

## **“Greening,” the Highest Stage of Extractivism in Latin America**

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### **Abstract**

Centred in ecosocialist and ecofeminist perspectives, this paper examines the negative impact of extractivism as an economic activity that removes a huge amount of natural resources, and evaluates how global capital’s ecological management, which I call “greening,” has developed in Central and South America. Three questions are addressed: how the regional and local network on the governance of nature in Latin America has been organized; why extractivism strikes women hardest; and to what extent and how movements against extractivism have become involved in contesting global trends as well as national and local policies supporting them. The paper exposes the United Nations as a key force in the permanent model of colonialism, economic dependence, patriarchy, and geopolitical power characterizing extractivism.

### **Introduction**

In the Americas, extractivism – economic activities that remove huge amount of natural resource - has existed since colonial times. These extractions grew exponentially in tandem with the neoliberal framework and engendered the debt crisis of the 1980s that then imposed the Stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programme by the IFM and the World Bank, respectively. After the Earth Summits (1992, 2002 and 2012), extractivism opened up new areas of global intervention for capital when responsibility for Sustainable Development (SD) was ceded to the World Bank.

The World Bank has contributed to the increase and intensification of extractive industries since taking charge of the Global Environmental Facility to pursue a so-called “Green Economy” through Environmental Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). The role of most international NGOs, such as the World Wildlife Fund, has been to act as brokers between corporations and indebted States, and to advance the language of the seemingly more ecologically friendly economic policies and programs. In the SD paradigm, despite on-going debates and the search for alternatives, economic growth remains a dominant objective. Consequently, the ongoing destruction of subsistence economies is the central element of what today is understood as Sustainable Development (Isla 2015).

The political economy of “greening” exposes a global model of accumulation based on extractivism. This perspective shows how the ecosystems of Central and South America are increasingly becoming destabilized, especially through an ever-growing pressure for resource extraction (Isla 2015). Particularly affected in this collusion between neoliberal Global Capital - States/NGO are Indigenous peoples who collectively own large land, territories and resources that are fundamental to their physical and cultural integrity, livelihood and sustenance. All these violations have led to an increase in Indigenous rebellions, despite the existence of International Covenants, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) – Convention No. 169, the Organization of American States (OAS)’s Declaration that guarantees pre-existing rights, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In Latin America, the role of governments, regardless of political orientation, has been the surveillance and intimidation of activists, who usually become victims of selective killings.

This paper addresses three questions: how the regional and local network on the governance of nature in Latin America has been organized; why extractivism strikes women

hardest; and to what extent and how movements against extractivism have become involved in contesting global trends as well as national and local policies supporting them. Two well-known regional infrastructure projects for extractivism are discussed: Plan Puebla Panama (PPP) in Central America; and The South American Regional Infrastructure Integration Initiative (IIRSA) (Integración de Infraestructura Regional in Sur America). They expose the United Nations as a key force in the permanent model of colonialism found in extractivism, based on expropriation, dispossession, exploitation, depredation and contamination.

An ecofeminist, combined with an ecosocialist frame, is used to question the message that the “green economy” and so-called Sustainable Development can in any way create social and gender equality, reduce poverty, confront ecological destruction and combat climate change. Instead, this perspective shows how extractivism can be understood as robbery of bodies and territories in a new phase of capital accumulation where extractive industries intensify – from enclosures for wind power, mining and metals, carbon, oil, natural gas, soya, sugar cane, oil palm, corn, meat to include forests, natural vistas, etc. - directly contributing to the ethnocide of Indigenous peoples, dispossessing the peasantry, expropriating the soil, destroying ecosystems, while at the same time creating conditions for human rights violations and increasing violence against women.

### **Organizing “Greening”: From Neoliberal Development to Sustainable Development**

In the 1970s, particularly in 1982 (debt crisis), Latin American countries were forced to open up even more to market-centered policies, so-called neoliberal development. Since then, U.S. banks have been using International Monetary Fund (IMF) stabilization, and World Bank (WB) Structural adjustment Policies (SAP) to reorganize internal social production and reproduction of the indebted world to favour the penetration of transnational capital. Restructuring implies setting up a new model of accumulation, new patterns of investment and saving, new income distribution, and the creation of capital in new ways. By the end of the 1980s, under Brady’s debt-restructuring plan established (1989) and the Washington Consensus (1995), Latin American bank loans were transformed into bonds that could be easily traded on the financial markets. The U.S. Enterprise Americas Initiative proposed debt swaps using public funds to transfer indebted countries’ public enterprises to U.S. private corporations (Isla 2015).

The 1992 Earth Summit opened the way for the direct management of nature and human resource development by giving responsibility to States and the World Bank. The World Bank developed a key concept – Natural Capital – which refers to the goods and services provided by the planet’s stock of water, land, air, and renewable and non-renewable resources such as plant and animal species, forest and minerals. As a result, the debt (social) crisis was entangled with the environmental crisis into what has been called “sustainable development.” This discourse mistakenly argues that the tensions between poverty and ecology will be resolved in indebted countries by reconciling global economic interests and ecological interests in the market system (UNESCO 1995). W. David Pearce and J. Jeremy Warford (1993), of the World Bank Environment Department, stressed the importance of permanent growth and development. They argue that growth in real income per-capita can be achieved without major degradation, by getting the price right. This means that price calculations to allocate the use of scarce resources (e.g., water, air) should be based on the laws of supply and demand operating in the marketplace. Kirk Hamilton (2001), also from the World Bank, argues that one possible definition of sustainable development is the process of creating, maintaining, and managing a nation’s portfolio of assets in national asset accounting. These assets must include build infrastructure

(roads), natural capital (minerals, energy, genetics, agricultural land, forest, rivers, etc.), human capital (education, health care), and social capital (networks, the court system, the political regime). They propose that these elements must be embedded in the economic system as natural capital to become integrated with the sustainable development framework and thereby ensure sustainable growth (30). From their perspective, Genuine Saving Measures expand the national account definitions of assets.

At the 2002 + 10 Earth Summit, in Johannesburg, the United Nations argued that the State has lost its capacity to lead Sustainable Development (SD) understood as economic growth, to confront Climate Change; therefore, it transferred responsibility for SD to global corporations and their shareholders. Extractivism was boosted and mining was defined as SD, despite its fossil fuel-centred industrial model, which greatly contributes to global warming. Since then, additional legal protection to corporations to produce alternatives to fossil fuels (solar panel, eolic energy, and geothermal) were incorporated into private-sector friendly legislation and codes regarding the rights of foreign in the Free Trade Agreements. This flawed argument is that they emit less carbon dioxide but are more mineral-intensive. According to the World Bank, between 2018 and 2150, the use of graphite, cobalt and lithium will increase by 450%; aluminium in 103 million tons and copper by 23 million tons by 2050 (World Bank 2018). All this represents a strong pressure for the southern countries.

In the 2012 + 20 Earth Summit, again in Rio de Janeiro, the ‘green economy’ was unmistakably publicized as the process to eradicate poverty, subsequently nature must be selectively monetized and turned into goods (water) and services (forest) traded in financial markets. The Kyoto Protocol (1987) initiated the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) that later evolved into Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), REDD+ (*focused on the forest of indebted countries*), and the European Emissions Trading Systems (ETS) programmes, using global markets to manage the forest as an environmental service. An amount of dollars is paid for each hectare of forest. However, it is also relevant to emphasize that the measure of emission-absorption of carbon gases is not really possible, since forests are living organisms that breathe, are dynamic and complex systems, so measurements are always estimates. Again, this program is problematic as Indigenous and peasant users of the land are described as the most important agents of deforestation.

### **Critiques by Ecosocialism and Ecofeminism: The “Greening” by Extractivism and Social Costs**

Ecosocialism and ecofeminism joined forces in denouncing the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production. Marxist Ecosocialists have concentrated on capitalism’s destructive activities in the sphere of production. They argue that civilization is a heat engine, and an economy is an entropic flow of energy (oil, gas, carbon, etc.) and materials (aluminium, copper, etc.). Elmer Altvater (1994) found major sources of contradiction in the functioning of capitalism through identifying the natural processes of time and space, described as “ecological modality,” as well as the attempt by capital to codify and control time and space with the aim of speeding up the process of capital accumulation, defined as “economic modality.” He argues that two different modalities of space and time conflict upon a territorial-social reality, as biological time and reproduction are slower than economic time or commodity production. As capitalism is a system that only understands value in terms of money capital, the perpetual drive toward short-time, or “t” (economic time) accumulation, is in direct conflict with the ecological limits of “T” (historical time) that allow and provide for life on this planet. By applying the principle of

entropy in the use of energy in production and consumption where no transformation of energy or matter is perfectly efficient, he concludes that recycling is thermodynamically impossible, thus energy and raw material are used only once. Therefore, the economy looks for new energy and raw materials permanently, creating social and ecosystem disturbance. Consequently, extractivism has been creating conditions, for what Foster et al., posit that with constant process of subsuming nature under capital metabolic rifts, vast regions of the planet are being converted into dust bowls, which “were the social-historical product of expanding capitalism, empire, and white settler colonialism, all of which cover the destruction of land cover and soil erosion. It arose out of the expropriation of indigenous lands, the indigenous people themselves, and the fertile soils.” (Foster, Clark, Holleman 2019, 11)

Socialist ecofeminists have adapted the Marxian framework to explore the dynamic between production and reproduction. Ecofeminists have focused on the sphere of reproduction. They locate the origins of oppression in the interconnected systems of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. Ecofeminists have long considered issues of unpaid and community work, women’s and nature’s work as foundational to economic growth (Mellor 2010, Bennholdt-thomsen and Mies 1999). They argue that extractivism declares Nature as Death (Merchant 1983, 2005); enclose the public Commons and create ownership (Federici 2009); and immerse our bodies and our labour as raw material (Shiva 1989).

Ecofeminist Maria Mies (1986) explains that housewifization is an ideology to define some human beings and nature as having no value. At the center of her analysis is the knowledge that capitalist patriarchy creates an intersecting domination against all “unwaged” labour. As a result, the expropriation of unpaid and poorly paid labour of **women** is through rape, harassment, and sexual assaults; the expropriation of labour, knowledge, and subsistence economies of **peasants, Indigenous people** labelled ‘unoccupied’ or ‘unused’, and thereby easily appropriated by those who can make it ‘productive’; and the destruction of **nature**. They all are called feminized or ‘resourced’ – and to suite the purposes of capital expansion they have to be appropriated, exploited, raped, extracted, and destroyed. Ecofeminist Ariel Salleh suggests that as women’s relation to capital, and nature has been constructed differently from that of men, women’s involvement across cultures in life-affirming activities has resulted in the development of gender-specific knowledge grounded in a material base and reality. Her concept Embodied Materialism is an ecological embodied knowledge that reproduce labour (women); sustains metabolic relations with nature (peasants); creates lay knowledge (Indigenous people); and biological infrastructure (nature). She uses the term meta-industrial class to describe all invisible reproductive labourers (e.g. mothers, peasants, Indigenous peoples, nature) (Salleh 2004).

Consequently, “greening” disputes the message that Sustainable Development (SD) can in any way create social and gender equality, reduce poverty, confront ecological destruction and combat climate change. Instead, it shows that extractivism as SD can be understood as a new phase of capital accumulation of global capital (Isla 2015). “Greening,” denotes the massive expropriation of territories, depredation and contamination of the soil, and dispossession of the workers, through the monetization of nature that requires the devaluing of all other forms of social existence, transforming skills into deficiencies, commons into resources, knowledge into ignorance, autonomy into dependency, and men and women into commodified labour-power whose needs require the mediation of the markets. Therefore, viewed through the lens of ecofeminism, these aspects of “greening” come together to wage war on women, subsistence producers and nature by formulating a new kind of domination based on poverty and unsustainability.

In the “greening” paradigm, two conditions exacerbate poverty and unsustainability: first, bodies are united to the territories that people inhabit. In extractive contexts, the local economy is reoriented toward the presence of the corporations (mining, oil etc.); as a result, people in their communities lose access to natural assets that have historically allowed them to reproduce ancestral and solidarity forms of economy. The inadequate minimum wage offered by the company becomes an instrument of dependency. The feminine is considered a submissive and subordinate nature that has to sustain the reproduction of life even when ecosystems are destroyed. Furthermore, the increase in diseases caused by water pollution as a consequence of extractive activities, increases the care tasks that sick people require, and that fall exclusively on women. Nature, like women’s bodies, is considered by corporations as a territory that has to be sacrificed to allow the reproduction of capital; nature can be exploited, violated, extracted (Colectivo Miradas Criticas 2017). The political economy of development is the second condition that exacerbates poverty. Economic growth, aligned with military dictatorships, the way the United States protects its corporation by bribing or running over governments, and/or the operation of its notorious School of the Americas, also known as School of Assassins, has created the violence that runs through the continent (SOA Watch). Extractivism, expanded after the 2002 Earth Summit, has been increasing militarization with the consequence that the bodies are controlled, objectified, appropriated, violated, and some time killed to those who resist dispossession. Militarism is combined with violence, force disappearance, femicides and rapes. Paramilitaries that accompany extractive projects, as in Colombia and Mexico are encouraged (Zibechi 2020). As a result, the extractive projects deepen the power relations of gender, causing gender inequalities toward women and children, and violence towards women’s bodies.

The mark of extractivism, as SD, on women’s bodies is expressed in the number of women assassinated or disappeared. For instance, the latest report from the Gender Equality Observatory of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), reveals that in 2019 at least 4,640 femicides took place in the region, noting that it is in the State where the high levels of impunity, repression and rape by State agents occur. As mining expanded, by 2005, Indigenous, Black, and rural women, who saw their children with various health ailments, declared themselves in rebellion and in open opposition to the robbery and predation committed by transnational mining companies. They began to organize “Encuentros (Gatherings) Against Mining,” gather information and act together in the defence of their territories and their human rights by challenging their States and Justice system that do not work for the common good or for the right to life (Ecuador 2007). As a result, violence is directed at these women and they are harassed, stigmatized, disappeared, and murdered.

The region is raged with anti-systemic movements, including the anti-femicide movement of which I am part. In Argentina, due to the lack of judicial response to femicide (2015) women created a movement called “Ni una Menos” [No one (woman) less] which means that another woman does not die, that cannot be tolerated. It paved the way for “Un Violador en tu camino” (A rapist on your way) by the Chilean group Las Tesis (2019), which began as a street act, during the commemoration of a new International Day Against Gender Violence and the social outbreak in Chile. The message of the lyrics says that “patriarchy is a judge who criticizes us for being born and our punishment is the violence that you already see.” It claims, “The repressive state is a male rapist,” before concluding that “the rapist is you.” The movement “Ni una Menos” and the lines of “A rapist on your way” have crossed borders and in some cases have been modified according to the context of each country or city where it has been replicated.

In Mexico, 3,752 women were killed in 2020. (Amnesty International 2021) Mexican women denounce femicide in ‘Song Without Fear’ (2020) (Here are some verses):

Let the State, the skies, the streets tremble  
Let the judges and the judiciary tremble  
Women’s calm was rekindled  
They scared us, but We Grew Wings

For all the compas (companeras) marching in Reforma (where the government house is located)  
For all the girls fighting in Sonora  
For the Comandantas battling for Chiapas  
For all the mothers looking (their disappeared children) in Tijuana

We sing without fear, we ask for justice  
We scream for every missing  
Let it resound loudly “we want each other alive!” (nos queremos vivas)  
Let the femicide fall with force

In brief, these women have become a global symbol of women’s anger and their repudiation of the misogynist violence, gendered discrimination that permeates the world, and the destruction of the planet. Consequently, ecofeminists are committed not only to resist the worst consequences of this system and its spread but to work toward totally different equal, cooperative, life-sustaining, communal forms of social and economic organization.

The next portion illustrates the political economy of extractivism, also called corridors, expressed in class/gender/ethnicity struggles, taking place in Central and South America. The first moment illustrates rebellions to massive dispossession and depredation of women, peasants and Indigenous people in Central America by Plan Puebla Panama; and the second moment shows struggles against expropriation and exploitation in South America by IIRSA.

### **Moment I. Rebellions Against Expropriation and Dispossession in Central America under Plan Puebla Panama (PPP).**

Dire social and ecological consequences result from the generalization of the commodity-form on nature and human beings. In Central America, the PPP emerged from Agenda 21 and was considered as the main initiative for SD, with the objective of identifying and quantifying the biodiversity of the area, organizing infrastructure, contributing to poverty reduction and environmental reparations (World Bank 2003). Eight governments - Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama - accepted the PPP, which involves infrastructure projects in an area of 1,026,117 km<sup>2</sup> and affects almost 63 million inhabitants. PPP combined with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed in 1994 by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, assembled capitalist globalization promoting free capital movements and free trade as well as institutional framework for property and contracts, setting the conditions for capital accumulation.

Minerals have been the basic inputs of industrial production. In the mineral economy, subsoil resources and water are the primary means of accumulation. But mining is a fundamentally unsustainable activity that destroys ecosystems through massive deforestation,

poisoning water and lagoons, turning land into deserts, increasing traffic, polluting rivers and draining chemical sludge and heavy metals into inhabited valleys. Moreover, mining corporations pay few income taxes nor for the massive amount of water and energy they use. Furthermore, to expand mining, capital needs to destroy the self-reproducing capacity of individuals and communities; therefore, mining has generated the most conflicts, because access to water for cultivation and livestock is distorted by extractive activities and made even more by the effects of climate change.

Communities resist violent and corrupt incursions of government and military-backed companies and investors operating in many sectors. Pressured by Indigenous activists, since 1989, the International Labor Organization has recognized the ancestral rights of Indigenous peoples. But in a deregulated framework there is no community right to reject mining investments. Tragic outcomes of mining projects occur when rural communities refuse to become stakeholders in what they perceive as the plunder and contamination of their lands and resources. Consequently, civil unrest is the only option left to those who do not want mining in their areas or territories (Coumans 2010). Additionally, “[G]overnments, including many in Latin America, are being increasingly targeted with multi-million-dollar claims from corporations to undermine efforts of mining-affected communities, courts, governments and even international human rights bodies to protect people and the environment from the harms of mineral extraction” (MiningWatch Highlights of 2017).

### **Changing the energy matrix and technological patterns: Nature and Social Disorder**

Among “modern environmentalism,” wind turbines are a key factor in the change of the energy matrix and technological pattern. But wind turbines are **made of steel** (an **alloy** of iron with varying amounts of carbon content which represent 71-79% of total turbine mass), **fiberglass**, resin, or plastic (11-16%), iron or cast iron (5-17%), **copper** (1%), and **aluminum** (0-2%) (World Bank 2018). In Mexico, their use expanded under The Federal Electricity Commission of Mexico and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), which is dependent on the United States Department of Energy (DOE). These groups organized the exploitation of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec for wind power, which is the narrowest area of the Mexican territory that lies between the two oceans - Pacific and Atlantic. At its narrowest point, only 200 km separate the Gulf of Tehuantepec and the Gulf of Mexico. The Isthmus region has one of the highest potential for wind power generation in the world, calculated between 5,000 and 7,000 MW of annual capacity. As a result, using public transmission lines, private corporations - the French EDF, the Italian ENEL, the Australian MacQuarie Infrastructure Fund, the Dutch PGGM, the Japanese Mitsubishi, the Spanish Iberdrola, Gamesa, Acciona, Renovalia, Gas Natural Fenosa, Preneal, EYRA-ACS and the Mexican companies Peñoles, Grupomar, Cemex and Grupo Salinas, among others - have taken over the Isthmus of Tehuantepec for wind farms (GRIETA).

The wind projects were entered into without authorization from the community, or environmental impact assessments. In 2014, there were 28 wind farms for electricity production whose beneficiaries are mining, intensive agriculture, gas production, maquiladora industrial parks, and eco-tourism, among others (OMAL). This infrastructure required the mapping of the 59 towns that inhabit the isthmus, the militarization and para-militarization of the area, and the creation of immigration controls between the borders of Mexico and Guatemala. These projects have produced dispossession among the Olmeca, Zapoteca and other indigenous peoples living in the territory. They have lost food sovereignty due to the displacement of agriculture (e.g. rice,

corn, sorghum, and cane) and fishing, and they have also lost socio-cultural knowledge. There has been a rupture of the collective being due to the confrontation between communities, and organized crime to scare people, the generation of precarious jobs, prostitution, and forced migration (Cruz 2020). To combat, popular and indigenous resistance has been organized - the Regional Coordinator of Community Authorities (CRAC) control the territory and administer security and justice. Further, Zapatista women declared in February 2019 “We are going to fight with everything and with all our strength against these mega-projects. If they conquer these lands, it will be on the blood of us Zapatistas.”

Max Binks-Collier (2020) examines the ongoing landmark Hudbay Minerals lawsuits, in Canada. In 2004, Skye Resources, a Vancouver-based mining company, was granted permission by the government to begin work in a large area in northeastern Guatemala that was home to at least 20 Maya Q’eqchi’ communities, including Lote Ocho. Earlier that year, Skye had bought the rights to the open-pit Fenix nickel mine, located near the majority-Maya town of El Estor, from the Canadian mining company INCO. Skye also bought INCO’s 70 percent share of its subsidiary, EXMIBAL, which Skye then renamed CGN. But the deal also saw Skye acquire the long-festering, unresolved disputes over land left by INCO and EXMIBAL’s violent past (as an example, between 2006 and 2008, CGN dispatched helicopters to terrorize those living in the land). CGN campaign culminated in two waves of evictions targeting several Indigenous villages on January 8, 9, and 17, 2007. Eleven women from Lote Ocho were allegedly gang-raped by police officers, soldiers, and CGN’s security during the last eviction. Consequently, these women have been suing Hudbay Minerals Inc., a Toronto-based mining company that bought Skye in 2008, acquiring Skye’s legal liability. Five were pregnant at the time; four miscarried, and one, three days from her due date when she was allegedly gang-raped, said in a deposition that she gave birth to a stillborn that “was all blue or green.” Then, men from all three groups (soldiers, police, and CGN security) splashed gasoline over the makeshift huts and the women’s tattered clothing and set them ablaze. Marriages were irreparably ruined. The impoverished community eventually split and drifted apart as some members accepted jobs at CGN. Supported by Rights Action, (Archives) the litigation, seeking justice, continues in Canada and Guatemala.

The 1998 mining law in Honduras erased any distinction between exploration and exploitation concessions, legalized open-pit cyanide mining, permitted forced expropriation in the case of conflict, reduced taxes on mining, and established no limits on water use and no closure requirements for abandoned mines. However, by 2004, an oppositional coalition forced the President to reject more than 60 mining concessions solicited and the suspension of new concessions by executive decree pending the passage of a new mining law (CIDSE, 2009 in Bebbington and others). In addition, the Supreme Court unanimous ruled in 2006 that 13 articles of the 1998 law violated the “fundamental right to harmonic conviviality with the environment and to sustainable development” (Corte Suprema, 2006: 18–19). By 2007, *Comite Ambientalista del Valle de Siria*, organized by Communities around San Andrés (concessioned to the Canadian Greenstone Resources Limited), and San Martín (concessioned to the Canadian Goldcorp), enlisted scientific studies on problems such as cyanide usage and spills and associated fish kills. They denounced health problems, such as skin infections, respiratory illness, sexual and psychological violence, and feminicide (Honduras 2007). With devastating results, the Honduras government passed a new general water law in 2007, promoting private hydroelectric dams. Between mining and dams, hundreds of defenders of freshwater resources for livestock and crops have been killed, and many others silenced. Among the dead in 2016 was Berta Cáceres, murdered for leading a grassroots campaign to prevent a private energy company, Desarrollos



Energeticos Sociedad Anónima, from building a hydroelectric dam in Agua Zarca. Reports of death squad killings, among the Garifuna, due to mining and palm oil activities sold to the U.S. and Europe for biofuel, have also occurred (Spring and Russell 2011). The threats and violence continue.

In 2004, after two years of searching for gold in El Salvador, the Canadian Pacific Rim Mining Corporation requested permits to begin mining close to the Lempa River. After several years of negotiations, political manoeuvring and conflicts with the local communities that tragically cost the lives of four environmental activists –one was eight months pregnant- the request was declined on the basis that the company had not met the necessary regulatory requirements and a nationwide moratorium on all new mining projects was put in place. In 2009, Pacific Rim sued the government of El Salvador for US 250 million, at a World Bank International Centre for Settlement of Investment Dispute (ICSID), for alleged losses of potential profits because of not being granted permits for its project (MiningWatch 2011). Several local organizations participated in this struggle: The Economic and Social Development Association of Santa Marta (ADES); Association for the Development of El Salvador, (CRIPDES); and the Foundation for the Study of the Application of the Law (FESPAD) – all three were member organisations of the National Roundtable against Metallic Mining in El Salvador. Working with international Allies, such as Institute for Policy Studies in Washington DC; Oxfam of U.S; and MiningWatch Canada, the campaign was on solid ground. They coordinated international protests in Canada, Australia, and the World Bank offices. The case was covered by the international press. By 2016, El Salvador had scored a massive international legal and moral victory, and Pacific was ordered to pay \$8 million towards El Salvador’s more than \$12 million in legal fees. In March, 2017, legislators introduced a law that banned metal mining activities in the country (MiningWatch 2017).

In brief, PPP expanded disorder by transforming commons into resources by privatizing public resources, such as wind power (for aeolian electricity), hydroelectric production (for mining), coupled with the expansion of physical infrastructure, highways, commercial markets, and other transnational businesses. For women and men who depend on their local commons for their livelihoods, the PPP amounted to a full-blown assault on their surroundings and meant a loss of dignity, independence, security, livelihood, health and sometimes loss of life. Furthermore, as life becomes unbearable under PPP, thousands of Central Americans have fled their countries for the United States, where they suffer a devastating family separation (Deutsch, 2020).

The next section examines Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Sudamericana (IIRSA). This initiative allowed multinational corporations to operate without impact evaluations, with successive addendum, with preferential arbitration, and without real competition. Also examines the People’s Conference on Climate Change (CCC) where forests were re-evaluated in terms of the carbon they sequestered. A key concept in the carbon credit market is the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) which is a voluntary transaction where a buyer from the industrial world pays a supplier for a well-defined environmental service, such as a patch of forest or a form of land use.

## **Moment II. Struggles against Dispossession, Depredation and Exploitation in South America - IIRSA**

IIRSA, another corridor, is a plan to link resources of South America with Northern markets. In 2000, under the initiative of Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, the Presidents of South America

countries met in Brasilia to discuss credits for governments interested in the construction of large infrastructures for ports, airports, roads, dams hydroelectric, railways, gas pipelines and telecommunications. It was not private investment that assumed the risks in the construction of the infrastructure, but rather the State's external debt, as well as the user's taxes that paid for infrastructure works. As a negative result, States are now involved in centennial foreign debt bonds, indebting generations until 2121. For example, Mexico has a debt of €1.5 billion; Argentina's debt is \$US2.75 billion; and that of Peru is \$US4.0 billion (Bartenstein 2020).

Infrastructure has been centralized in a new structure of the international business community, represented by Brazilian banks, such as BNDES and corporations, such as Odebrecht and others, though with State partners that connected the main political representatives and international organizations in bribery, kickbacks to senior officials, presidents and ministers, rigged bids, inflated contracts, social and environmental harm (Proetica). IIRSA has turned into an infrastructure fiasco leaving in its wake the destruction of the forest generating transformations resulting in more than 17,000 hot spots burning in the Amazonia.

### **Entropy in the Amazon Rainforest: Destruction of ecosystems**

IIRSA infrastructure increased the expropriation of the local commons. According to Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales (CEPES) 25% of Peru's territory is conceded to mining companies, conferring 48,000 mining rights. As a consequence, struggles for environmental justice, such as movement against Yanacocha open-pit mining of Newmont Mining Corporation, Buenaventura and the World Bank emerged in Cajamarca. These corporations hoped to move on to Minas Conga (9 times bigger) as their next project, but encountered the resistance of subsistence farmers, Indigenous people and civil society (Isla 2019). The resistance movement expanded when on June 2, 2000, approximately 151 kilograms of elemental mercury spilled despoiling the towns of Magdalena, San Sebastián de Choropampa and San Juan, affecting an area of 50 kilometers producing high level of poisoning in some 1200 people, contaminating rivers, streams, flora and fauna, and causing the alteration of the natural cycles of the area. The oppositional movement has been subjected to police and military presence, repression, harassment, fiscal persecution, illegal detention, prison and death.

After several setbacks, the antimining movement saw victory with Maxima Acuna and her rural family's resistance. In 2012, Yanacocha alleged that Maxima and her family occupied its land, and the Peruvian Court ruled in favour of the corporation. The judge gave four members of the family suspended prison sentences, which were then revoked in 2014. Since then, the family has suffered more repression in the hands of the police and the private security of Yanacocha. In February 2015, their house was demolished, in 2016, the family's potato harvest was destroyed, and in 2019, their fishpond was poisoned. The resistance movement supported the family by rebuilding their house and replanting their fields.

In the 1980s, Brazil's marginalized rubber tapper communities were losing land to timber companies and cattle ranchers. Chico Mendes proposed the creation of extractive reserves to allow forest peoples to live sustainably. His assassination in 1988 sparked worldwide attention to the plight of the Amazons forest communities. In 2007, the government laid the groundwork for Acre's program, the State System of Incentives for Environmental Services (SISA), by dividing all land into zones that developed programs pricing forests, biodiversity, water, soil, climate and traditional/cultural knowledge. Two REDD+ programmes under international guidelines outlined by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature

(IUCN), the Federal University of Acre (UFAC), the Amazon Environmental Research Institute (IPAM), the Woods Hole Research Center, Brazilian Agriculture Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GTZ) in collaboration with local governments have disenfranchised Indigenous people. For example, the program did not help people live with or obtain their livelihood from the forests. On the contrary, restrictive measures were imposed on *seringueiros* (rubber tappers).

With respect to the Indigenous Peoples of Acre, despite written promises, REDD+ money was never utilized for titling of indigenous lands creating incentives for outsiders to further dispossess Indigenous people by large-scale livestock, agribusiness, logging industry activities, land grabbers, and miners (WRM 2020). Instead, the commodification of the processes of natural and social reproduction (water, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity knowledge) leads to the further alienation of people to the rights of their natural surroundings. Indigenous organizations and social groups of Acre have denounced REDD+ for violations: 1) of land and collective territory rights as Indigenous people have no land title, deepening territorial conflicts; and 2) of the rights of the peoples in REDD+ occupied territories to subsistence and traditional activities, such as traditional agriculture and fishing, which have been reduced or eliminated depriving communities of their livelihood. As a result, these programs that place ‘price’ on nature have displaced entire families to the periphery of the cities forcing some of their children into prostitution (Faustino and Furtado 2014).

Another example of the devastation of local people in mining lithium in Bolivia. Lithium is another key factor in ‘sustainable energy and technology,’ leading to geopolitical dispute over natural resources and consolidation of the current hegemonic shift. Lithium in Chile and Argentina is exploited by large multinationals, but instead the government of Bolivia controls the resource and exploits lithium through the national company Yacimientos Litíferos Bolivianos. This allows Bolivia to enter the world lithium market without depending on resources, machinery, investment, technique, or conditions of the large multinationals. To industrialize lithium, Bolivia made agreements with ACI Systems Alemania (ACISA) and Xinjiang TBEA Group Co Ltd of China. These deals in the United States’ backyard displeased some US-based mining-financiers and corporations, as a result Regime Change was called for (Sanchez 2019).

In 2019, the Organization of American States (OAS), under the command of its President, made a false accusation of electoral fraud against the government of Evo Morales, gave rise to military treason and activated the fiercest repression against the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) militants (a network of unions, civil society, indigenous people, peasants). For instance, the Mayor of Vinto – Cochabamba, Patricia Arce, who had her hair cut, was covered in red paint and put out on the street. The OAS report of electoral fraud was denied by prestigious institutions (Long 2020). In this circus, the “UK embassy acted as ‘strategic partner’ to coup regime and organised international mining event in Bolivia four months after democracy overthrown.” Also “[it] brought cybersecurity company with close links to the CIA to Bolivia in March 2019, eight months before the military takeover” (Kennard 2021). Yet, in November 2020, Luis Arce, from MAS, overwhelmingly won the elections. In this way, in Bolivia the military temptation to seize political power was repudiated.

In all these ways, by converting the local commons into global commons, IIRSA is subjugating and annihilating women, Indigenous, peasant communities, and the Amazonia rainforest.

## **Conclusion**

The term “greening” includes all the present intensification of extractivism that prioritize economic growth over local people through militarization. In detailing the gendered processes of extractivism in Central and South America, this paper has exposed and examined some of the fallacies of “green” capitalism and corporate-defined sustainable development. The two related capitalist projects share a commonality: the expropriation and destruction of Indigenous bodies, territories, and labour in Central and South America, reinforced by a colonial/racialized policy instruments, and enforced by the United Nations and its institutions, and Free Trade agreements. Most of the projects are paid for by bank loans given to the indebted state to benefit corrupt local officials and international mafias. Natural commons (oil, mining, wind, hydroelectric, forest, scenery, etc.) are expropriated by multinational corporations. Signed international consultations (Convention 169, OAS, and other United Nations resolutions) become meaningless; and when the Latin-American citizens protest, they are assassinated or disappeared by the police and their undercover agents, and in some countries also by paramilitaries. In light of the human and planetary crises, ecosocialism, that is ecofeminist, is the most appropriated theoretical concept to interrupt economic growth.

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