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Ecología política del extractivismo: escenarios socio-territoriales y rurales de la lucha ambiental latinoamericana

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Universidad Nacional de Colombia
Sede Bogotá, Facultad de Derecho, Ciencias Políticas y Sociales
Departamento de Ciencias Políticas
Diagonal 40 A Bis 15 - 38, Piso 2º, Oficina 218
Instituto Unidad de Investigaciones Jurídico-Sociales Gerardo Molina, UNIJUS
Bogotá, Colombia
Tel [57+1] 3165000,. exts. 29266 - 29264. Fax: 29280
Correo electrónico: insisjpg_bog@unal.edu.co

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Neo-Extractivism in Latin America. One Side of a New Phase of Global Capitalist Dynamics

Neo-extractivismo en América Latina. Un lado de una nueva fase de dinámicas capitalistas globales

Ulrich Brand
Universität Wien, Viena, Austria.
ulrich.brand@univie.ac.at

Kristina Dietz
Freie Universität Berlin, Berlín, Alemania.
kristina.dietz@fu-berlin.de

Miriam Lang
Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Quito, Ecuador.
miriam.lang@uasb.edu.ec

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Abstract

The aim of this text is to make sense of the emerging political-institutional, territorial, and socio-ecological dynamics and contradictions of neo-extractivism in Latin America in the context of global capitalist development. In contrast to some existing literature, we argue that the term 'neo-extractivism' should not be restricted to countries with progressive governments but be applied to all Latin American societies that, since the 1970s and especially since the year 2000, depend predominantly on the exploitation and exportation of nature. We argue that the often vague usage of the term neo-extractivism can be strengthened when it is seen in line with dominant development models. Therefore, we refer to regulation theory and its historical heuristic of different phases of capitalist development. This enables us to look at the temporal-spatial interdependencies between shifting socio-economic and technological developments, world market structures, and political-institutional configurations that characterize neo-extractivism across scales and beyond national borders.

Keywordss: Capitalism, Development, Extractivism, Neo-extractivism, Latin America, Regulation, Resource-based.

Resumen

El objetivo de este texto es darle sentido a las dinámicas y contradicciones político-institucionales, territoriales y socio-ecológicas del extractivismo en América Latina en el contexto del desarrollo capitalista global. Nos referimos a recientes controversias latinoamericanas acerca del desarrollo basado en recursos llamados "extractivismo" y "neo-extractivismo". Contra una parte de la literatura, argumentamos que el término "neo-extractivismo" no debería aplicarse solo a los países con gobiernos progresistas, sino a todos los países de América Latina desde la década de los setenta, y especialmente desde el año 2000. Además, argumentamos que el uso del término neo-extractivismo puede cobrar fuerza cuando se mira en línea con modelos de desarrollo dominantes. Para ello, nos referimos a la teoría de la regulación y su heurística histórica de las fases del desarrollo capitalista. Esto permite mirar las interdependencias espacio-temporales entre desarrollos socioeconómicos y tecnológicos cambiantes, estructuras del mercado mundial y configuraciones político-institucionales que caracterizan el neoextractivismo más allá de escalas y fronteras.

Palabras clave: América Latina, capitalismo desarrollo, extractivismo, modelo, neo-extractivismo, regulación.

1. Introduction

The societal, political, ecological, and developmental implications of the twenty-first century commodity boom have been much debated, especially with reference to Latin America (Gudynas, 2009, 2015; Svampa, 2012; Lang and Mokrani, 2013; Veltmeyer, 2013; Burchardt and Dietz, 2014; Prada, 2014; Veltmeyer and Petras, 2014). This is hardly surprising, since the global boom of primary commodities has had a particular influence on development policies, growth rates, and the intensification of resource extraction for export purposes in the Latin American region. Similar implications of the resource boom can also be observed in other world regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia (Davenport, 2013; Hilson et al., 2013; Verbrugge et al. 2015). Between the years 2000 and 2010, national economies in Latin America grew at an average rate of five per cent per year. This wealth in raw materials became a key driver of growth and a central source of state revenue in the region. This was reflected in growing foreign exchange revenues, a mounting share of the primary sector in gross domestic product (GDP), and an acceleration of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the resource extraction and primary commodities sector, especially mining (CEPALSTAT, n.d.; Matthes, 2012; Bebbington and Bury, 2013). National governments, especially those with a left-liberal and further left orientation, were thereby granted new room for maneuver in social policies. Thus the distribution of additional revenues gained from the resource sector allowed poverty rates to be lowered and persistent social inequalities reduced (this was particularly the case in Venezuela).

But from 2011 on, and especially in the second half of 2014, the prices not only of oil but of all commodities, including minerals and agrarian export crops like soy, declined drastically. According to the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), while metal prices fell by 39% and cash crop prices by 29% between 2011 and May 2015, energy products like oil, natural gas, and coal went down by 52% in only seven months between July 2014 and January 2015 (ECLAC, 2015). The reasons for this latter dramatic price collapse are attributed to diminished demand, especially due to the slowing of the Chinese economy, increased production, related most importantly to the irruption of the US into the oil and gas market through fracking, but also speculative factors due to the increasing financialization of commodities. Although the impact of this crisis on each national economy has varied, it can be said that it led to economic deceleration in the whole Latin American

region and in some cases even to recession. Governments have tried to limit these effects by increasing tax revenues, fostering the expansion of the extractive frontier, and increasing the absolute export volumes of commodities (ECLAC, 2015; Svampa, 2016).

Much has been said, debated, and written in relation to neo-extractivism in Latin America. So why another article on the topic? Starting from the existing academic and political debates on the issue, the purpose of our paper is twofold. First, by applying insights from regulation theory, we aim to develop a theoretically founded understanding of neo-extractivism by characterizing it as a development model. By development model, we understand a more or less territorially defined unit, within which a determined set of cultural and social practices and mental schemes become (at least partially) hegemonic and translate into an institutionalized compromise on the national or sub-national scale. Thus a development model is the complementary combination of a more or less stable regime of accumulation, an industrial/development paradigm, and a mode of regulation that underpins the former two institutionally. Furthermore, this conducive combination can be seen as the unexpected result of mass social struggles and movements (Aglietta, 1979; Boyer, 1990; Atzmüller et al., 2013).

Second, we aim to evaluate the current political-institutional, territorial, and socio-ecological dynamics and contradictions of neo-extractivism in Latin America, not only at the national or sub-national scale, i.e. within the boundaries of the nation state, but in the context of dynamic global capitalist development. This argument is related to the first in the sense that neo-extractivism as a development model needs to be placed in its global context. Our line of argument is not world market deterministic; in other words, we do not assume that neo-extractivism as a development model is merely an expression of international economic and political conditions. Rather, we address the interdependencies between changing conditions of capitalist accumulation in times of crisis on a global scale and through processes of socio-political and socio-ecological restructuring at national and local scales.

The article is structured as follows. In the next section, we review the scholarly and political debate concerning neo-extractivism in and related to Latin America and present key figures who point to a trend towards the consolidation of neo-extractivism in the region.

In section 3, we present the theoretical framework of the analysis, which is based on insights from regulation theory. In sections 4 and 5,

we examine various historical phases of extractivism in Latin America. The historical analysis reveals the particular temporal-spatial interdependencies with respect to political-institutional configurations, social relations of power, and societal-nature relations. Moreover, it helps to historically situate neo-extractivism in the current phase of globalizing capitalism. In section 6, we focus on important political consequences and recent institutional changes, in particular the new constitutions in the Andean countries and the weakening of the state apparatuses concerned with environmental issues. In the final part, on the basis of selected indicators and structural socio-political changes, we show that the global crisis aside, neo-extractivism has become a consolidating development model in some Latin American countries, even if differences between countries and sub-regions need to be ascertained and taken into account.

2. 'Classical' extractivism and neo-extractivism in Latin America – debate and evidence

The terms extractivism and neo-extractivism are closely linked to the critique of the resurgence of a capitalist-dominated economic and growth model oriented toward the extraction and export of raw materials, one that has been pursued in many Latin American countries since the turn of the millennium. Authors like Eduardo Gudynas, Alberto Acosta, and Maristella Svampa use the concept of extractivism to refer to the predominance of economic activities that are primarily based on resource extraction and nature valorization without distributive politics, while the term neo-extractivism is linked to those national governments that use the surplus revenue from extractive activities to fight poverty and enhance the material well-being of the masses (Gudynas, 2009; Svampa, 2012; Acosta, 2013).

Classical vs. neo-extractivism in current debates

Extractivism in general is understood both as an accumulation strategy and in terms of the economic structures related to it, "based on the overexploitation of [...] natural resources, as well as the expansion of capital's frontiers toward territories previously considered nonproductive" (Svampa, 2015, p. 66). Additional key features linked to neo-extractivism are the partial rejection of neoliberal policies, the partial nationalization of certain raw material industries (oil, gas, mining), stronger po-

litical control of resource appropriation and profits, and the expansion of socio-political programs. Examples of this 'post-neoliberal' form of extractivism are to be found both with respect to recent developments in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay under left-liberal governments, and also in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela ruled by governments which are considerably further left. This 'new' extractivism is defined in the Latin American debate as distinct from 'classical' or 'conservative' extractivism, which is characterized by the perpetuation of neoliberal policy patterns such as transnationalization, deregulation, and privatization. Mexico and Colombia are seen as prime examples of this latter model (Gudynas, 2013; 2015). Gudynas (2015) also stresses that conservative extractivism seeks to build legitimacy in terms of corporate social responsibility, while progressive neo-extractivism achieves this on the basis of nationalist or anti-imperialist discourse, arguing that the extractive activities are of the people and for the people.

Svampa (2012) links both versions, i.e. classical extractivism and neo-extractivism, with the corresponding models of liberal and progressive developmentalism respectively, and argues that neo-extractivism is based on a national-populist socio-political *dispositif* that strategically functions as a source of political legitimization. In other words, as an integral part of the development model, neo-extractivism is the justification for the exploitation of nature as a project that aims to promote national development, sovereignty, and social redistribution. Particularly in the countries of the Andean region ruled by leftist governments – Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela – the extraction of raw materials is socio-politically justified by the necessity to struggle against poverty and social inequality (Correa, 2012; Gudynas, 2014).

In our understanding, the distinction between progressive and liberal/classical extractivism, or between "neo" and "classical" extractivism, lies at the level of concrete societal historical formations, that is, concrete countries in specific moments. Especially when considering these formations in depth (which we do not intend to do here), one should take this differentiation as a point of departure. Nonetheless, we would like to emphasize that in spite of the fact that *differences* certainly do exist, *commonalities* among the different countries are becoming increasingly visible. These are related to the political practice of nature appropriation and the importance of international constellations (Bebbington Humphreys and Bebbington, 2012; Gudynas, 2014). On this basis, we would like to caution against overestimating the differences between

countries due to their forms of government when analyzing extractivism/neo-extractivism. In the remainder of the paper, we deliberately talk only of neo-extractivism, referring to a development model that is embedded in a specific historical phase of capitalist development where nature and its valuation in the world market play a decisive role for the realization of exchange value, and which exhibits commonalities across different political regimes.

Extractivism in Latin America in figures

Several commonalities between different Latin American countries, notwithstanding the political orientation of their governments, become visible when one focuses on macro-economic tendencies. In 2011, ECLAC observed the tendency toward a regression or return to primary goods production, representing the reprimarization of many national economies (ECLAC, 2011d). This export-based raw materials boom is particularly marked in the Andean region, but even in the MERCOSUR countries (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay), the share of raw materials in overall exports rose. This reprimarization thesis is, however, based not only on the increase in export values resulting from a rise in prices. A glance at absolute extraction and production volumes in several countries also shows a clear tendency of a move toward an extraction economy: in Bolivia, gas production tripled in quantity between 2000 and 2008; while petroleum production in Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico, and Venezuela rose by between 50 and 100 per cent between 1990 and 2008. The growth in extraction and production quantities in mining is also notable in Brazil, Chile, and Peru. The expansion of mining in countries in which it has not traditionally been a sector, such as Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and Ecuador, is a particularly important indicator of the change in the political and economic constellation of neo-extractivism (ECLAC, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d; 2012a; 2013; 2014).

Hence what is at issue here is that before the downturn of commodity prices in 2014, it was not only the price-driven growth in the monetary value of primary products for export that caused the raw materials boom in Latin America; the quantitative growth in the extraction of strategic raw materials also pointed to the expansion of an extractive model of growth in Latin America. If, moreover, we connect the export values and absolute extraction or production volumes with GDP, and even when taking into account locally-specific developments, we see an overall trend toward extraction economies. Thus the share of the pri-

mary sector in the GDP of Venezuela in 2011 was 32,3% compared with 21,9% in 2000; similar trends can be observed in Argentina and Bolivia (CEPALSTAT). While in 1998, oil represented 68,7% of total Venezuelan exports, in recent years this share rose to 96% (Lander, 2014a). In Ecuador in 2013, 80,8% of all exports corresponded to the primary sector, while the share of manufactured exports had fallen by 11% since 2012 (Luna Osorio, 2013).

In some countries of the region such as Bolivia and Venezuela, the high share of raw material revenues in the state budget indicates the consolidation of this development model. Other examples include Chile, where the share of raw material-based revenues in the state budget rose from 28% to 34% between 1990 and 2008; Colombia saw a rise from 8% to 18%; and Mexico from 30% to 37% (Burchardt and Dietz, 2014). Overall, the calculation was that raw material extraction provided an economic base, by means of which increasing growth and –under certain political conditions distribution could be achieved; even in times of global economic and financial crisis. At the same time, there has been a marked reduction in poverty in the region, including extreme poverty, which dropped from almost 44% in 1999 to below 31% in 2010 (ECLAC, 2012b). Nevertheless, 19% of the overall Latin American population was dependent on government assistance and social programs (Svampa, 2014), a situation that could easily reverse the trend toward poverty reduction in the case of a substantial drop in the world market prices for raw materials.

It would seem that Latin America's veins were open once again, to use the famous metaphor of the Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano (1997), but this time, at least in some respects, positively and under different conditions. This time, the 'blood' was not flowing exclusively to benefit the domestic or *comprador bourgeoisie,* the balance sheets of transnational corporations, or for the maintenance and intensification of the imperial mode of living of those in the global North. Rather, in many countries, it also flowed to benefit other strata of the population, addressing urgent social issues and stabilizing ever more precarious state budgets. This seems to be the case particularly in countries with so-called progressive governments in power, such as Bolivia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, where in recent years post-neoliberal state interventions have taken the form of the partial nationalization of raw materials, high levels of profit taking from raw material production, the imposition of export taxes, and the establishment of certain social programs, to name the most important measures.

Despite these important achievements, critical and skeptical positions have gained momentum over the past years. This critique has mainly been directed toward the spatial and temporal externalization of the social and ecological costs of this development model, the re-centralization of political power, and a disregard for social, territorial, and political rights (Haarstad, 2012). With reference to the various practices of extraction (especially mining, agro-industry, fossil fuel extraction), critics have pointed to the territorial transformation processes that result in the restructuring of landscapes and social and labor relations, as well as spatial fragmentation. Specific to such processes are the drawing of new territorial boundaries and enclosures, the emergence of enclave economies, the imposition of exclusive use rights, the de-democratization of the use of nature, and wide ranging ecological destruction. The critique has also taken aim at the unbroken Western belief in progress and at the growth paradigm associated with it. Another more recent strand of critique focuses on the poverty reduction strategies themselves. Lavinas (2013) stated that while in the 1980s and 1990s microcredit schemes were the dominant anti-poverty tool in Latin America (with moderate results), since the turn of the century conditional cash transfer programs have moved to the fore:

> [...] by providing select groups of the poor with cash or new modalities of bank credit rather than decommodified public goods or services, they are also a powerful instrument for drawing broad strata of the population into the embrace of financial markets. (Lavinas, 2013, p. 7)

In our view, the strength of the critical Latin American debate is that it sees neo-extractivism as an economic model that is secured by the state, cultural norms, class relations, and particular societal-nature relations. It is based on and reinforces a subaltern integration into the world market and authoritarian politics.[1] Moreover, the societal-nature relations upon which the model is based, as well as its considerable socio-ecological problems and effects, are being politicized as a result of these discussions. At issue is not a broad-brush rejection of any form of societal use or appropriation of nature, but rather the domination-ori-

1 By adopting such a perspective, we do not overlook the fact that an additional driving force of capitalist economic growth can be the development of the internal market and the increasing consumption of the middle and upper classes in particular (Jäger et al., 2014).

ented content of this appropriation for the capitalist world market, which is destructive of both nature and social structures (Gudynas, 2009; 2014; Colectivo Voces de Alerta, 2011; Svampa, 2012; Acosta, 2013; Lang and Mokrani, 2013).

3. Theorizing extractivism as a development model using regulation theory

As we argued above, we see a certain conceptual and theoretical weakness in putting the neo-extractivist economic model into a broader context. This weakness is also reflected in critical accounts from the region itself. Machado Aráoz states that understanding extractivism mainly as a national development strategy lacks consistency because "it focuses on the social formations where these activities are carried out, omitting and disregarding the world system, the rules governing the rate and rhythm of extraction, the uses of these resources and the technology applied" (Machado Aráoz, 2015, p. 4, as cited in Martín, 2016). Along the same lines, Moreno (2015) questions a state-centered perspective on extractivism, which ignores the real dynamics of a globalized world increasingly dominated by China's resource hunger. She therefore argues that extractive activities are neither disconnected from industrial production processes and technological innovations, nor are the latter disconnected from the availability of natural resources (Martín, 2016). Taking these critiques as a starting point, we propose to understand neo-extractivism as a development model, referring here to insights from regulation theory. This approach claims that historically speaking, contradictory capitalist relations –including societal-nature relations have taken very different forms due to technological, socio-economic, cultural, and political developments, and the contingent results of social struggles. These manifold relations can be temporarily stabilized, and will thus create the societal context for a relatively permanent process of capital accumulation. Such a temporal stabilization is called a 'mode of development', referring to a particular articulation of a regime of accumulation, mode of regulation, and technological paradigm (Aglietta, 1979; Lipietz, 1988; Boyer, 1990; Hirsch, 1997; Alnasseri et al., 2001; Becker, 2002; Jessop and Sum, 2006; Atzmüller et al., 2013). We use the terms 'development model' and 'mode of development' interchangeably.

The analytical point of departure of regulation theory is as follows. As we have often seen throughout history and as we currently experi-

ence, capital accumulation can also take place under unstable conditions and in periods of crisis. However, socio-economic structures and processes work better when certain regularities exist; concerning social structures like class or gender, compromises and consent can be better achieved under more or less stable conditions. The reproduction of society as a whole is continually manifested through the actions of individuals who pursue entirely different strategies and have very different allocative and authoritative resources available to them. For this reason, the reproduction of society remains a precarious process, although the ability to plan and handle dynamics may develop through the temporarily firm establishment of social relations.

Marxist theory focuses at the abstract level on the capitalist mode of production, and at the concrete level on social formations (usually national societies). The invention of regulation theory was intended to introduce a middle range level of abstraction in order to identify different, more or less stable, phases across different formations since the emergence of capitalism: i.e. modes of development such as Fordism. The concept of mode of development considers more –and historically concrete elements such as mass production and mass consumption than the more abstract term mode of production.

Macro-economic coherence –a functioning regime of accumulation that in peripheral countries is always highly dependent on the concrete forms of world market integration, is institutionally embedded through a mode of regulation. This encompasses "the totality of institutional forms, networks, and explicit or implicit norms assuring the compatibility of behaviors within the framework of a regime of accumulation in conformity with the state of social relations and hence with their conflictual character" (Lipietz, 1988, p. 24). This stabilization occurs via broadly shared societal values and the temporary institutionalization of societal relations in the form of modes of regulation. Boyer (1990, pp. 42ff.) describes the characteristics of modes of regulation: they secure the reproduction of fundamental societal relationships across all concrete manifestations of institutional forms; they 'steer' the reproduction of the particular regime of accumulation; and finally, they guarantee the dynamic compatibility of a wide range of decentralized decision-making processes by individuals or institutions without having to take the logic of the entire system into account. The relative permanence of societal relations means not only the reinforcement of institutions but also the stabilization of the expectations and life practices of

individuals, as well as of collective actors such as trade unions. In this sense, a functioning development model tends to be abler to create socio-economic and political hegemony in the sense of Antonio Gramsci, i.e. to elucidate the complex mechanisms of "the agreement of associated societal wills" (Gramsci, 1991, pp. 1536ff.). Hegemony in this sense refers to domination-shaped consent based on the material core, i.e. a more or less functioning capitalist political economy, and the ability and willingness of the dominating classes to compromise.

Gramsci's concept is useful because it aims precisely to detect the universalized (not homogenized) socio-economic, political, and ideational patterns and mechanisms of domination. This brings us to an important point that needs to be considered in a global perspective on the (neo) extractivist development model, namely that the capitalist regulation of societal-nature relations does not mean the abolition of tendentially destructive forms of the appropriation of nature; nevertheless, the destruction of nature will not necessarily become an urgent problem for overall capitalist development, since dangerous negative impacts can be spatially externalized and temporarily postponed. We can observe this quite clearly in Latin America and at an international scale.

Finally, a strength of regulation theory is its perspective on deeply embedded structural features, their variation throughout history, and their inter-linkages with accumulation strategies and manifold other social actions. Therefore, methodologically, regulation theory looks both at different phases of capitalist development with particular features, but also at continuities with previous phases, i.e. it attempts to highlight the continuities and discontinuities, moments of – spatially highly uneven stabilization and crises.

4. Extractivism in Latin America's history

The history of Latin America is inseparably linked to raw-materials extraction. At each point in history, the historically specific forms of nature appropriation were constitutive for the modes of socio-economic reproduction and power relations. In Latin America, various historical phases of extractivism can be identified, based on specific world-market structures, supporting political economic and power relations, specific development conceptions and effects on social inclusion and exclusion as well as specific discursive rationalities. In the following we distinguish four historical phases: colonial extractivism, the extractivism of the liberal capitalism of

the 19th century, peripheral-Fordist extractivism, and the current phase of neo-extractivism. The latter will be addressed in section 4.

The colonial extractivism of the 16th to 18th centuries

The phase of colonial extractivism extends from the *conquista* to the independence of the colonial countries in the early 19th century. The key constitutive and interrelated characteristics of this phase are the forced appropriation of precious metals, especially gold and silver, and of land areas, and the establishment of a specific colonial system of domination. The dominant societal form and practice of extractivism during this phase based on a social classification along the category of race that not only divided humans themselves and justified factually unfree labor, that is to say slavery, but created also a societal relation with nature that subjugated it exclusively for human necessities. During the colonial period Latin America became one of the world's most important suppliers of raw materials for the industrializing European countries and their idea of modernity, i.e. it was a precondition for a colonial regime of accumulation. The export of raw materials from Latin America was driven by the growing power of international commercial capital and the soaring growth rates of worldwide economic output.[2] The phase of colonial extractivism must therefore be seen as the other, i.e. the dark side of European capitalism (Coronil, 2000; De Sousa Santos, 2008). Colonial extractivism was the basis, on the one hand, of a plundering economy within the Latin American countries, and, on the other hand, of a global division of labour which has remained structurally effective to this day, and which has triggered heterogeneous socio-spatial structural effects domestically. The mode of regulation consisted of the political dependence from the centers, of the complete subordination under their economic necessities and of racism and a strong role of the Catholic Church. The phase was characterized by instability and the constant valorization and de-valorization of regions depending on the particular commodities that existed there, the ability to extract them, as well as on the demand from outside.

The extractivism of liberal capitalism (1810 to approx. 1930)

The second phase of extractivism coincides with the independence of the Latin American countries, "The Age of Capital" (Hobsbawm, 1975), the increasing importance of foreign capital and a wave of internal col-

2 Between 1700 and 1820, world economic output almost doubled (Maddison, 2002).

onization processes. With the economic boom in the capitalist centers, the world market expanded under the leadership of Great Britain, and a world order known as the "Pax Britannica" was established (Cox, 1987). Starting in the mid-19th century, a "neo-colonial order" (Donghi, 1993) emerged. Under this order, Latin America developed into one of the most economically prosperous regions of the era, with some characteristics of a stable development model, thanks to the continuation of the colonial raw-materials regime of accumulation. The dominant free-trade policies seemed to work, and contributed –albeit not everywhere to the capitalist penetration of Latin America. Based on such models as progress and stability, the neo-colonial order developed a strongly structured forcefulness, with oligarchic democratic systems ensuring the promotion of the system of raw-materials extraction dominated by free trade. Moreover, initial welfare-state programs helped to coopt the burgeoning working class into the political system, and thus to reinforce the political-economic order internally (Kurtenbach und Wehr, 2014).

The discontinuities with respect to the previous phase involved the fact that Latin America now itself became an importer not only of consumer goods, but also of such capital goods as machines. The capital imports led to a technological modernization of the extraction sector, and the participation of international capital contributed to the direct connection with the international financial system. In some countries, this favored the rise of a so-called "comprador" bourgeoisie, for which the so-called "Bolivian tin barons" were the quintessential model. With the private accumulation of raw-material revenues, the members of this class achieved such political and economic influence that in some cases literal 'extraction states' emerged, with the goal of implementing the interests of this group within the state. Another power center established within the state was that of the large landowning families, whose material power base was augmented by internal colonization processes, often involving the violent appropriation of indigenous areas and of church lands in order to meet the growing demand for raw materials and foodstuffs –sugar, coffee and cereals in the metropolitan centers. This also involved the integration of new raw materials like saltpeter, guano, rubber and oil.

The extractivism of peripheral Fordism (1930-1970)

The global economic crisis of 1929 went hand in hand with various waves of collapses of the world market caused by crises and wars and the decline of the neo-colonial order.

Since the beginning of industrial capitalism, capitalist, patriarchal, and imperial modes of production and living gained certain stability and hegemony at the cost of environmental destruction. However, societal nature relations were stabilized, especially during (peripheral) Fordism, *due* to its environmentally unsustainable character. Manifold societal institutions, like the capitalist market and the capitalist state, assured certain hegemony of destructive and domination-shaped societal nature relations (Mitchell, 2009; Brand and Wissen, 2012). The societal regulation, in the sense of dealing with contradictions, of capitalist societal nature relations is possible, and does in fact occur; herein lies a central dynamic of politics.

After World War II a peripheral-Fordist development model emerged in Latin America. It was characterized by the consolidation of a new world order, the "Pax Americana" (Cox, 1987), partial successes at industrialization, and the emergence of the Latin American development state as well as a tendency toward indebtedness which began as early as the 1950s.

There were also internal reasons for such developments: After the crisis of 1929 and the declining demand for Latin American export products from the raw-materials sector, a strong wave of economic nationalism got the upper hand. The state intervened more strongly in economic activities, breaking with the liberal free-trade model of the 19th century. Some key industries were nationalized –for example, the oil industry in Mexico. The new economic-policy paradigm was that of "import-substituting industrialization" (ISI). The construction of domestic industries and the support for domestic economic development was designed to decrease the dependency on imports and raw-material exports. In this context, the Latin American development state emerged: the state established protective tariffs, transferred income from exports to domestic-market-oriented sectors, integrated the interests of the urban middle and upper classes and those of the working classes (at least initially) alike, and often worked against the interests of the agrarian oligarchy. The development-policy model was known as *desarrollismo* (developmentalism) with a strong orientation toward economic growth and societal progress, which could be called 'conservative modernization' or 'catch-up development'. In the current debate, some authors refer to the logics of ISI as an option for a post-extractivist, autonomous development pathway of the region, particularly with respect to a break with the regions' dependency on imports of manufactured goods and raw-material export-orientation (Ugarteche and Valencia, 2016).

Although an enhanced processing of raw-materials within the region would reduce export orientation, increase the parts of the value chain controlled by Latin American state and non-state actors and certainly help to diversify the productive bases of the regions' economies, we argue that it would not necessarily lead to overcome neo-extractivism as a whole. First, because within the region considerable political-economic inequalities and power asymmetries exist. Already today a great deal of raw materials from the Andean region is exported to Brazil and Argentina. Thus, a regional answer would probably deepen these asymmetries and reproduce spatial-temporal inequalities –now at a regional level. Second, beyond the national state level of analysis, what is important to take into account is that also under (peripheral) Fordism, destructive and domination-shaped societal nature relations prevailed. Thus, in order to overcome neo-extractivism, what is necessary is not only a break with export-orientation but a radical transformation of domination-shaped societal nature relations, within in and beyond national states and world regions.

However, in spite of continuing growth in the industrial sector and some nationalization measures, there was no real break with the development model of the preceding phase based on exploitation of raw materials. Rather, with the changed constellation of social forces and in the context of a growing United States hegemony combined with the politically justified exclusive claim to the strategic resources of the region, a specific national popular form of extractivism emerged. One example was Venezuela, where a popular nationalist development model based on the exploitation of newly discovered petroleum fields for export had already become a dominant force during the 1930s, with the promise of modernization and progress which was concentrated in the popular slogan of 'sowing oil' (Coronil, 1997).

Starting in the 1960s, ever more contradictions of the ISI model emerged: economic growth declined, the wage levels of the working class dropped, the tax income that would have been necessary to finance state investment dried up, and the promise of political and societal participation by the urban under-classes, which had grown enormously as a result of country-to-city migration, was abandoned. The indigenous population was excluded from the outset from the supposedly positive developments of this phase, or else it was to be de-ethnicized and assimilated into the nation as *campesinos* or inhabitants of the new urban peripheries (Smith, 1996).

With the crisis of Fordism, the global structure of demand for resources changed, resulting in a crisis of import substitution. The hopes for 'debt-based industrialization' (Altvater, 1987) remained unfulfilled, since the industrial products did not enjoy a high level of demand on the world market. Moreover, the loans were largely used for favorable consumer loans.

5. Neo-extractivism in the age of a global 'commodity consensus'

The current neo-extractivist development model is, similar to the peripheral-Fordist phase, one of catch-up development with a supposedly "strong state" which assumes both the role both of an entrepreneur and of a mediator and also guarantees the basic conditions for raw-material extraction and profit accumulation. Simultaneously, it differs from the previous phases of capitalist development essentially due to the changed altered world economic and political position of natural resources and their appropriation by society, shifting roles of the state, specific world market constellations, new technologies, and capital valorization strategies (Albritton et al., 2001; Robinson, 2004). Nevertheless, associated national and international policies, cultural norms, and *dispositifs* for action are also changing. For the analysis of the influencing factors of neo-extractivism, two phases can be distinguished at the general level. First is an initial phase, which roughly covers the period from 1970 to 2000, during which extractivism/neo-extractivism was to a certain extent prepared as an option. The second ensuing phase coincided with the turn of the millennium and is still ongoing.

The neoliberal phase (1970s-2000)

With the neoliberal economic and societal policies that gained the upper hand during the 1970s, the previous socio-economic and political constellation changed radically. The dominant model was a new world market-oriented developmentalism, which by way of the mechanisms of debt service and structural adjustment led to the direct impact of the power and volatility of the world market on society. This ultimately created the conditions for at least a partial reprimarization of Latin American economies. While the participation of Latin America in world trade stagnated below the level of 5,5% during the period from 1980 to 2000, the export shares of certain raw material sectors, particu-

larly mining, climbed. In the course of overall structural changes, however, control over raw materials also changed (Bridge, 2008; Emel and Huber, 2008). In the mining sector, the importance of transnational corporations increased –in Chile and Peru, for instance while at the same time, the so-called multilatinas, such as the former Brazilian state enterprise *Companhia Vale do Rio Doce,* graduated to the ranks of the global players. In the agricultural sector, a highly industrialized globalized production system established itself, accompanied by a transformation of the institutions of land use and access distribution, and also of the range of actors; landownership was generally liberalized and transnational corporations from Latin America and the global North became ever more important (Gras and Hernández, 2014). At the same time, these developments aggravated the crisis, as the goal of achieving dynamic development through exports and direct investment was not attained. Starting in the mid-1990s, neoliberal and increasingly authoritarian constellations and developments were politicized by social movements. The most obvious expression was the Zapatista uprising on January 1, 1994 in the south-east of Mexico.

Reprimarization through neo-extractivism (2000 to the present)

The second phase of reprimarization began around 2000, although this was not initially obvious. This phase was initiated by the constantly rising global demand for agricultural and mineral products, which tended to improve the real terms of trade between primary and secondary commodities. For example, the price of oil rose to over US$140 a barrel in 2008. Although it dropped again as a result of the global economic crisis, its average between 2011 and 2013 was still around US$107, making these three years the most expensive oil years in history (InvestmentMine, n.d.; for a german chart with year-by-year figures see Tecson, n.d.). Even more dramatic price rises could be seen in the area of minerals, metals, and ores (Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe, n.d.). Similar developments have been evident in the agricultural sector, which were accompanied by an intensification of the agribusiness production paradigm based on high energy inputs, which have had serious social and ecological impacts (Rockström et al., 2009, pp. 222ff.; OECD-FAO, 2013).

What must be taken into account is the changing structure of the world market, characterized by an intensification of fossil fuel-based, industrial production and modes of living in the capitalist centers themselves, which could be characterized as a deepening and expansion of

the imperial mode of living (Brand and Wissen, 2012). At a lower level, this also applies to the economically dynamic industrialization model in other parts of the capitalist semi-periphery; associated with this is a growing demand for consumer goods. By recent estimates, despite all savings and efficiency measures, demand for primary fossil fuels will rise by almost 45% by 2030 (Maggio and Cacciola, 2009). On top of that, we are witnessing the economic rise of a number of emerging markets, especially China, which in 2010 used 20% of the world's fossil fuels, 23% of its major agricultural resources, and 40% of its ferrous metals (Roache, 2012). China is not only the 'factory of the world'; it is also developing a strong middle and upper class and thus seeing the expansion of the resource-intensive consumption patterns of these 'new consumers', for instance for meat, electronic devices, and automobiles, with all the implications this has for the production of feed, mineral raw materials, and fossil fuels.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), world trade quadrupled between 1990 and 2008, "but South-South trade multiplied more than ten times" (OECD, 2010, p. 5) and is becoming ever more important in economic policy strategies. It should be noted that raw materials account for 90% of Latin America's exports to Asia (ECLAC, 2011d). Foreign direct investments from China in the region have increased dramatically, with a large majority of investments in firms that extract raw materials without processing them. China also plays a dominant role in lending money to Latin American countries. The strategy is to provide loans that are repayable in oil and thus to secure the flow of oil to the country. In the four years leading up to 2013, China had lent more than US$59 billion repayable in oil to Latin America and the Caribbean; furthermore, more than two-thirds of Chinese loans in the region are designated to be repaid in oil (Gallagher et al., 2013; Lander, 2014b).

An additional international factor for the increase in resource extractivism is the shift of 'dirty' industries such as aluminum and steel production to countries of the global South, as a result of environmental regulations and/or protests in countries in the global North (Braun, 2010). After all, even a supposedly sustainable and low carbon 'green economy' will be unable to get by without the extraction of raw materials (Brand, 2012; Moreno, 2013). The rising demand for raw materials for the production of biofuels –particularly oil, sugar cane, and corn provides a clear indication of this (Dietz et al., 2015).

In view of rising prices, growing geo-economic competition, and the possible exhaustion of some resources, political strategies to secure resources in the context of the above described world market constellations are gaining significance. The European Union's raw material initiative, adopted in 2008 and updated in 2011, and the German government's 2010 raw material strategy, are good examples (EU Commission, 2008; 2011; BMWi, 2010). China is also formulating policies for this area, as the Chinese government strategy for economic policy cooperation in exchange for quid pro quos in development policy shows. Moreover, the fact that raw materials and their extraction are becoming increasingly attractive for financial capital as objects of real or speculative investment has an effect on current price developments (Clapp, 2014).

A further condition for the current Latin American raw materials boom is the altered significance of politics on the regional scale, compared with the preceding phases. Regional development and integration are both a condition for and a result of current development models in Latin America, and are manifested both in new cooperative efforts and regional agreements, and in regional infrastructure politics encompassing the cross-border construction of dams, roads, and ports.[3] Thus regional infrastructure politics is being used to reorganize and produce space and to establish the preconditions for the valorization of nature (Zibechi, 2012).

In this context, Svampa (2015) refers to a 'commodity consensus', i.e. a global constellation in which, in spite of the global politicization of the ecological crisis and climate change, the extractivist form of the appropriation of nature has remained the dominant global dynamic. The continuities with respect to the neoliberal Washington consensus are that Latin American national economies continue to be integrated into the world market in a subordinate position and have few possibilities to design their own options in the global political economy. What is new, however, is that capital valorization is no longer, as in previous decades, carried out via privatization, liberalization, the promotion of foreign direct in-

3 The Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) is one example. It involves investment amounting to US$70 billion for more than 500 dams, hydroelectric projects, road and port construction projects, as well as the expansion of pipelines. A similar strategy for Central America is planned by the *Proyecto Mesoamericano.*

vestment, and structural adjustment programs, but rather via resource extractivism at relatively high world market prices. This is at the core of the frequently used term 'post-neoliberalism' (Brand and Sekler 2009; Svampa, 2012). The current paradoxical situation is that Latin American progressive governments achieved their socio-political leeway for action –as both a result and an expression of former popular organization and mobilization thanks to their continued intensive valorization of nature for the world market (Lander, 2012). This led to a major increase in social programs and an active state economic policy and created further expectations on the part of the lower and middle socio-economic strata.

6. Socio-political and structural resonances

One of the most important changes in some Latin American countries has been the contested formulation and acceptance of new constitutions (e.g. in Ecuador and Bolivia) that have stipulated not only wide ranging political and social rights and the rights of nature, but also the recognition of cultural difference and the rights of territorial self-definition and autonomy. However, the last few years have proved how difficult, ambivalent, and disputed their implementation under neo-extractivism is (Vega, 2012; Ávila Santamaría, 2014; Castro Patiño, 2014). The political presence of indigenous organizations rose the controversial issue of neo-extractivist societal-nature relations, while these countries' constitutions stipulate such principles as 'living well' (*buen vivir* or *vivir bien*), which precisely do *not* imply an extractivist relationship with nature.

At the same time, the neo-extractivist phase brought about important processes of state modernization throughout the continent, which also included the creation of legal frameworks, new institutions, and mechanisms of democratic control around extractivism (RLIE, 2016). The majority of Latin American countries, starting with Brazil in 1981, saw the creation of high level environmental authorities (ministries in most cases) and environmental protection laws; followed, from 2002 on, by laws on transparency and access to public information around extractive activities. Nevertheless, these regulations were always contested and only partly implemented. While information on the volume and value of extraction –which demonstrates a government's success has been made publicly accessible, in many countries information on the conditions of contracts and concessions is only partial or is difficult to find. The same limitations apply to data on the exact destiny of the revenues collected.

From 2012 on, a severe setback regarding environmental regulation, control, transparency, and democratic, decentralized decision-making can be observed. As a response to the decline of commodity prices, countries are now engaging in a competition for foreign investment at almost any cost and under any conditions. In particular, the stipulation for free and informed prior consent around extractive activities, grounded in the ILO Convention 169 and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples –although ratified (in Bolivia 2007 and Ecuador 2012) and written into law in some countries (in Peru 2012, according to RLIE, 2016) was weakened or neutralized even before implementation. In Bolivia, Presidential Decree 2195 (2014) has practically undone the constitutionally avowed self-determination rights of indigenous peoples, and Decree 2366 (2015) allows hydrocarbon exploration in protected areas.

Many national environmental institutions as well as control and sanction mechanisms against environmental destruction were reshaped and weakened, and in some cases disappeared altogether. At the same time, the political power of institutions linked to extractivism within the State apparatuses, in the form of ministries for mining, energy, or agriculture, was strengthened and some of them were associated to powerful ministries like those of finance, industry, or public works, thus providing the necessary infrastructure (Gudynas, 2014). In Venezuela, the Ministry of Environment was dismantled in early September 2014 and its functions subordinated to the Ministry of Habitat and Housing. In the same year, in Ecuador the Ministry of Environment was placed under the coordination of the Ministry of Strategic Sectors, which also coordinates the Ministries for Hydrocarbons and Energy. In Brazil, the Brazilian Institute for Environment has been divided into two institutions, while Uruguay's president José Mujica has repeatedly asked to break up the country's Ministry of Environment and Housing. In Colombia, bypassing the policies of the National Environmental Authority, Supreme Decree 041 (2014) introduced 'express' environmental licensing for mining activities, which allows corporations to present an environmental management plan and start working without waiting for the authorities' approval (Gudynas, 2014; RLIE, 2016). In this context, the classification of land as 'unused' or 'degraded' represents a discursive construct and norm setting combined with the specific goal of valorization or appropriation; existing non-commercial uses are seldom if ever recognized. In this context, Sacher (2014) underlines the dynamic and so-

cio-political dimension in the definition of territories that are declared suitable for raw material extraction. A case in point for the expansion of territories that are politically and socially defined as mineral deposits or oil fields is the Yasuní National Park in Ecuador, which in August 2013 transitioned from a worldwide symbol of environmental and climate justice policies to simply an oil field to be exploited, when president Rafael Correa announced the end of the 'leave the oil in the soil' policy.

On the other hand, many countries experienced what could be called a partial reformulation of class compromises, the core of which is the use of high economic growth rates in the primary sector to greatly enhance the leeway of governments to distribute wealth. In many countries, the result was less an expansion of the industrial sector than an enhancement of raw material-based revenues, which enabled the implementation of assistentialist policies. In countries with center-left or leftist governments, this has brought millions of people out of hunger and has led to a relatively high degree of governmental legitimacy among poor people,[4] as well as to a political discourse that is both national-populist and favorable to Latin American integration. Nevertheless, there is some debate regarding the durability and structural character of these changes. Some authors observe a significant increase in the continent's middle class, up to a third of the overall population (Ferreira et al., 2013). Most clearly in Bolivia, the cooperative miners and the *cocaleros,* as well as other Aymara groups, have experienced important processes of social mobility and are now part of the new elites (PIEB, 2013).

Positions that tend more to emphasize the paradoxical character of current developments, while still taking note of the successes of the redistribution policies, point out their structural and strategic weaknesses. On the one hand, there has been no restructuring of the productive sector, while on the other, integration into and dependence on the world market are proceeding apace. Accordingly, there is growing criticism not only of the ecological effects of these policies, but also of the type of state distribution policy applied. The latter is criticized for not changing societal power relations, so that, for instance, there have been few initiatives toward land reform. In sum, this model makes no radical break,

4 The last presidential elections in Brazil in October 2014 showed this quite explicitly. The now impeached candidate of the Workers' Party, Dilma Rousseff, clearly won in those regions in the north and north-east where the majority is poor, while she lost remarkably in the south where the middle classes are stronger.

either with modernity's *ethos* of progress and development or with traditional relationships of power and domination (Lavinas, 2013; Gudynas, 2015, 198ff.).

Aside from these facts, extractivist strategies involve considerable intra-societal conflicts, particularly in countries with new constitutions and formerly strong indigenous movements such as Bolivia and Ecuador, where governments and state apparatuses are in the throes of an enormous dilemma between the postulated decentralization and democratization on the one hand, and a potentially authoritarian development state that embodies the concept of *raison d'état* on the other (Eaton, 2013). The latter is realized within the state and society by means of a hierarchical, authoritarian, even militaristic *dispositif* according to which development is to be promoted and society defended against internal and external enemies:

> Thus there exists a close connection between extractivism and the strengthening of centralism and authoritarian tendencies in the political realm. A state leadership with unlimited and uncontrolled access to a country's most profitable resources can easily secure the continuation of its rule without bothering to deal with autonomous societal forces in an equal way, even if it is required to regularly subject itself to free elections. (Meschkat, 2013, our translation)

Academic and socio-political assessments of these developments diverge. Some take the position that a stronger state and the redistribution of income constitute the basis for a shift of power relations in society over the medium term, which will clearly favor the broad masses of the population and their organizations (García Linera, 2012, pp. 75-80). In contrast, recent critiques diagnose a significant concentration of power in the executive function and an erosion of the separation of powers, namely for Ecuador and Bolivia, as the executive power has gained control over the legislative, judicial and also electoral power. In both countries, the popular mass organizations whose struggles brought these progressive governments to power have been weakened significantly, and critics of the government in office are often prosecuted (Tapia, 2011; Basabe and Martínez, 2014). Gudynas (2014, pp. 150-151) also observes a loss of democratic mechanisms of deliberation or consultation and a tendency towards the exclusion of political minorities throughout the region (Prada, 2014).

Nonetheless, in spite of the important current experiences in Latin America indicating that other paths toward development are possible, the alternatives to date have all remained within the extractivist corridor; i.e. they represent a form of capitalist modernization that is currently profiting from high world market prices, but which does not change the fundamental political, economic, and cultural structural patterns or the power relations that support them.

At the core of many current problems are the contradictions of the industrial-fossilistic and capitalist mode of production. (Peripheral) Fordist forms of mass production and consumption, more or less functioning social compromises, and stable welfare institutions became and still are a strong and attractive orientation in societies of the global North as well as in the global South. In the current state of global economic crisis, Fordist patterns are prolonged and partially deepened through an intensification of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.

7. Conclusion

As we have shown, the characteristic elements of the neo-extractivist development model that have emerged since the 1970s, and especially after 2000, are as follows. First, changing world market constellations and growing geopolitical and geo-economic rivalries favor continued high demand for natural resources, which in most areas contributed to continued high world market prices until 2014. Second, the emergence and stabilization of resource extractivist practices were clearly dependent on specific state action based on institutional and judicial assurance and the securing of property and use rights; i.e. the granting of concessions or property titles to land and forest areas and the only partial implementation and subsequent undermining of environmental controls. Likewise it depended on the infrastructural enablement and authorization of raw material exploitation, extraction, and marketing in the form of roads, ports, and pipelines. Such practices were further supported by discourse, evident in the debate around the cultivation of raw materials for agro fuel production in so-called unused or degraded areas. In countries with center-left or leftist governments, state-organized distribution measures, from which not only the upper socio-economic strata but also the lower and especially the middle strata profit, have also contributed to social and political stability. Thus it has been possible, despite all the

contradictions and conflicts, to create a legitimized base for extractivism, which formed the foundation for hegemonic social relations, the prosperity of which was based primarily on the extraction and sale of the products of nature on the world market. Third and finally, the specific dynamics of neo-extractivism have been marked by new societal disputes between the postulated processes of decentralization and democratization on the one hand, and the tendency toward authoritarian state policy patterns on the other. The conflicts here were not only about access to the products of nature as the material basis for societal production and reproduction or over the revenues obtained from extraction, but also about divergent concepts of prosperity, competing worldviews and interpretations of nature, political procedures and concepts of order, as well as a recognition of identity and territorial self-determination.

These disputes demonstrate that neo-extractivism is not only an economic/technical form of resource appropriation or a renaissance of the Latin American economic model, but rather should be seen as a central expression of political domination, in which the material, cultural, and socio-political dimensions and conflicts of a new development model coalesce. Furthermore, these disputes are interesting for the discussion of socio-ecological transformation (Brand, 2012; Brand and Wissen, in press), a debate that is currently witnessing dynamic development. The increasing recognition of ecological problems and the obvious need for fundamental transformation –which is stipulated in the constitutions of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela stand in contrast to the rather narrow political and societal corridors of action. Actors critical of extractivism in Latin America intend to promote a discourse and related practices that strengthen politics in the broadest sense, namely that of the conflictive and democratic making of society. The focus is thus not on policies alone, but also on the societal and political structures and the capitalist, patriarchal, and imperial logics upon which they are based.

An analysis of the neo-extractivist development model that we can currently see in Latin America provides an impetus for current development politics, and for the socio-political and socio-theoretical challenges that also affect social and political theory. The focus on the global context of the complex societal and social-ecological relations and their dominant development dynamics that we have proposed here might help to evaluate possible multi-dimensional transformative alternatives to extractivism. This includes, most importantly, necessary changes in international rules and regulations, but also in social and political

institutions, socio-technical configurations, societal-nature relations, and prevailing symbolic orientations such as conceptions of progress, freedom, and growth (Brand and Wissen, in press). One final important point to make is that such social-ecological transformation would necessarily require addressing social practices in the capitalist centers, including countries such as China as a field of innovation, in order to overcome the social relations underlying the still predominant imperialist mode of living. One implication of this, for example, would be the need to de-naturalize access to cheap and unsustainably produced commodities and labor power.

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Ulrich Brand

Professor for International Politics at Vienna University, works on international political economy with a focus on environmental issues, internationalization of the State, post-neoliberalism, imperial mode of living and social-ecological transformation; theoretically, he works with regulation theory, Gramsci and Poulantzas.

Kristina Dietz

Director of the junior research group 'Global change – local conflicts? Conflicts over land in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa in the context of interdependent transformation processes' together with Bettina Engels at the Institute for Latin American Studies, Freie Universität Berlin. She holds a PhD in Political Sciences from the University Kassel. Her research and teaching focuses on political ecology, conflicts over land and resources in Latin America, climate and energy policy, spatial and democracy theory.

Miriam Lang

Teacher in the area for social and global studies at the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar in Quito, Ecuador. She holds a PhD in Sociology from Freie Universität Berlin. Her areas of interest are social and global studies; welfare and care in a transnational perspective; social-ecological transformation; (inter)cultural and gender studies. She coordinated the Latin American Permanent Working Group for Alternatives to Development since its foundation in 2011 until 2015.

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