in the conflicts on the map. They play a central role as leaders in protests and occupations, but also in the protection and maintenance of life. Nevertheless, they face the invisibility of their role and social marginalization. They also suffer from specific forms of criminalization and they are often excluded from land ownership and from negotiations and decisions making that directly affect their lives. To analyse this phenomenon, we have selected a Brazilian emblematic case.

The Steel complex in Piquiá de Baixo and its effects

At the end of 1980, five steel companies were established in Piquiá de Baixo: Viena Siderúrgica S.A, Gusa Nordeste S.A, Ferro Gusa do Maranhão (Fergumar), Cia. Siderúrgica Vale do Pindaré e Siderúrgica do Maranhão S.A (Simasa). Besides that, in Piquiá are located all the iron ore extracted from the Carajás' mines, which are explored by the company Vale. The steel complex, central for the extractivism operations, and the railway needed for the runoff, has been causing serious impacts on the lives of women who live in the area. The consequences on their health and quality of life are so alarming that they have already reported the Brazilian state to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR).

Moreover, a cement production plant was also established in the area, aggravating the situation of air pollution. The companies' vehicles that transport products such as coal, ore or even liquid pig iron travel the road that cuts Piquiá, exposing the women of the region to the risks of accidents, or even shedding of liquid metal. The industrial activities also cause the pollution of the river that cuts the community, which affects the tourism in the area.

The blast furnaces throw polluting gases in the atmosphere and the combustible gas from companies' trucks causes several health problems for the community, especially for children, who are also the responsibility of women, since they are the ones concerned with the family's care tasks, because that's was imposed by a sexist society. The companies' law down their own values, without dialogue or consultation with the local women. In addition, there are several reports of physical violence suffered by those women.

On one hand, there are communities that live under poverty and social inequality and suffer from the lack of implementation of housing, health and sanitation policies and programs. On the other hand, there are companies with great economic power. These impacts represent serious and systematic human rights violations because the State usually are on the companies' side and do not supervise or regulate its extractive activities.

Supported by Fiocruz and the PACS Institute, the local women started to monitor the waters and air of Piquiá de Baixo, so that the data would be counterposed to those of the companies. Besides that, those women started to exchange and share experiences with other organizations. Thus, more instruments have been introduced to support the fight, which also includes the desire to resettle families to an area without direct contamination.

When women act in political mobilization and take part in decision-making, they redefine their social position and challenge the domination structures. "One thing we have learned is that there are other neighbourhoods in Brazil and Latin America in a similar situation. Contaminated places by large companies, that injure the population's health and the environment", states Joelma Alves, from the Association of residents of Piquiá de Baixo.

LEARN MORE:

PACS – from Maranhão to Rio de Janeiro: populations resist the impacts of mining (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ppx4ij5-FI)

PACS – Instituto de Políticas Alternativas para o Cone Sul (http://www.pacs.org.br)

PACS; Rede Justiça nos Trilhos; Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (2017) – Popular surveillance in health and environment in areas close to the steel complexes (http://www.pacs.org.br/files/2017/09/Relat%C3%B3rio-Final-Final.pdf)

"Otras voces por la tierra" Documentary: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzjNFaiHjP8

WOMEN'S RESISTANCE AND STRUGGLES

*Conflicts caused by extractivism in which women were the protagonists, by place**

Mining Project El Tambor
San José Del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc -Guatemala

The resistance of Kaqchikel' women from San José Del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc, along with the front of resistance "La Puya" and the Latin American network of women social and environmental rights defenders, has managed to stop the mining project in El Tambor, from the American company Kappes Kassiday & Associates (KCA).

Mobilization against the mining activity by the Canadian Pacific Rim
San Isidro – Cabañas, El Salvador

The National Round Table against Metal Mining has managed to stop the gold exploration by the Canadian company Pacific Rim. The social mobilization, with great protagonism from women, made El Salvador the first country to ban metallic mining for its environmental and human impacts.

Women in defence of the Valle de Síria
El Porvenir – Francisco Morazan, Honduras

The Mother Earth Movement and the Environmental Committee of Valle de Síria, among others, denounced serious contamination problems caused by San Martín's gold extraction project, from the Canadian companies Glamis Gold and Gold Corp Inc.

Environmental defence against
Támesis' mining activity
Antioquia, Colombia

The Committee for the Territory's Environmental Defence proposes a "Western Environmental Belt" against the gold extraction projects by the companies Sociedad Minera Solvista (Colombia) and Anglogold Ashanti (South Africa). Women organized themselves in the economic Solidarity circuit of Támesis.

Rights violation by the company Almaden Minerals
Iztacamaxtitlán, Puebla-Mexico

The union between Communities in Defence of the Earth, Water and Life, Acolhua people, with a large participation of women, reports the violation of rights caused by Canadian company Almaden Minerals with the Ixtaca's project, that explores gold and silver.

March against the mining activity from Intag
Cotacachi – Imbabura, Ecuador

Several Organizations, among them Popular and Diverse Women's Assembly of Ecuador, started a movement against the mining projects near the ecological reserve Cotacachi-Cayapas, a region of great biodiversity. They join the march for life, water and the dignity of peoples against mining mega-projects in Ecuador.

Women against Aratirí's
iron extraction project
Valentines – Florida, Uruguay

The Aratirí's iron extraction project from the companies Zamin Ferrous (USA) and Aratirí (Uruguay) boosted the creation of the Uruguay Free of Open Pit Metallic Mining Movement. The audio-visual project "Otras voces por la Tierra" shows the impacts suffered by women.

Tintaya copper mine contamination
by Glencore company Espinar,
Cuzco-Peru

The local communities, with strong participation of women, report human rights violations and environmental contamination by the Swiss mining company Glencore International Ag and its copper's extraction project.

Women against River Huanuni contamination
Dalence, Oruro- Bolivia

The national network of Women in defence of Mother Earth denounces the environmental violence suffered by the communities with the impacts caused by Bolivian Mining Corporation (COMIBOL), which also endanger the river Huanuni.

RENAMAT against the Achachucani's mining project– Challapata
Oruro, Bolivia

The struggle of the communities, with strong participation of women, especially the national network of Women in defence of Mother Earth (RENAMAT), manages to stop the Achachucani's gold mining project, by claiming the region's main sectors, agricultural and livestock.

* We do not specify an exact date of the conflicts in view of the historical and structural character of some of them. Therefore, the map includes recent and old conflicts, but with consequences until today.

Labmundo, 2018

Source: Own elaboration based on the Environmental Justice Atlas (https://ejatlas.org/featured/mining-latam), 2018.

Indigenous people's struggles and resistances

"Mother Earth is a live person, we can't understand this type of activity and we are against it, many animals from the region have disappeared, life is the earth, it maintains life, life is water and sun; oil is a problem for us. Brings us a lot of violence, with the oil companies come also the armed groups".
Statement of resistance movement representative in *Motilón Bari.*

Why indigenous people?

Extractivism is closely linked to the internal colonialism that characterizes Latin America and the Caribbean's countries, which means the ongoing colonial domination and the current situation of those countries. Thus, extractivist projects mainly affect rural populations and specific groups like indigenous people. One in three hectares of the territory granted for mining, oil exploration, agro-industry or forestry belongs to indigenous peoples. The marginalization of indigenous peoples is historical and is responsible for their social, economic, political and cultural exclusion, as well as the subordination of their know-how and worldviews. Even though their rights are recognized by international instruments, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention nº. 169, the indigenous land demarcation and occupation are slow and, sometimes, they record regressions. In this context, the extractive frontier expansion, without consent or prior consultation, causes several conflicts, making permanent the indigenous peoples' struggle and resistance on defending their territories and natural resources. To illustrate this situation, we will analyse a case of one of the countries most affected by extractivism: Colombia.

Mining and other extractive activities in Motilón Barí people's territories

The Motilón Bari tribe lives in Colombia and their territory has been inhabited for generations, composed by some 23 indigenous communities. The region has great biodiversity and known by the presence of minerals, wood, oil and water resources, which have attracted the interest of international companies. In the 1990s, oil companies established themselves in the region, such as COLPET (Colombian Petroleum Company) and SAGOC (South American Gulf Oil Company), and more recently the Ecopetrol. It is also essential to emphasize the role played by the Colombian State as facilitator and collaborator in the entry and permanence of these companies, representing a true cooperation of forces for the severe extraction in the region: In 2014, the State granted seven concessions for coal mines exploration in the area. They intend to extract about 270 million barrels of crude oil.

Government players in favour of these communities, such as the National Authority of the Indigenous Governments, participated in the negotiation process to resolve this conflict. However, governance bodies like the Ministry of Development believed that the exploitation of resources would bring important benefits to the country. Because of the forced displacement caused by the conflict, the UNHCR also became involved. In addition to the displacement, the increase in violence and crime, the loss of subsistence resources and the human rights' violations, the community also faced the potential risk of increasing corruption, as well a host of social problems, such as lack of occupational safety, dismissals, unemployment. The main protagonist in that battle against the extraction companies were local informal workers, social movements in favour of indigenous people, farmers, women and nearby communities.

But oil drilling and coal digging are not the only threats to the indigenous peoples of Bari; their health and crops have been suffering for decades from the consequences of the aerial fumigation carried out by the national government. Besides that, these communities face roads on their territory, drug dealers and the gold mining activities. The arrival in the 1999s of the paramilitary group "Bloque Catatumbo Bloque Norte" increase violence and the militarization of the area by the government. It was an intense conflict between the parties, with not only mass mobilization but a high level of violence as a result of the resistance by the organizations in the area. An important instrument in this struggle was the Permanent Court of the peoples, to which the Motilón Bari appealed in 2008. Thanks to the protests and mobilizations, and the given visibility to the situation, the project Ecopetrol was terminated.

In 2006, after the case was taken to the international level, the Constitutional Court of Colombia ruled in favour of the indigenous communities, demanding the companies to suspend the coal and oil exploitation. However, in 2014, seven coal mines exploration concessions were granted in the area. After the court decision, the paths to a better result are institutional changes, judicial ruling, new legislation and strengthening of these peoples' mobilization. The Motilón Bari needs to keep resisting.

LEARN MORE:

Barí Indigenous People Association (http://www.asocbari.org)

Motilón Barí Culture (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSeLkYIt-PI)

Motilón Barí people suffer human rights violations https://www.colectivodeabogados.org/?Vulneracion-de-los-Derechos)

Permanent Court of the People
(http://permanentpeoplestribunal.org/?lang=es)

ACNUR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
(http://www.acnur.org)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S STRUGGLES AND RESISTANCES

*Conflicts caused by extractivism which impacted indigenous territories, by place**

Communities against the Tuligtic project by the Canadian Almaden Minerals
Iztacamaxtitlán, Puebla – Mexico

Indigenous communities who oppose the exploitation of gold and silver project, in an area of strong indigenous presence, demanded the prior consultation of the population and created the Union of Ejidos and Communities in Defence of their Life, Water and Territory, denouncing the granted of permission by Mexican state and the violation of their community rights.

Protests against the Marlin project by the Canadian Gold Corp
San Marcos, Guatemala

The project caused environmental impacts on the territory, the water and the health of the residents. Because of that, the indigenous and peasant communities rose against it, opposing the mining on the 58 community consultations carried out. Despite the deaths of indigenous leaders and activists, the great resistance has inspired other fronts of opposition to mining in the country.

Yukpa Indigenous fight against the expansion of coal exploration
Province of Zulia – Venezuela

The attempt to expand carbon exploration projects in the Sierra de Perijá contradict the law of indigenous peoples and the demarcation of indigenous lands. The extractivism expansion resulted in strong resistance by the Yukpa indigenous, but their demands for land and respect for their rights have been addressed.

Yanomami Communities of the Ocamo river basin affected by illegal mining
Alto Orinoco – Amazonas, Venezuela

Since 2009 there are complaints of illegal gold exploitation in the region of Alto Ocamo, with about 1,000 gold diggers working illegally on Yanomami land, despite the pressure and mobilization of the Yanomami community and other social groups. The situation has led to the murders and massacres of Yanomami people.

Indigenous communities against illegal mining in the sacred land
Santander de Quilichao – Cauca, Colombia

Indigenous communities face illegal miners who exploit gold in traditional territories, especially in the sacred location of The Munchique National Natural Park. Despite mobilization, illegal exploitation continues to cause environmental and health problems, loss of culture and territory, displacement and even homicides.

Protest against the Curipamba South mining project
Las Navas, Bolívar-Ecuador

Peasants, women and indigenous people have mobilized against the exploitation of gold and metals. They manage to expel miners since they did not conduct environmental impact studies or consultations with local communities. The official approval of the project caused protests, with strong police repression,that joined the national March for Water, Life, and Dignity of the peoples.

Indigenous against the gold mining Fruta Del Norte project
Zamora Chinchipe, Ecuador

The project by the company Kinross faced opposition from the traditional communities. The indigenous mayor of the province declared his territory as "the Earth's lungs" in order to avoid the advance of the extractivism, and joined the national March for Water, Life, and Dignity of the peoples. Kinross declared that would stop the project, but the Chinese company Juneeld seems interested in the region.

The conflict between indigenous and miner in Cinta Larga
Rondônia and Mato Grosso, Brazil

Since the 1960s exists disputes for the exploitation of diamonds in traditional lands. Indigenous communities continue to resist state initiatives to regulate exploitation. Despite the creation of a reserve to preserve the community, the borders of theirlands have been constantly reduced, their demands have not been addressed and groups of miners still invade the region.

Mining in Yaigojé-Río violates the rights of Taraira indigenous peoples
Vaupés, Colombia

The company Consigo and illegal miners have been exploring gold in the region since 2007, especially in Sierra de La Libertad, within the collective lands Yaigojé-Río, a sacred place for indigenous communities. This situation violates the rights of indigenous peoples and the sustainability of the biological corridor of the region.

Tres Islas Indigenous community against illegal mining
Tambopata – Madre de Dios, Peru

80% of the lands of the native community Tres Islas of the people Shipibo and Ese'Eja are covered by 137 mining concessions. Tired of having their lands invaded, the indigenous groups organized the resistance to the invasions. The companies have denounced the community, but the Constitutional Court decided in their favour.

* We do not specify an exact date of the conflicts in view of the historical and structural character of some of them. Therefore, the map includes recent and old conflicts, but with consequences until today.

Labmundo, 2018

Source: Own elaboration based on the Environmental Justice Atlas (https://ejatlas.org/featured/mining-latam), 2018.

Afro-descendants people's struggles and resistances

The members of the Saramaka people maintain a strong relationship with the ancestral territory that has traditionally used and occupied. The lands and resources of the Saramaka people form part of their social, ancestral and spiritual essence. In this territory, the Saramaka people hunt, fish and harvest, and collect water, medicinal plants, oils, minerals, and wood. The sacred sites are distributed throughout the territory, since the territory itself has a sacred value for them. In particular, the identity of the people's members with the land is intrinsically related to the historical struggle for freedom against slavery, called the sacred "first time."
Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), 2007.

Why Afro-descendants?

Despite the lack of registration, Afro-descendant populations are one of the groups most affected by the effects of extractivism and the invisibility of their struggles. In addition to the racism and social, economic, political and cultural exclusion suffered in Latin America and the Caribbean, Afro-descendants face the expansion of monoculture, mining projects promoted by the State and multinational companies, as well as the exploitation of other natural resources in their territories. The Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, which also recognizes the rights of Afro-descendants, has been ratified by the majority of the States of the region, but the demarcation of collective lands for these populations is advancing slowly and with difficulties. In this sense, the discrimination they face is multiple and the consequences of extractivism include the loss of their traditional ways of life, expulsion and forced displacement of their lands, impacts on negative effects on health and well-being, increased violence and the criminalization of protests in the defence of the land and natural resources. As an example of these phenomena, we present the case of the Saramaka people in Suriname.

Violations of the rights of the Saramaka people by the State of Suriname

The members of the Saramaka people (Saramacca or Saamaka), also known as maroons - a term derived from cimarrón, used in the Spanish colonization of the Antilles to name the Africans who escaped slavery to take refuge in the most inaccessible regions of the islands and to form autonomous communities, also called quilombos or palenques - are descendants of Africans originating from different regions and peoples, who were brought for America as slaves to work in sugarcane plantations. They escaped from slavery to refuge in independent communities of colonial power and formed their own quilombos, in Suriname and French Guiana, located in the in the middle of the Amazon Forest, and protected by a treaty of peace signed with the Dutch settlers in 1762. Thus, the Saramaka recreated the social organizations of peoples of which they are descendants and have formed an original society with norms, politics, religion and own language.

Since the 1960s, the Saramaka people have been threatened construction of dams and multinational companies logging and mining, which with the approval of the State of Suriname. In October 2000, the Association of Saramaka Authorities, the Forest Peoples Program, and David Padilla, former president requested the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to (IACHR) to declare the State of Suriname guilty for violating the rights of the Saramaka people, for the losses associated with the construction of the dam Afobaka hydroelectric plant in 1960, and the concessions affected and still affect the daily life of the Saramaka people. In May 2007, the hearing was held at the IACHR. The victory went to the Saramaka people, as the Court concluded that the State violated the right to property, the right to personal and the right to judicial protection. Same after this victory for the Saramaka people and for environmental justice, the State of Suriname did not take the necessary measures to carry out the Court's recommendations. On the contrary, the government continued with activities that compromise the survival of the Saramaka people, as concessions minerals and wood exploitation.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the history of Afro-descendants is marked by struggles and resistances that cross generations. In this respect, the process of international judicialization disputes of traditional communities, such as the of the Saramaka people, have become the most common path so that the rights of self-determination and the traditions of these peoples are respected, and that they are not placed as a bargaining chip in the negotiations between the States and large multinationals. The case of the Saramaka people shows that "development" in Latin America is a process that is often accompanied by militarization and the loss of rights of more traditional peoples. The resistance of the Saramaka people and of the various peoples throughout Latin America against large-scale exploitation is perhaps the only possible alternative to bar the neoliberal advancement and propose alternatives to the in force.

LEARN MORE:

Saramaka Authorities Association – Forest Peoples Programme: https://www.forestpeoples.org/partner/association-saamaka-traditional-authorities-vsg

REBELO, M. (2011): "O povo Saramaka versus Suriname: Uma análise sob o olhar de Glifford Geertz". Cadernos da Escola de Direito e Relações Internacionais, 14, v. 1, pp.95-118 (http://revistas.unibrasil.com.br/cadernos-direito/index.php/direito/article/view/605/569)

CIDH – Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). Saramaka People Vs. Suriname, 2007 (http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_172_esp.pdf)

Latin-American Quilombos – Frei Tito Information Agency for Latin America (ADITAL) (http://etnoterritorios.org/apc-aa-files/92335f7b3cf47708a7c984a309402be7/quilombos_latinoamericanos.pdf)

FIGHTS AND RESISTANCES OF AFRO-DESCENDANT PEOPLE

*Conflicts over extractivism with impact on Afro-descendant communities, by place **

35 Quilombolas communities against extractivism in Oriximiná
Oriximiná, Pará - Brazil

For decades, quilombolas communities in the region have been fighting that threaten their territories and traditions, imposing restrictions on the hunting, fishing and their way of life. The resistance led to the organization in several Associations of the Remnant Communities of Quilombos.

The action of the Saramaka People against the State Upper Rio Suriname, Suriname

The exploitation of minerals and wood has affected severely the Saramaka people, who struggle to keep their territories and their traditions alive. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights that the State violated the rights of this people, but the concessions for the exploitation of resources in their territories did not stop.

Kaolin pipeline in Quilombola lands
Moju, Pará - Brazil

In the region, 674 quilombola families suffer negative consequences of kaolin transport carried out by CADAM, a subsidiary of Vale, which passes through the traditional territories of these communities. Populations struggle recognition and collective ownership of their lands and against deforestation, the invasion and the effects of pollution.

Resistance to bauxite mining by Aluminium Company of America
Cockpit Country - Jamaica

Exploitation of bauxite in Community territories Afro-descendants generated strong opposition, due to prior consultation and negative effects on the environment and their traditional ways of life. The organizations have come together to demand mining and that the area is declared the property communities of Afro-descendants.

Afro-descendants against AngloGold Ashanti and Continental Gold
Dojura, Chocó - Colombia

The difficult social and environmental situation caused by illegal mining and large companies with gold, copper and uranium exploration projects, generated active opposition among the inhabitants of the region, Afro-descendants, which require prior consultations in the territories recognized as collective property by the State.

Lead Contamination by Brazilian Company of Lead Santo Amaro da Purification and Boquira, Bahia Brazil

The construction of a Lead mining processing company has caused the contamination of the local population, mainly composed of Afro-Brazilians. They have been contaminated by inhalation of smoke and by intoxicated water as a result of the actions from the company. The project closed, but the population continues to mobilize against the environmental and socio-economic effects that still remain.

Communities against the exploitation of gold from AngloGold Ashanti and Cosigo Resources
Suárez, Cauca - Colombia

The exploitation of gold led to expulsions and changes in habits communities of Afro-descendant communities, generating a strong opposition to mining. Despite the criminalization, aggravated by the presence of drug traffickers and paramilitary groups succeeded in suspending of the operating licenses up to the holding of prior consultations with the affected communities.

IImpacts of the San Cristobal mine on the indigenous and Afro-descendant communities
Colcha, Potosí - Bolivia

The exploration of silver, zinc, and lead by Japanese Sumimoto led to the indigenous and Afro-descendant communities of the region, affecting their traditions and forms of life. The population that still remains in the area faces social problems and environmental impacts caused by the mine on water, health, and traditional forms of life.

Illegal mining causes mobilizations in Esmeraldas
Municipalities of Eloy Alfaro and San Lorenzo - Ecuador

Illegal mining, with more than 200 projects in the region, impacts on the health and well-being of the local population. The population, mostly Afro-descendant, mobilized government intervention, but mining is advancing without prior consultation with strong opposition from affected communities.

Resistance to mining activities in the Cañariaco Norte mine
San Juan de Kanaris, Ferreñafe - Peru

Cañariaco is a copper deposit exploited since 2001 by the company Candente Cooper. In 2012, more than 2,000 commoners' peasants, indigenous and afro-descendant participated in a community consultation and 95% declared against mining activities. Since then, they have mobilized suspension of operations and the end of the project.

** Environmental Justice Atlas includes data on impacts in indigenous peoples and racially discriminated groups, but does not specify the impacts on Afro-descendants except for specific cases. Therefore, the map does not show all the conflicts involving Afro-descendant communities, but only some specific cases.

* We do not specify an exact date of the conflicts in view of the historical and structural character of some of them. Therefore, the map includes recent and old conflicts, but with consequences until today.

Labmundo, 2018

Source: Own elaboration based on the Environmental Justice Atlas (https://ejatlas.org/featured/mining-latam), 2018.

Extractivism and multinational companies: The Vale case

One year later, the Articulação Internacional dos Atingidos e Atingidas pela Vale S.A. reaffirms that the Samarco/Vale/BHP disaster cannot be understood as an isolated incident, but as another tragedy of the mining sector. Throughout the years, we have denounced many tragedies provoked by Vale Joint Stock Company, regarding people's lives, traditional communities, quilombolas, indigenous people, farmers, and impoverished urban population.
Articulação Internacional dos Atingidos e Atingidas pela Vale, 2016

Why Vale?

Multinational companies, the main sponsor of the extractivist model, have developed megaprojects that favours their own self-interest rather than of the affected people and territories. The key protagonists in this process are companies coming from the global North; however, multinationals from emerging countries, especially Asians and Latin Americans, have increased their participation. Although either originally from the South or with its prevalent capital from this latitude, the harmful effect of these companies is similar to multinationals from the North, against which the environmental organizations and civil society have generally protested. The fight and resistance of those affected by multinational companies -Northern and Southern- continue to mobilize more and more transnational activist networks.

Due to the increasing importance of expansion of Brazilian companies expanding into Latin America and the Caribbean, we want to expose the role of the company Vale, one of the biggest mining companies in the world, with operations extending to logistics and power sectors. Vale was founded in 1942 by President Getúlio Vargas and eventually privatized afterwards. Today, with its headquarters in Brazil, it's a publicly-held company, with its shares traded on the stock market. Vale is present in about 30 countries around of the world and, according to Environmental Justice Atlas, 18 out of the 23 conflicts in which the company is involved occur in Latin America - particularly in Brazil, but also in Colombia, Peru and Chile. As demonstrated by the 10 cases represented on the map, the negative effects caused by this company are visible in different countries; nevertheless, given the importance, symbolism, and currentness of the case, we will focus on the dam collapse of Mariana and its consequences.

The Samarco dam collapse in Mariana

In November of 2015, the barrage of Rejeitos do Fundão, located in the Industrial do Germano Complex in the city of Mariana (Minas Gerais), ruptured. The building site was situated at river basin of Gualaxo do Norte, affluent of the Carmo river which, in turn, is an affluent of the Doce river.

This disaster leads to the pollution of more than 300 km of the Doce river as well as the release of 60 million cubical meters of mining waste, resulting in the death of 19 people, destroying entire villages and leaving homeless and waterless over 1000 people, in addition to having caused the death of numerous animals.

The dam was operated by mining company Samarco Mineração S.A., which is controlled by the Vale S.A. company and BHP Billiton Brazil Inc. According to the report by the Minas Gerais State Police, the collapse occurred due to liquefaction of arenaceous mining residues that supported the dam. Furthermore, a report made by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare points out other factors responsible for the break, such as structural, functioning and maintenance elements, as well as imperfections in the draining system, erosions, leaks etc.

The Public Prosecution Office pressed charges against Samarco, Vale, BHP Billiton Brazil Inc., and 23 people more, arguing for their criminal and environmental responsibility. Additionally, in a later time, presented a Public Civil Action requesting full reparation for all the social, economic and environmental damages caused by the collapse.

The Mariana disaster also triggered social and union movements participation. An important involved organization was the Articulação Internacional dos Atingidos e Atingidas pela Vale, aiming to "fortify and expand the coordination of communities and organizations, on a national and international level, before the violations of human rights by Vale S.A. and other mining companies".

The Mariana disaster, like other cases in Latin America and the Caribbean, resulted in obvious negative impacts for the population, including the death of several people. Nevertheless, in this case, it is possible to make out positive aspects, like the coordination of different players in formations such as the Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB) which continuously keep on fighting not only to defend the natural environment, but also the interests of people affected by big companies, beyond an institutional performance that addresses those issues.

LEARN MORE:

International Articulation of Affected by Vale – (https://atingidospelavale.wordpress.com/quem-somos/)

Documentaries about the Mariana disaster "Olhar Mariana" – Olhar Mariana (http://redeminas.tv/olhar-mariana/)

"Tragedia en Mariana" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvprawvqQgs)

Committee of Specialists for the Analysis of the Rupture of the Fundão Waste Dam - Report on the Immediate Causes of the Rupture of the Fundão Dam (http://fundaoinvestigation.com/wp-content/uploads/general/PR/pt/FinalReport.pdf)

Federal Public Ministry Complaint - filed before the judicial section of the State of Minas Gerais (http://www.mpf.mp.br/mg/sala-de-imprensa/docs/-denuncia-samarco)

CONFLICTS PROVOKED BY ACTIONS OF VALE S.A.

*Conflicts over Vales extractivist projects, by place**

Conflicts over phosphate extraction
Bayóvar, Sechura - Peru

The phosphate extraction project has displayed conflicts for three main reasons: the scarce regional advantages, the impacts on the coast (mainly in fishing and shellfish production) and the possible presence and exploration of Uranium, which would have a strong environmental impact on the region, public health and farming activities.

Environmental and social impacts of coal extraction
El Paso and La Jagua de Ibirico, Cesar - Colombia

Conflicts between the regional communities and coal extraction companies, among them Vale, in one of the largest mines in the world, have been generating important social and environmental consequences, leaving the local population out of any human development that might be generated by this exploration.

Quilombola communities against bauxite mines
Oriximiná, Pará – Brazil

Thirty-five quilombola communities fought the wood exploitation and mining companies, among them Vale, defending the integrity of their territories. These companies' activities are responsible for deforestation and forced migration of hundreds of quilombolas families.

Kaolin transportation impacts in indigenous lands
Moju, Pará – Brazil

674 quilombola families that live in Moju suffer the negative impacts of kaolin (white clay) transportation performed by Vale. These communities call for an environmental impact statement as well as the construction of basic services for the population.

Poor practices of the La Morada project
Jesus, Pedro Galvez, and Cachachi, Cajamarca - Peru

Since the beginning the project was met with a set of poor practices generating a growing dissatisfaction from the communities, leading to a conflict with Vale that formed security groups later accused of attacking community leaders and their families. The company, since then, has been sanctioned by different international and national agencies

Mining, deforestation and indigenous communities
Corumbá, Mato Grosso do Sul - Brazil

Extractivist companies such as Vale, that act on the third largest iron deposit in the country, are fuelled by coal derived from native wood, and in some cases by illegal deforestation from the Kadiwéu native territory. Criminal practices have been denounced by the indigenous people and by environmental organizations, generating ample local and national mobilization.

Mariana disaster due to the rupture of Samarco's dam
Mariana, Minas Gerais – Brazil

One of the worst environmental disasters in the country, polluted Doce river over 300 km, destroying villages, causing displacements and impacting the survival and economy of riverside communities. The Movimento de Atingidos por Barragens and the Articulação Internacional de Atingidos pela Vale have denounced the gravity of the situation, demanding company responsibility and compensation for the afflicted.

Impacts of the mining project of
Tres Valles on the local communities
Salamanca and Illapel, Coquimbo – Chile

The Vale project involves the exploration of two mines and, even though having government consent, occurred without the knowledge of local communities. These people live off small economic activities of fruit farming and pasture, being directly affected by the loss of land and contamination of the main water effluents.

Capão Xavier Vivo movement against iron exploitation
Nova Lima, Minas Gerais - Brazil

The Capão Xavier iron mine has an important environmental impact: it threats a conservation area and a hydrographic basin responsible for supplying water to 320 thousand people. The Capão Xavier Vivo movement denounces this situation throughout reports defending the inhabitants of the region to the right to clean water.

Potassium extraction Project on the Colorado River
Malargue, Mendoza – Argentina

Vales potassium extraction project on the Colorado River, one of the most important basins of Argentina, was presented as one of the biggest foreign investments in the country. However, the risk of river salinization, enormous gas consumption, and, especially, the lack of agreement on the company taxation and the benefits for the region resulted in the suspension of the project, leaving unemployed over 3500 people that worked in the mine construction.

* We do not specify an exact date of the conflicts in view of the historical and structural character of some of them. Therefore, the map includes recent and old conflicts, but with consequences until today.

Labmundo, 2018

Source: Own elaboration based on the Environmental Justice Atlas (https://ejatlas.org/featured/mining-latam), 2018.

Criminalization of Social Movements
that fight against extractivism

The water that God gave me / I need to take care, / If I waste the water, / others of thirst will die, / water of lakes and rivers, / water of sky and sea, / you are a divine gift, / you are life universal.
Elva Del Carpio Merino. Member of the Defence Front of Cajamarca.

Why criminalization of social movements?

Today, Latin America and the Caribbean is the most dangerous region to stand against the extractive development model and leads the number of land defenders and environmentalists murdered. The murdered are mainly peasants, indigenous people, Afro-descendants and women, with more probability of repression in case of combined conditions. The forms of criminalization include the hushing of mobilizations, protests, and denunciations against the impacts of extractivism, making use of various types of violence, threats, arbitrary detentions, complex legal processes that suppose high costs for the social actors involved, arriving at the assassination of the leaders of these movements.

Thinking about the criminalization of protest and social activism means thinking about the role of the state in the analysed conflict and its relations with private companies. The interaction between public and private actors is based on the great power exercised by private entities over the State, which, in order to impose extractive projects or conceal their harmful effects, resort to corruption and secret agreements. Thus, as the ten cases on the map shown, the use is increasingly clear of militarized force - including the army and armed groups at the service of multinationals - in the process of repressing environmental social movements in the region. From these premises, let's look in more detail the criminalization of movements in the case of mega project Yanacocha.

The criminalization of social movements within the framework of the mega-project Yanacocha and Conga

Yanacocha is the largest gold mine in Latin America and the second largest in the world and for a long time the most profitable as well. It is mainly owned by the Newmont Mining Company, which starts operations in Cajamarca, Peru, in the 1990s.

The proportion of this megaproject is so great that it does not boil down to a single locality: the mining complex stretches for 250 square kilometres and produces annually more than eighty-five thousand kilos of gold. Exploration of gold generates decisive impacts on the lives of local inhabitants: the main one concerns water contamination, leading to the population's demand to stop the process extraction, to make a popular consultation about the activity of Newmont Mining, and to allow the participation of the population in the profit obtained by the withdrawal of gold from their lands.

Newmont Mining's operations are expansive. The company, with State support through expropriation, has been buying land from residents at extremely low prices, impact on the culture and livelihood of the local population, who are in a state of despair. One name that became known was that of Máxima Acuña, who since 2011 had her life transformed by the Conga project, another megaproject of the company. After being physically assaulted and judicially sued, recently the Peruvian Supreme Court has reaffirmed her and her family's right to their lands. In 2014 a representative fact occurred of Peruvian politics regarding social demands. Six people were arrested (Andrés Fernández Castrejón; Jeremías Rodríguez Vargas; Marcos Tocas Rodríguez, Norberto Medina, Waldir Medrano Toscano, Fredy García Becerra - the latter out candidate to the city council) on the way to a community assembly on Lake Conga's pollution. Human rights organizations were proclaimed denouncing irregularities in the process.

In 2012, during a protest against the Conga project, José Antonio Sánchez Humán was the fifth fatal victim of the conflict, in addition to the arrest of the leader of the movement "Tierra y Libertad" Marco Arana. According to the NGO Grufides, Peru's national police have the right to work for private companies in their free time as compensation for their low wages. In the region, many work for Yanacocha. The local populations of Cajamarca are in a state of vulnerability to the violence of the companies and the State due to the disparity of forces, being victims of assassinations, judicial processes, physical assaults, and threats. However, as show the cases depicted on the map, in order to overcome such obstacles, new forms of mobilization are used beyond to the traditional protests and demonstrations in the streets and at the doors of the mining camps. It has been noticed the search for mobilization through networks of social movements and some NGOs, with the objective of receiving support legal, as well as to make their demands and the criminalization of the conflict visible.

LEARN MORE:

OCMAL – Observatory of Mining Conflicts of Latin America (https://www.ocmal.org/)

Environmental Defence Front of Cajamarca (http://fdaccajamarca.blogspot.com/)

Máxima Acuña (https://www.es.amnesty.org/en-que-estamos/blog/historia/articulo/el-caso-de-maxima-acuna/)

Tierra y Libertad Movement (https://tierraylibertad.lamula.pe/)

Grufides NGO (http://www.grufides.org/)

"Open Pit" Documentary about Yanacocha project (https://vimeo.com/50059350)

Interview about prisons in 2012 (https://youtu.be/Py8OL48VZyo)

CRIMINALIZATION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THAT FIGHT AGAINST MINING

*Contests that led to the criminalization of struggles and resistance, by place**

Resistance to land acquisition by Canadian MagSilver
Buenaventura, Chihuahua – México

The acquisition of land for mineral extraction by the company MagSilver without the consent of the community assembly, as required by law, generated an important conflict with the local inhabitants. In the escalation of violence, two activists were murdered defending a local river from an illegal exploitation of El Cascabel, a subsidiary of MagSilver.

Cotui against the megaproject of
Pueblo Viejo / Barrick Gold / Goldcorp
Cotui, Sanchez Ramirez - Dominican Republic

Megaproject installed by Canadian companies Barrick Gold and Goldcorp, along with the Dominican Pueblo Viejo Corporation, with an investment of about 3.8 billion dollars, causes intense protests in the region with violent responses from the government, resulting in the wounding and imprisonment of leaders and demonstrators.

Indigenous wayúu of the Socuy against
the exploitation of coal
Mara, Zulia – Venezuela

The indigenous peoples of the region fight against the increasing mineral exploration encouraged by the government. Disputes over territory increased militarization and violence against the Wayúu, with a strong criminalization of their actions. The Guajira Committee of Human Rights denounced the repression, imprisonment, and murder of dozens of community leaders..

Popular Consultation on mining
Piedras, Tolima – Colombia

The people of the city held a referendum on the acceptance or not of mining, with a massive victory of non-operation, approved by the city council, but the Colombian government claimed the illegality of the referendum. As a result, grew militarization and violence against opponents of the project, including the death of activist César García.

Fenix project of nickel exploration
El Estor, Izabal – Guatemala

The conflict happens around the exploration of nickel and acquisition of land in the region, leading to a series of processes concerning the companies involved, with the interference of several organizations international. The violence led to the assassination of Adolfo Ich, in a land dispute over security for the mining project.

Tolupanes against antimony mining
Northern Honduras, El Yoro - Honduras

Tolupanes are an indigenous people with more than 5,000 years of existence who oppose extractive projects, demanding their free determination and the right to be consulted. Because of their opposition and protests against mining projects and deforestation, they have been the victims of strong repression, with the imprisonment and murder of several leaders.

Los Caimanes community against
the Los Pelambres project
Salamanca, Coquimbo – Chile

The project is considered to be the 5th largest copper producer in the world and has prompt conflicts due to the risk of contamination of agricultural areas and water. A community lawsuit was able to stop mining activities, but the company resumed activities. During the demonstrations for respect of the judicial decision, there were injured and more than 30 prisons.

Ngöbe-Buglé against mining
Province of Ngöbe-Buglé - Panama

The Ngöbe-Buglé are the largest indigenous population in Panama and have suffered from copper explorations and the installation of hydroelectric plants in their territory. At the same time, they have been victims of repression, including wounded and killed during demonstrations for the defence of their territory.

Protests against the project Mirador of the company Ecuacorriente
Zamora Chinchipe - Ecuador

The project is located in the Ecuadorian Amazon, a place of high biological diversity and territory of the indigenous people of Shuar, which demands to be consulted about the megaproject. When the company sealed a contract with the government, protests intensified, mobilizing various social organizations, but were harshly repressed.

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Labmundo, 2018

Source: Own elaboration based on the Environmental Justice Atlas (https://ejatlas.org/featured/mining-latam), 2018.

Beyond extractivism: activism and construction of alternatives

"We are agroecological," say several leaders (...) it's a way of seeing things, a way of understanding, a way of being, a way of living with pride in the field"
Ribadeneira; Robalino, 2004.

Why building alternatives?

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the struggles and resistances of the people hit by extractivism are emerging with increasing force. These fights are not only forms of opposition to economic growth based on resource exploitation natural, but question the genesis and characteristics of the current and hegemonic development model, considered western, with an extractivist character and defended by progressive and conservative governments. As a result, these resistances defend the rights of nature, of Pacha Mama and the need to build alternatives - like the Sumak Kawsay or Good Living - to recover values and traditional knowledge and allow the emergence of sustainable forms of life that place them at the heart of people, their interests and their well-being.

The alternatives built on Intag

Intag is part of the municipality of Cotacachi and the province of Imbabura, in the northern zone of the Ecuadorian Andean region, in which indigenous populations - Kichwa Otavalo – Afro-descendants and mestizos live. In geographical terms, the region forms part of two of the most important biological zones of the world: The Tropical Andes and Tumbes-Chocó- Magdalena. At the same time, Intag is on the Cotacachi Cayapas Ecological Reserve, the protected area and most important conservation zone of the western Andes of Ecuador.

Among the riches of Intag, we highlight the presence of important copper and molybdenum reserves that have caused the interest of exploration by local and international companies and a long history of struggle and resistance inhabitants to declare their territory free of mining. Intag copper mining starts in the years 1990, by Bishimetals of the Mitsubishi Corporation. The project appeared without informing the population and without licenses legal, but after strong community opposition and organizations social and environmental issues such as Defence and Conservation of Intag - which included the occupation and destruction of the mining camp - as well as a study on the environmental impact of the project, submitted in 1996, been suspended. Between 2003 and 2004, concessions were ceded by the Ecuadorian government to the mining company Canadian Ascendant Cooper, also with various irregularities, without community participation and with repression of opposing organizations. However, as a result of social pressure, the project was suspended in 2007.

At the same time, a strong environmental awareness develops in the region and there are cooperative and alternative enterprises to mining, such as the Agroartesanal Association of Rio Intag Caficultores and several beekeeping projects, fish farming, biogas production, handicrafts, and community tourism. In 2000, the local government also approved a municipal law declaring Cotacachi municipality "Ecological Village", the first in Latin America, prohibiting mining and other activities not compatible with conservation of natural resources.

On the other hand, in 2008 Ecuador approved a new Constitution, the first Magna Carta in the world that recognizes the rights of nature. The text establishes the goal of achieving Good Living through respect for human rights, collective and nature. In this context, in 2008, with a significant role of civil society, it is created a "Mining Mandate" that, as a consequence of the use of the violence against communities and the fraudulent purchase of lands in the region of Intag, withdraws the mining concessions to the company Canadian Ascendant Cooper. Nevertheless, in 2009, during the government of President Rafael Correa, considered progressive, it was approved a Mining Law, which gives the Ecuadorian State the possibility to carry out new concessions in the name of the "national interest" and National Mining Company. In 2012, the Ecuadorian State licenses to the state-owned company Chilean project CODELCO through the state-owned project Llurimagua and ensures the execution of the project, repressing physical violence and judicial sanctions against the opposition of locations. Since then, the inhabitants of the region continue to fight in a peaceful way to maintain their territory free of mining and generate new alternatives. They appeal to the Constitution, which recognizes the rights of nature and the right to resistance in case of violation of rights constitutional rights, as well as the need to consult to local communities about projects that may affect their environment and ways of life.

LEARN MORE:

DECOIN – Defensa y Conservación Ecológica de Intag (http://www.decoin.org)

AACRI – Asociación Agroartesanal de Caficultores Río Intag (http://www.aacri.com/)

Coordinadora Zonal de Intag (http://cordinadorazonalintag.blogspot.com.br/p/intag.html)

Documentary "Sitio y ocupación de Intag" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iceMcsakm6c)

Photographic Projec "La resistencia a la minería en el Ecuador" (http://www.planv.com.ec/miradas/la-resistencia-la-mineria-el-ecuador)

Constitution of Ecuador, 2008 (http://www.asambleanacional.gob.ec/sites/default/files/documents/old/constitucion_de_bolsillo.pdf)

Movimiento Regional por la Tierra – Estudio de caso Ecuador. Intag. Historia de una Luz (http://porlatierra.org/docs/ff-f0858311230b7bb7ccc22e3ddaf659.pdf)

RIBADENEIRA, J.; ROBALINO, L. (2004): Intag. Vivir en los Andes Occidentales de Cotacachi: agroecología y agricultura campesina. Proyecto FOES, Intag. Quito: Abya Yala.

BEYOND EXTRACTIVISM: ACTIVISM AND CONSTRUCTION OF ALTERNATIVES

*Conflicts that led to alternative proposals, by place**

Environmental protests in 1970 against ALCOA
San Isidro of the general, Pérez Zeledón - Costa Rica

The local and international pressure resulted in the end of the ALCOA and the prohibition of such contracts was included in the Constitution, guaranteeing the right of citizens to develop survival. The struggle to ban the mineral exploitation is one of the most important moments in history of the Costa Rican environmental movement.

Ngöbe-Buglé movements against mining
Province of Ngöbe-Buglé - Panama

Through strong opposition to mining projects, indigenous movement and, particularly, the women of the movement, the project was suspended, and the local population obtained legislation that recognizes the validity and need for protection of their life forms and traditional livelihood practices.

Sustainability against the iron-nickel mine in Loma Miranda
La Vega, Province of La Vega - Dominican Republic

The mining project was halted thanks to strong demand from local communities, supported by national and international actors. Alternatively, a new environment-friendly legislation was created, and the Loma Miranda protected area was created, which promotes sustainable forms of survival for local people, such as tourism.

Bribri's traditional practices against mining
Limón, Talamanca - Costa Rica

As a result of the strong pressure of the indigenous people of Bribri and the support of local and international organizations, exploitation in the region has been suspended in favour of of the forms of life and traditional practices of this collective.

Cooperatives against mining in Intag
Cotacachi, Imbabura - Ecuador

Strong local and international pressure, with broad participation of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, suspended the mining project. Alternatively, they agro-craft cooperatives, community-based tourism and small dams able to cover local demand. The struggle of the communities continuest hreatening to return to the region.

National Sanctuary of Tabaconas and cooperatives against mining
Province of San Ignacio, Cajamarca - Peru

The region is an area with a significant wealth of fauna and flora. Through strong pressure and struggle, communities, with the support of local and religious organizations obtained the suspension of mining projects and created alternative forms of subsistence, such as coffee cooperatives and the religious pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the region.

National Park in the Chain of Mountains
Gandarela against iron mining
Raposo, Minas Gerais-Brazil

Opposition to the mining of the iron extraction project executed by Vale was very active. With the support of local and international actors, communities and movements in struggle to create the Gandarela National Park, with community tourism.

Family farming against the Achachucani mining project
Challapata, Oruro - Bolivia

With the strong pressure from communities and especially from women's groups, the project was suspended in favour of maintaining community forms of life based on family farming and livestock farming.

Alternative tourism in Sierra de la Ventana
Province of Buenos Ares - Argentina

The opposition and struggle of the local inhabitants, with the support of various national movements, obtained the suspension of concessions and exploration of the zone. As a result, Protected Landscape Law of Provincial Interest, allowing the emergence in the region of alternative and community tourism projects and other more sustainable activities.

Sustainable local development against the Meridian gold mine
Esquel, Chubut – Argentina

The local population, with the Asamblea de Vecinos Autoconvocados protagonism, fought the mining project until a referendum was held in 2003, in which the opposition to the project triumphed, the creation of a development plan and conservation of traditional practices and lifestyles in the region.

* We do not specify an exact date of the conflicts in view of the historical and structural character of some of them. Therefore, the map includes recent and old conflicts, but with consequences until today.

Labmundo, 2018

Source: Own elaboration based on the Environmental Justice Atlas (https://ejatlas.org/featured/mining-latam), 2018.

Conclusions

Against death, we demand life.
Against silence, words, and respect. Against amnesia, memory.
Against humiliation and disdain, dignity.
Against oppression, rebellion.
Against slavery, freedom.
Against imposition, democracy.
Against crime, justice.
Zapatista Army of National Liberation, "Entre la luz y la sombra", Mexico, 2014.

Since the beginning of GRISUL we've been analysing the shapes and characteristics of the extractivist model of development, as well as its origins and its diffusion on Latin American and the Caribbean. Historically, extractivism has characterized the territories of the region and, in spite of the Independence from colonizing countries, projects as the Import-Substitution Industrialization strategy aiming to diminish the economic dependency or the application of different economic models, extractivist capitalism is – today - the hegemonic model of development, imposing itself in different modalities across all of the region's countries.

At the start of the XXI century, the arrival to power of more progressive governments in different countries fed the hope of social movements and critical sectors with this model. The election of candidates who oppose neoliberalism and actions as the drafting of new Constitutions (in Bolivia and Ecuador) that recognized the plurinationality, the rights of nature, and embraced the Good Living or Sumak Kawsay propositions confirmed the initial optimism. However, despite the inflow generated by the boom of commodities from 2003, that allowed the creation of several social programs, these governments allied themselves with transnational capital, promoting developmental projects instead of implementing structural reforms for alternatives to extractivism. This way, not only this model was kept out of any discussion, but also favoured it and explicitly contributed to its consolidation under a renewed form: the neoextractivism. This new modality argues for the expansion of the extractive border as national interest, but, differently from the classic model, includes a bigger state participation and control, expecting social policies and other compensating mechanisms aiming to diminish the harmful effect of extractivist projects. As a result, the Latin American economies had tried processes of reprimarization - with the increase in primary products exportations- and reinforced their subordinated global insertion as well as their dependence, only this time not just in relation to central economies, but also to China and other emerging countries. This expansion of the extractivist model brings irreversible consequences over the territories and its inhabitants, who continue protesting and resisting.

With that in mind, first and foremost, we've decided to highlight the extractivism related impacts on people and nature. Secondly, stemming from the Environmentalism of the Poor and Environmental approaches, we brought to light the extractivist related conflicts, as well as the fighting and resistance of social movements and groups that were affected by this model. We reviewed 259 extractivism-related conflicts, contrasted with several players. On one hand, States and private companies, especially multinationals, that collaborate in public-private partnerships and on the promotion of a model that benefits only themselves, criminalizing and suppressing populations who reject the impacts of extractivism, resulting on their expulsion and forced displacements. And on the other hand, the affected population, fighting the negative social, political and cultural impacts of this phenomena, resisting their advances and defending their choices and way of life. Nonetheless, we also consider the complexity of the phenomenon as well as the heterogeneity of its players, emphasizing not only the role of multinationals of northern countries but also from the south, in particular, the Brazilian Vale, for its importance in the region. We also highlight that paramilitary groups and organized crime networks have been increasing their part on the violence towards the affected population. The violence, threats, lawsuits, and murders make Latin America and the Caribbean the most dangerous place in the world for environmental activists and land defenders.

Given the historical characteristics of Latin America and the Caribbean, the extractivism related consequences assume greater proportion if connected to farmers, women, indigenous groups and Afro-descendants. They are the protagonists of the opposition to the arrival and expansion of extractivist projects in their territories; however, their action has been frequently ignored by ethnocentrism, internal colonialism, racism and the patriarchal culture that mark our societies. That is precisely why our intention was to showcase that these are not simply passive players, but active citizens on the first line, acting not only with multiple ways of fighting and resistance but, also, with alternative proposals for the defence of Pacha.

With this work we seek to contribute to the understanding of the region, showcasing the different battles about what the concept of "development" means, the extractivism related conflicts and the fighting and resistance of the Latin American and Caribbean populations, whereas we generate analyses that allow building emancipatory horizons for all the inhabitants of the region.

In a few words...

Causes of conflict

Among the main conflict provoking causes are: mining and processing sector; human rights violations, violation to the right to access water; contamination, climate change, dumping and forced displacement, deforestation, health threats, violations on Indigenous territories, rights and land propriety, defence of biodiversity and of Pacha Mama, violence and militarization territories etc.

Conflicts Results

It can be either positive or negative to the Social Struggle:

Positive results to the communities (able to stop extractivist projects) shown when: judicial decisions support environmental justice or apply the existing regulation in order to protect territories and its population; realization of referendum that force suspension of extractivist activities; right to compensation; institutional changes and favourable laws; carrying of environmental impact studies; active citizen participation; creation of transnational solidarity networks; creation of alternative projects; strong popular mobilization, etc.

Negative results to the communities (left neglected) shown when: strong public-private partnership, corruption, criminalization, repression, and violence against activists, judicial decisions supporting extractivist activities, government concessions, and support to the activities; forced displacement; murders; severe environmental consequences, etc.

Murders

According to Global Witness, in 2017 Latin America was the region with the largest number of murders of people who defend the environment: 116 of a total of 197 (in other words, almost 60% of the worldwide total!), many of which were fighting extractivism.

Brazil remains as the most dangerous country, accounting for 46 murders, followed by Colombia (32), Mexico (15), Peru (8) and Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Argentina, Dominican Republic, and Venezuela.

Almost 40% of the victims were indigenous… Berta Cáceres and Isidro Baldenegro López, Goldman Environmental Prize winners, are two fighting references in the region that were murdered.

The vast majority of murders remain unpunished… Those responsible for the murders are large landowners, executives, and employees of mining companies, illegal miners, private security agents, state security forces, paramilitary, etc.

Protest Criminalization

Besides murder, other techniques are used to criminalize and silence the Pacha Mama defenders: death threats, harassment, intimidation, prisons, arbitrary detentions, violence, sexual aggression, kidnapping, beatings, forced displacements, smear campaigns, lawsuits, etc.

Environmental Impacts

Some of the environmental impacts provoked by extractivist activities: pollution and quality reduction of water, air pollution, desertification, toxic waste, loss of biodiversity (wildlife, geodiversity), food insecurity (in lieu of damages to family and local agriculture), global warming, landscape degradation, soil contamination and erosion, deforestation and loss of vegetation cover, damage to hydraulic and geological systems, ecological connectivity, etc.

Actors involved in the conflits

The main players involved in these conflicts, with different positions and alliances, are:

Private: mining companies, illegal miners, private security agents, paramilitary, drugs networks, organized crime, etc.

Public: national government, Congress, ministries and secretaries (environment, industry, mining, labour, water, etc), courts, State security forces, local authorities, defenders, etc.

Social: small farmers, craftsmen, pastorals, social movements, syndicates, women groups, religious people, indigenous communities, Afro-descendants, research centres, local councils, human rights defenders, environmental organizations, NOG, popular courts, affected networks, etc.

International Organisms: Word Bank, Inter American Court of Human Rights, United Nation organisms (UNHCR, ILO, FAO, UN Women), international courts, etc.

Social actors forms of mobilization

Social actors use different mobilization strategies: street protests, manifestations, blocks, boycott campaigns, media activism, complaints and petitions, public campaigns, strikes, occupations, carrying of environmental impact studies, international alliances, creation of transnational solidarity networks, denounces and lawsuits, demands of prior consultation, reports, creative and artistic activities (theatre, wall paintings, documentaries, etc), community participative research (militant research), referendum, etc.

Bulding alternatives

These social struggles not only resist the extractivist projects, but also propose alternative activities to local economy, such as: new environmental laws (biodiversity defence, protection of territories, creation of natural reserves and parks, support to productive activities and of sustainable livelihood (family agriculture and fishing, community tourism, craftsmanship, etc), creation of cooperatives, respect to cultures and traditional ways of life, protection to indigenous territories and Afro-descendants communities, better working conditions, etc.

Dedication

To those who fight for the defence of our Pacha Mama

Leadership repressed and murdered for fighting for land and natural resources

"The struggles are despised and invisible because those who have political and economic power are a bad example. They inspire the emancipatory struggle of peoples and show that they do other forms of life that protect the planet are possible. This is contrary to the project of hegemonic domination that is imposed all over the world and which intend to plunder the strategic resources of the people"

Berta Cáceres.
The leader of the Lenca indigenous people and Honduran environmental activist murdered in 2016 for fighting for more than 20 years for the rights of its people and women and for defending environmental justice alternatives to the current development model. http://bertacaceres.org

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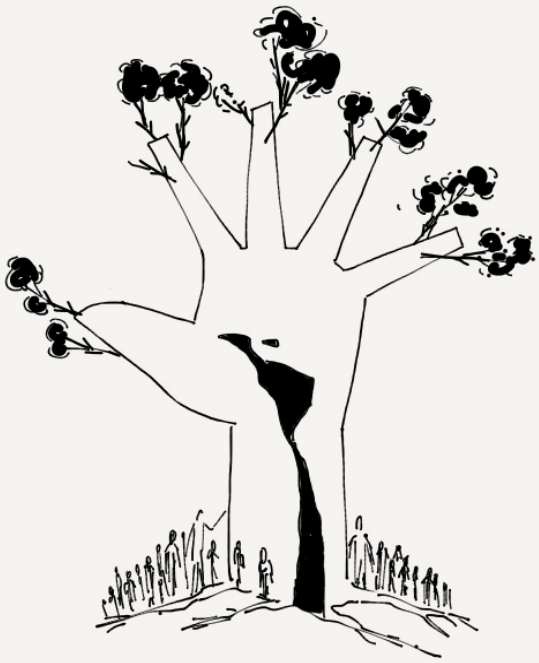
What is extractivism? Why is Latin America and the Caribbean the most dangerous region in the world for land defenders, environmental leaders, and activists? What are the impacts of extractivism on communities affected, women, indigenous and Afro-descendants? How do they stand before this process and what are their struggles and claims? What role do States, multinational corporations and other actors play in extractivist? Are there alternatives to extractivist? These are some of the questions that "Pacha: defending the land. Extractivism, Contests, and Alternatives in Latin America and the Caribbean "tries to respond. Visiting the protagonism of the communities affected by extractivism, we also want to show the multiplication of alternatives to development that generate diverse strategies for the defence of land and traditional ways of life, as well as the creation of new paradigms such as Good Living derived from knowledge and perspectives of the region's people.



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