SPECIAL REPORT

New developments in the indigenous movement: environmental protest

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d+i LLORENTE & CUENCA

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1.INTRODUCTION: 30 YEARS OF THE INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT (1980-2013)

The emergence and visibility of the indigenous movement is one of the most important political and ethnic-social developments in the recent history of Latin America. This has taken place in parallel with the introduction of democracy into the Latin American countries in the eighties. Although its roots go back to the start of the twentieth century, it was only in the final quarter of the last century that indigenous intellectuals and leaders took the reins of the movement and turned it into a new political force, managing to add their demands to national political agendas through direct political intervention.

Thirty years ago, coinciding with the transitions to democracy (in the 1980s) and the final consolidation of this (in the 1990s), we saw the appearance of the indigenous movements, with particular force and intensity in Ecuador and Bolivia, and with a lower capacity for growth in other countries such as Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil, Peru and Chile.

At that time there was unprecedented growth in indigenous activism (the so-called “awakening of the indigenous question”) with the rise of these movements and their range of new demands relating to issues such as land, autonomy and cultural diversity. In addition, these demands called into question the traditional model of liberal-republican states created in the nineteenth century, due to the rejection of cultural homogeneity and the universality of civil rights.

However, their progress from the 1970s to the current time has not been straightforward. As can be seen from the discussion below, they have passed through different phases and strategies before reaching the current position.

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2. CAUSES OF THE RESURFACING OF THE INDIGENOUS PROBLEM (1980-1992)

In the 1980s, the indigenous political movements organised themselves and created their own political forces that sought autonomy and the recognition of their identity, an increase in their influence and even wanted to take power through the electoral route (the case of Ecuador since 1996) or through armed struggle (Zapatista uprising in Chiapas in 1994).

In that period the movement had undoubted successes, as recalled by the academic Salvador Martí: “The appearance of the Zapatista movement and the discourse developed by Subcomandante Marcos from the Second to the Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona, the marked multicultural accent of the peace accords in Guatemala in 1996, the active role of the confederation of pan-Andean indigenous organizations in Ecuador, the intense mobilization of Aymara and Quechua organizations in Bolivia, the organized presence of the Mapuches in Chile, and the media impact of various leaders of Amazonian peoples in the Amazon basin. All these examples are a sign of the importance of this phenomenon in Latin America”.

However, why did we see this boom in the indigenous movements in the eighties and nineties?

We can highlight at least four factors:

The emergence of democracy

The process of moving towards democracy that began in the 1980s and that was consolidated on a regional scale in the 1990s, created opportunities for new political forces, organised from civil society, to gain political influence, including those from the indigenous sectors. In short, democratisation enabled civil society to play a more important role in the context of less authoritarian states with reduced powers after the structural reforms of the 1990s.

In a report coordinated by Heraldo Muñoz, Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it states that “in the Latin American socio-political scene at the end of the 1970s and the start of the 1980s, the processes for the transition from dictatorship to democracy and the fight for civil rights, reflected in the demands from certain social groups, acquired a central place in the public arena. From this scenario came the so-called new Latin American social movements (Calderón and Jelin, 1987: 84): “collective actions with a strong participation base using non-institutional channels and that, at the same time, are developing their demands, finding ways to express themselves and forming collective groups, or in other words, recognising themselves as a social group or category”.

“The emergence of an indigenous urban intellectual elite helped to provide ideological support and establish networks of support for the protests both inside and outside the country”

Reaction to the economic and social changes arising from the “neo-liberal” reforms of the 1990s.

These reforms in the 1990s led the state to withdraw from many areas, leaving a hole that was filled by civil society. In this conducive situation we saw the re-emergence of local indigenous groups, to date controlled or co-opted by the state, which established direct relationships with a large number of international organisations (governments, non-governmental organisations, initiatives by municipal bodies, etc.).

From the late 1970s the policies of the indigenous groups also found material and intellectual acceptance and support from the Catholic Church (its role was very important, for example with the Salesian priests in Ecuador) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Similarly, the economic model changed and there was a move from the politics of Import Substitution Industrialisation, seen in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, to the new politics of a “neo-developmentalist” nature, extracting and exploiting natural resources. This affected the interests of the rural indigenous areas, where the mineral resources are normally found, and helped to accelerate their mobilisation.

As argued by the sociologist Fernando Calderón, these changes formed part of “a series of transformations in the social structure of the different countries, whose main features would be: a) more complex asymmetries in the patterns of social inclusion and exclusion, in both symbolic and material aspects; b) changes in the basic institutions of socialisation and of communication forms and structures; c) the addition of new issues to the political and socio-economic agenda, on the basis of cultural demands, in particular multicultural rights, associated with the new asymmetries of social exclusion; and d) the development of new informational specificities in the mechanisms of exclusion due to the impact of globalisation.”

The emergence of an indigenous urban intellectual elite helped to provide ideological support and establish networks of support for the protests both inside and outside the country.

The favourable international context

The growth of the indigenous movement was favoured, internationally, by various events taking place in the nineties starting with the celebration of the 5th Centenary, an event triggering the polarisation and exacerbation of feelings for and against that date. It was a reason for demonstrations and protests, which were also supported by the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to an indigenous person (the Guatemalan Rigoberta Menchú) in 1992.

In parallel, also in the year 1992, in the context of the Ibero-American Summit, an agreement was signed in Madrid to create the Fund for the Development of

the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, at the same time as the Inter-American Development Bank dedicated human and financial resources to supporting projects in this area. Similarly, the Organization of American States decided to ask the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to run a project for the Inter-American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

One of the most important and far-reaching changes was convention 169/89 from the International Labour Organization which recognised that the priorities in terms of development would be established by the indigenous peoples themselves. In its articles 6, 7 and 15 it set out mechanisms for participation, the right to be consulted and prior consent so that the indigenous peoples could defend their statutory rights and decide what exploitation model they wished to implement in their territories. From there, ways have been created for the indigenous people to influence decisions when their territories are a target for companies or governments that want to extract resources.

Lastly, we should not forget the increase in the academic work focused on indigenous issues in the 1990s (although it had been growing considerably since the 1960s-1970s), with a clearly favourable bias towards the indigenous demands which in some cases resulted in the idealisation of the indigenous values, culture and way of life.

All of that favoured a large change and transformation taking place in terms of the objectives and internal ideological coherence of the movement since as José Bengoa said “whereas in the past, especially the 1960s and 1970s, the indigenous people asserted their rural identity and class, at the moment the organisations have highlighted their ethnic particularities. While rural demands were focussed on agricultural reforms, today the indigenous people are largely demanding their right to recognition and to the affirmation of their identity. In the first part of the last century the most active players politically and those with greater visibility on the national stage were the peasants who were subjects”.

“While rural demands were focussed on agricultural reforms, today the indigenous people are largely demanding their right to recognition and to the affirmation of their identity”

3. THE FIRST WAVES OF INDIGENOUS PROTESTS (1990-2003)

After the rebirth of the indigenous movement in the 1980s and the stimulus experienced at the start of the following decade, the moment of take-off and growth took place in the 1990s. During these years the movement was characterised by its heterogeneity and by the diversity of its demands and strategies, with each country having its own specific features and situations.

However, in the 1990s we could already see a number of important parallels and continuities across the entire region. The aspirations of these movements were aimed in various directions, demanding economic, social and

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cultural rights as well as civil and political rights.

There were examples, to a greater or lesser extent, of this type of "indigenous awakening" across the length and breadth of the region, although it was in Ecuador where it took hold most strongly.

In the 1980s the Ecuadorian indigenous people created a strong union organisation, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, which brought together the most important regional indigenous organisations such as ECUARUNARI (Confederation of Peoples of Kichwa Nationality) and CONFENAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon). Later, in the 1990s (1995), the political wing, Pachakutik, was founded.

At the start of the 1990s, CONAIE organised the first indigenous uprising of contemporary times, with demands for multiculturalism and plurinationalism. Later, there was a march by the indigenous peoples of Pastaza in 1992, and the events rejecting the 5th Centenary of the Discovery, which gave the process of creating CONAIE a national and even international dimension.

From this foundation it tried to make the leap into the political arena through its political party, Pachakutik, an organisation that won 20% of the votes in the presidential elections of 1996 and 14% in 1998. It actively took part in the 2000 coup against Jamil Mahuad and gained power in 2003 as part of the coalition formed with the party of Lucio Gutiérrez.

As argued by the sociologist Jorge León Trujillo, the legitimacy of the indigenous movement "grew above all in moments when there were no predominant social or popular figures on the public stage and when the political legitimacy crisis was heightened. That is when the indigenous organisations managed to capture the space for opposition vacated by the unions, using protest as an expression of social discontent. Popular demands were added to this protest, thanks to which the indigenous people constructed an image that embodied ethics and finally, one-off issues of general interest against the then predominant deregulatory trend".

All of these indigenous protests at the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s had very clear political and legislative effects since in the nineties they were accompanied by a wave of constitutional recognitions of indigenous rights by the governments. The protests also turned the indigenous people into public figures, which allowed them to influence government proposals and policies.

It is what Donna Van Cott, of Connecticut University called the new type of "multicultural" constitutionalism in Latin America, in which the multi-cultural nature of societies and the existence of indigenous peoples as distinct sub-state collectives is recognised; indigenous common law is recognised as official and as public

"From the protests of the 1980s and 1990s, the indigenous movement extracted as a result the right of the indigenous people to determine their own development"

law, as are property rights over communal land. Also recognised is the official status of the indigenous languages in the territory and the areas where the peoples are located, guaranteeing a bilingual education along with the right to create autonomous regional areas.

This "multicultural constitutionalism" had a direct impact in 1991, in Colombia, where the new Constitution addressed the indigenous issue: "the State recognises and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian Nation". Later, other countries followed suit. For example, the Constitutional Reform of Argentina (1994) recognised the "ethnic and cultural pre-existence of the Argentine indigenous peoples". The constitution of Bolivia in 1994, before the rise of Evo Morales, already defined the country as "free, independent, sovereign, multi-ethnic and pluricultural, constituted as a Unitarian Republic, (which) adopts for its government a representative democratic form laid down in the unity and solidarity of all Bolivians".

That in Guatemala (1985) declared that the country was formed of diverse ethnic groups among which were the indigenous groups of Mayan descent and subsequently agreements have established the recognition of its pluriethnicism and multiculturalism.

In Bolivia, during the government of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (1993-1997), an indigenous leader, Víctor Hugo Cárdenas, was chosen as Vice-President of the country at the same time as the Law of Popular Participation was approved, in 1994, which promoted a process of decentralisation and greater indigenous participation.

In terms of the protests of the 1980s and 1990s, the indigenous movement won the right for the indigenous people to determine their own development, as recognised by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and by the Universal Declaration of Indigenous Peoples.

4. CRISIS AND CHANGE IN THE INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT (2003-2013)

The indigenous movement in the region became less focussed in various ways between the late 1990s and the start of the new century. In Ecuador, this was due to the alliances with the traditional parties no longer working, and in Mexico it was because Zapatism had reached its limit in terms of its potential to keep progressing.

In addition, as argued by the academics Nancy Postero and León Zamosc, the indigenous groups realised that "the simple existence of a demographic majority does not guarantee a favourable electoral result", as the failure of the 1999 referendum in Guatemala showed. This was a consultation in the Central American country, in which extensive constitutional reforms that increased the rights of the indigenous people were expected to be approved. However, only

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18% of the population turned out to vote and the “No” vote was victorious.

These failures meant that at the start of the new century the indigenous movement reached the conclusion that to gain more influence it would have to build bridges with the non-indigenous political movements and that to have more of an impact and following it would need to find more common ground than just the indigenous demands.

Since the turn of the century the general approach to protesting has had a series of specific characteristics:

- The armed option is not the right approach, instead using low-intensity conflicts and protests that raise questions about the monopoly of violence by a state that cannot repress these protests as overwhelmingly as it did when dealing with the old uprisings. All of which provides the indigenous movements with the power of veto and “blackmailing the state”.
- In addition, these indigenous groups managed to create broad alliances that go beyond the indigenous issue, adopting policies that could be supported by other social groups in “strategic alliances that can open the way to advancing toward solutions really overarching the indigenous issue since they affect all social sectors”.

This means that while the Ecuadorian electoral route was in terminal decline (this collapse of the indigenous movement in Ecuador could be seen in 2006 when it obtained only 2% of the votes in the elections, leading to the loss of internal cohesion), other methods were becoming more important. For example, in Bolivia the “Water Wars” (2001) and later the “Gas Conflict” (2005) showed that the way to grow, to make their voice heard and to achieve political success in setting the agenda was not exclusively indigenous protest focussing on the problems of that ethnic sector.

The Bolivian Water and Gas wars showed that a short-term issue, but one of great importance, could serve as a point of connection between the indigenous peoples and other social groups, therefore gaining the ability to reach wider sections of the population. Combined with charismatic leadership (of the Evo Morales type in Bolivia), this gave the movement a wider influence.

Over the last decade, therefore, the indigenous movements have had a much wider agenda that covers and includes much broader social and ethnic interests. In addition, growing pressure and battles over natural resources located on indigenous lands (or claimed by them) encourages the unification of the different ethnic groups and serves as a foundation for them to develop an alternative development proposal (ecological and environmental) that wins support among non-

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indigenous, urban sectors and gains the international backing that legitimises this type of environmentalist message.

The new protests taking place over the last decade have learned from the failure of the armed route in the 1990s (the Zapatist case) and of the electoral political route (the case of Ecuador with Pachakutik, and Katarism en Bolivia).

As argued in 2010 by the academic at the University of Salamanca, Salvador Martí, “the fact that most of the strategic resources of the 21st century (water, biodiversity, gas, oil, minerals, forests) are located in areas inhabited by the indigenous people will mean that episodes like those of Bagua in Peru, Awas Tingni in Nicaragua, and Ralco in Chile, will multiply in the future. So, despite the closing down of the “opportunities” that is emerging in this new cycle, the fight of the indigenous people for their rights is going to continue. The organisational learning over the last few decades and the recognition of specific rights as a result of the constitutional and legislative reforms are a decisive factor”.

This was the case, in the early years of its rise to power, for the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) in Bolivia. The *Cocalero* movement that began in the 1980s was defined as the movement of the producers of coca leaves. It brought together indigenous elements to defend coca as the “sacred leaf” and united various social and indigenous groups. However, it was also capable of building a broad social coalition in which environmental issues were of key importance. The academic Sofía Cordero Ponce says that “MAS is not a simple expression of the indigenous communities, but instead a force which represents a plurality of popular sectors. In 2002 it obtained 20% with an indigenous approach, but exceeded 50% in 2006 and 60% in 2009 thanks to a broader proposal that covered the popular groups, the indigenous peoples and the middle classes”.

However, this alliance between environmental and indigenous groups is not new and has clear roots dating back to the 1990s. José Bengoa, in an ECLAC report, described how from this era we saw the consolidation of “the alliance between the indigenous movements and the environmentalists on the continent. This alliance can be seen from the many conflicts that involve both the indigenous peoples and the “greens”. The indigenous leadership for its part has included elements of the environmental approach in its own indigenous approach, and for their part, for many environmental movements the indigenous people are the “historical guardians of the environment”, often producing a certain idealisation of them. Regardless of the depth of this alliance, there is no doubt that it has allowed the indigenous movement to move closer to broad sectors of the population and public opinion, which consider respect and care for the environment to be a higher and non-negotiable issue.

In some countries, like Ecuador for example, the alliance has been efficient in terms of wining votes and obtaining parliamentary representation".

"The current indigenous-environmentalist approach is a reaction to the extractive policies"

The current indigenous-environmentalist approach is a reaction to extractive policies and responds to the arguments of governments and transnational companies dedicated to mining and water-related business ventures. They reject the existence of a new technology that protects the environment, so-called green mining, modern and responsible. They do not believe that mining generates employment and fosters sustainable economic development for the communities. Nor do they believe that the transnationals involved in mining metals respect human rights, since they accuse them of causing the uprooting of human groups from their lands, damaging the environment of the peoples and causing lung and skin diseases.

5. THE BREAK BETWEEN THE LEFT AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL-INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT (2009-2013)

However, this alliance between the environmentalist and indigenous movements and the new left (embodied by Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador) did not last long. In reality, it was present while these new regimes were emerging and establishing themselves (2005-2009) but once these leaderships had settled down they started to move away from the environmental groups and to come into conflict with their respective agendas.

The clash of approaches (developmentalism vs. "indigenous philosophy of living well" based on being in harmony with nature) was due, as Sofía Cordero says, to the developmentalism of governments like those of Correa and Morales "seeking the return of the active state" which clashes with "the new subjects recognised among the public who demand their rights as "equals". However, a public with new collective subjects obliges the state and its institutions to give up areas of power, which is not normally to the liking of the current Bolivian or Ecuadorian governments, with a strong centralising approach and strong presidential systems. It is often thought that the state's interests are universal compared to the more specific nature of community interests and it is suspected that the self-governments could be colonised by transnational companies".

This developmentalism of the governments of Correa and Evo Morales has ended up coming into direct conflict with the environmental-indigenous approach. Two conflicts are revealing in this respect. In Ecuador, in 2012, CONAIE initiated the "March for Water, Life and the Dignity of People", rejecting the signing of contracts with Chinese companies for large-scale mining.

In Bolivia, a long conflict began around the construction of a road that crossed the Isiboro Secure National Park and Indigenous

Territory (Tipnis), which was opposed by many of the indigenous peoples settled there, who demanded their right to prior consultation.

So, the left, both reformist and from the "21st Century" movement, experienced a serious conflict between the supporters of developmentalism and the environmentalists. A decade ago both lefts were united around the leadership of Morales, Correa and Humala. Today they are opposing each other with different approaches to the countries and economies.

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For example, Evo Morales started his political career clearly linked to the environmental groups, as did Rafael Correa and Ollanta Humala who initially opposed the extractive mining projects. However, at the current time, the Cocalero leader argues that behind the environmental movement there is a "new type of colonialism" and Rafeal Correa calls the environmentalists "infantile".

They are all now on the opposite side of the argument to the environmentalists since they support the extension of the model of exporting primary products, a proposal which clashes head-on with the environmental approach.

As a result, according to a report by the World Bank, most of the current social conflicts in Latin America relate to the environmental and social aspects of mining. The Office of the Public Defender of Peru, in a recent report, also identified one of the causes of social-environmental conflicts as the "justifiable fear of the public about the potential contamination that could result from mining activities". The mining companies are clearly aware of this and have been almost ubiquitous in incorporating the environmental issue into their Corporate Social Responsibility work.

Disputes about natural resources are therefore the most recurring element of mining conflicts. However, the World Bank says that it is not always a question of environmental conflicts in the strictest sense of the word, or in other words, limited to defending biodiversity for its own sake. Although this is the aspect that most interests the environmental organisations, the rural communities consider the environmental issue also, and probably more, in terms of the right of access to land and water, or in other words, to the resources that are the basis of their household finances.

So, "the indigenous movement has appropriated the environmentalist approach which scarcely existed in the 1950s and 1960s since the old indigenous groups focussed on the language of exploitation", says Bengoa. In the 1970s the environmental movement grew stronger in the developed countries, and "the uncontrolled externalities of capitalist development started to be of concern to growing sectors of society in the developed countries". In the

various international forums, the indigenous demands moved closer to the environmental proposals and in 1992, in the Earth Summit, the meeting of these two approaches took place: “The indigenous people at the start of the 21st century have become the main players in the defence of the environment. The defence of the land has stopped being a rural struggle and has instead become an environmental struggle”. As argued by Bengoa, coordinating with the environmental movement has allowed the indigenous movements to establish a shrewd alliance with the post-modern sectors of social demand.

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This is because they have seen an “urban reinterpretation of the indigenous tradition undertaken by the indigenous people themselves on the basis of indigenous interests and objectives. There is no doubt that many elements of the indigenous vision of the past existed at an earlier stage, but nor should the dispassionate observer be in any doubt that many of these elements are an idealisation of the past”.

6. MAP OF THE CURRENT INDIGENOUS PROTESTS

According to data from the Observatory of Mining Conflicts in Latin America there are currently more than 180 socio-environmental conflicts in the region that involve 183 mining projects and 246 communities.

TABLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS IN LATIN AMERICA	
Peru	33
Chile	33
Argentina	26
Mexico	26
Brazil	20
Colombia	12
Bolivia	8
Ecuador	7
Panama	6
Guatemala	6
Nicaragua	4
Dominican Republic	4
El Salvador	3
Honduras	3
Costa Rica	2
Paraguay	1
Uruguay	1

Data: Observatory for Mining Conflicts in Latin America

The countries with the greatest number of conflicts are Peru and Chile with 33, Argentina and Mexico with 26, Brazil with 20 and Colombia with 12. The rest of the countries have fewer than ten conflicts.

In the following section we analyse some of these conflicts and their political impact.

Peru, the changing policies of Humala

In the 2011 campaign Ollanta Humala argued strongly against the mining of gold and the wastage and contamination of water.

This anti-mining policy, a response to the indigenous protests during the administration of Alan García that led to protests in Cajamarca and Cusco and to the events in Bagua (Amazon) where 33 people

died, was very loud and clear from Humala: "I have seen a group of lakes and they tell me that they want to sell them. You want to sell your water? What is more important, water or gold? Because you don't drink water, don't eat water, but we drink water, our children drink water, our livestock drink water. And from there comes the milk, comes the cheese, comes wealth. Water for the Peruvians!".

> "In the Peruvian Amazon region the indigenous communities continue to fight for their land and their way of life"

Later, once in Government, he made a significant u-turn and tried to gain the support of both the environmentalists and neo-developmentalists at the same time. The most serious challenge for Humala's government is in Conga (Cajamarca), in the north of Peru, where there is strong opposition to a mining project from the US company Newmont. The residents of this rural region fear that the open-cast gold mine, whose construction would require the replacement of four Andean lakes with artificial reserves, could contaminate the water resources and affect the health of the people.

To date, Humala has defended the project: "The Conga project (in the region of Cajamarca) is an important project for Peru, because it is going to allow it to undertake a great transformation. (....) We reject extreme positions: water or gold. We propose a more sensible approach: water and gold".

However, this change and this proposal have meant him having to deal with large anti-mining protests in the country led by broad indigenous and popular groups. Humala has faced, according to reports in the local press, more than 200 social conflicts, and during the government of his predecessor, Alan García, according to the Office of the Public Defender of Peru, 195 people died in clashes with the security forces between January 2006 and September 2011.

In addition, in the Peruvian Amazon region the indigenous communities continue to fight for their land and their way of life. Much of the area covered by the rainforest in Peru has been granted through concessions to mining and oil companies. Mining companies alone account for almost 14% of the land and more than 75% of the Peruvian Amazon is under concession to the oil industry.

Humala has chosen to continue with economic growth based on a mining-exporting model. Of total exports, 60% come from the mining sector of the economy and Peru is in sixth place in terms of the largest gold exporting countries in the world.

The developmentalists vs environmentalists battle in Bolivia

Evo Morales took the presidency in 2006 with an indigenous manifesto focussing on respect for mother earth, the Pachamama. "The Earth does not belong to us, we belong to the Earth", said Morales at the UN General Assembly in 2009.

However, his approach is now less indigenous and more nationalist, more neo-developmentalist and less environmentalist. This change

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explains, for example, the TIPNIS conflict since 2011 resulting from the construction of a road through the Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS) which is being driven by the Morales government.

In the face of indigenous resistance to this project, Evo Morales had no hesitation in breaking with the indigenous-environmentalist groups since "the historic enemies of the indigenous movement present themselves as defenders of the environment when their policies were never aimed at conservation. The right involves itself in the conflicts taking place in some regions or sectors, to inflict damage on the government. When there is a border dispute the entire right is there, they get involved to magnify things, to deepen things and to confront their own colleagues".

The academic Pablo Rosell argues in an article for the magazine Nueva Sociedad that " the central issue behind the Tipnis conflict is the direction of the development model. The proposal for the road is a material and symbolic milestone for the pre-eminence of a conventional development model (physical integration of the country) and brings with it the risks of the expansion of the agricultural boundaries in detriment to the conservation of virgin forest areas".

He adds that "for the organisations that recognise themselves as essentially indigenous, land is the key issue, since it is the basis for an economic life based on ancestral uses and customs. The indigenous organisations, particularly in the lowlands, demand access to the land and the management of natural resources under community models. For the organisations that recognise themselves essentially as agricultural, in contrast, the central demand is access to land that can be cultivated".

Not only has the government of Evo Morales distanced itself from the indigenous movement, but the ruling administration, with its policies of patronage, of co-option and conditional transfers, has ended up dividing the indigenous movement. The Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB) has fractured into two groups. One associated with the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) and the second, critical of the government, led by Adolfo Chávez, a leading figure for the Tacana people who was behind the two marches against the construction of the road through the Isiboro Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS).

Correa's break with the indigenous and environmental movements

Something similar happened with the president of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, who while strengthening his grip on power has been losing the support of the indigenous and environmental movements, such as his ex-chancellor Fander Falconí. Correa and the indigenous movement have come from working together in 2006 (in that year CONAIE supported

Correa in second round and aligned itself with the politics of the government) to rejecting and condemning the policies of the other in 2013.

"Correa and the indigenous movement have come from working together in 2006 (in that year CONAIE supported Correa in second round and aligned itself with the politics of the government) to rejecting and condemning the policies of the other in 2013"

The movement divided and fractured with the emergence of Correa, among other reasons because of its policies of patronage and co-opting the executive since the president wanted to win over the indigenous population bypassing the organisations. The centralist nature of decision making and the developmentalism of Correa came into conflict with the policies of the indigenous movement which argued for, among other things, prior consultation, and above all prior consent, before any extraction project could be started.

So, for example, while in 2007 he defended the idea of conserving the Yasuní-ITT (Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini) from oil companies, in 2013 Correa proposed a diametrically opposite policy: "We have tens of thousands of millions of dollars that the Ecuadorian people urgently need. We cannot be silly, useful to nobody, we will take.... the decision to continue and to responsibly exploit the ITT"

For Rafael Correa, this "childish environmentalism" holds back the development of the country and is managed "from the shadows (by) those that have never won an election but want to prohibit, prevent this country from taking advantage of its non-renewable natural resources. I am never going to take part in these games, history will tell us who was right once the dust settles, it will be clear who acted for the homeland and who acted on the basis of fundamentalism, dogmatism and childishness".

Correa defends a "Korean style" development and administration model that gives priority to economic development and the centralised presence and management of the state in that process, through public companies such as Petroamazonas. An approach that clashes directly with the indigenous movement which tends to support decentralised government in which decisions about the exploitation or otherwise of natural resources is the responsibility of local powers emanating from the indigenous movement.

From Lula to Daniel Ortega

Other left-wing presidents in the region have also had similar problems. It is enough to recall the rupture between Lula da Silva and Marina Silva, his Minister for the Environment, in 2008.

At that time the environmental organisation Greenpeace claimed that the resignation of Marina Silva showed that the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva "has decided to abandon the Amazon": "The resignation shows that this government is not serious, does not respect the environment or the Amazon".

In Brazil the greatest problem is in the Amazon due to the conflict with the indigenous groups in this area whose interests clash

“In Brazil the greatest problem is in the Amazon due to the conflict with the indigenous groups in this area whose interests clash with the initiatives of the mining companies and landowners”

with the initiatives of the mining companies and landowners.

Last October, for example, hundreds of indigenous people from different tribes and regions marched on the Brazilian capital to ask for more support from the federal government for their rights. The indigenous people were protesting about a legal initiative proposing that the jurisdiction over everything related to the creation and demarcation of new indigenous lands, which currently corresponds to the Executive, be passed over to Parliament The indigenous people oppose this and argue that this change will give more power to the landowners and the mining and logging companies operating above all in the Amazon, where most of the indigenous reserves in the country are to be found.

In Chile, work started on the HidroAysén hydroelectric project during the administration of the socialists Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet (2000-2010), despite protests from the environmental groups. The protests by the indigenous Mapuche groups, which continued into the administration of Sebastián Piñera, have found significant support from the groups on the left and in the campaign for the 2013 presidential elections the *Nueva Mayoría* candidate, Michelle Bachelet, even argued for the HidroAysén project to be halted.

HidroAysén is a company formed by Colbún and Endesa (Chile), the latter controlled by Endesa España, which plans to construct five large hydro-electric plants in the basins of the rivers Baker and Pascua, in the Chilean Patagonia. The electricity produced would be transported more than 2,300 kilometres, to Santiago de Chile and the mines in the north, over the longest high voltage line in the world. The hydroelectric complex would contribute 2,750 MW to the Central Interconnected System (SIC), with an annual average generation capacity of 18,430 GWh.

The local communities have shown their rejection of this and have proposed that legislation be enacted to grant Patagonia the protected status of “*Reserva de la Vida*”, but for now, Chilean law recognises that ownership of water sources is private and in the region of Aysen Enel, Endesa owns more than 90% of the water rights.

Another project that brings the developmentalists from the left and the environmentalists head-to-head is the *Canal Seco* in Nicaragua, proposed by Daniel Ortega with the support of a company of Chinese origin that wants to construct a new Inter-oceanic canal, like the one in Panama.

Indigenous sectors in Nicaragua support the *Mesa Nicaragüense ante el Cambio Climático*, or Nicaraguan Round Table against Climate Change, which brings together more than 20 environmental organisations from the country and expressed its rejection of the project to construct the inter-oceanic canal

"as it is proposed": "We share the desire to find alternatives that lead us rapidly to improve the levels of poverty, but these routes must not compromise the ability of future generations to live in a healthy environment".

"The current indigenous protest movements are carrying out acts of peaceful social protest such as complaints, marches, rallies, sit-ins, hunger strikes, land invasions and taking over municipal palaces and government offices"

Other regional points of conflict

- **Mexico:** The indigenous movement in Mexico, with its roots going back to the revolution, bounced back in the first half of the 20th century but suffered a profound transformation when the Zapatista uprising took place in Chiapas in 1994.

  At the moment, beyond the exhausted Zapatista movement, the current indigenous protest movements are carrying out acts of peaceful social protest such as complaints, marches, rallies, sit-ins, hunger strikes, land invasions and taking over municipal palaces and government offices.

  Guillermo Trejo, from the University of Notre Dame, highlights the changes seen over the last 25 years in the demands and identities of the indigenous people who have shown themselves capable of constructing a strategic indigenous leadership and transforming the identity of their movements as economic and political circumstances and opportunities vary.

  At the moment, beyond the exhausted Zapatista movement, the current indigenous protest movements are carrying out acts of peaceful social protest such as complaints, marches, rallies, sit-ins, hunger strikes, land invasions and taking over municipal palaces and government offices.

  So they moved from demands of a political nature (1976-1993) focussed on the end of "the repression by chiefs, landowners and public authorities (state and municipal police); the release of political prisoners; and the removal of municipal authorities, to new demands in the 1990s focussed on the awakening of the indigenous consciousness as a public demand and identity, among the Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Veracruz and Puebla movements".

  As explained by Trejo, although the Zapatista EZLN started as Marxist-Leninist guerrillas, from the end of 1994 to 1995-96 they embraced the ethnic and autonomous approach. The ethnic demands in general, and the demands for indigenous autonomy in particular, became one of the main elements of a fledgling national indigenous movement "the objective of the organised indigenous movement is no longer land but rather territory; they no longer demand resources for the indigenous people but rather dispute the rules for

deciding on and sharing out the resources that belong to them as indigenous people; they no longer demand the removal of the public authorities but instead now demand the ability to elect the public authorities under their own rules".

- **The voice of the indigenous people in Panama:** Over the last few years, and particularly over the last four years, the indigenous people themselves have come out of anonymity denouncing the "injustice against its people and their resources." Many indigenous people have managed, through making a huge effort, to gain access to university education, becoming successful professionals and occupying important posts. Despite there being no shortage of obstacles in their path, the indigenous people of Panama have relied on their organisations to stand up to the rest of the country. Thanks to this mobilisation, today their presence has become much more felt and palpable.

  Panama currently has five indigenous districts that represent 20% of the national territory (417,559 inhabitants): the district Ngäbe - Buglé, the district Kuna Yala, the district Emberá-Wounan, the district Kuna de Madugandi and the district Kuna de Wargandi. It is these peoples who have stimulated interest in the topics that concern them, to such a point that we can take just a few of the many examples from the past few years: protests against the reforms to the Mining Code in 2011; the strike harshly repressed in Changuinola in 2010; and demonstrations in the Ngäbe territory against the hydroelectric plants in January 2008, which led to human losses and injuries.

  This protest set a precedent for the indigenous struggle in Panama, halting legislative reform and obliging the President Ricardo Martinelli to sanction a law that prohibited mining, and created a special regime for the protection of water and environmental resources in the indigenous district of Ngäbe Buglé. The indigenous peoples have become more belligerent and their struggles are becoming more skilful in various parts of the country. This is a topic that will continue to be latent in the new Panamanian government which will have to look for ways to enter into dialogue with these groups who have an autonomous administrative regime in their lands, where many of the water and mineral resources to be exploited are located.

> "Panama currently has five indigenous districts that represent 20% of the national territory"

- **Guatemala:** The traditional division between the different indigenous ethnic groups in Guatemala (Kaqchikel vs

"The fight against the mining companies at the local level has led to the rearticulation of the indigenous movement"

Quiche people, among others) and the Mestizo groups (Ladino people) with the indigenous group diminishes (although it does not disappear) when in the centre of the debate there is the rejection of the mining companies. This is what is happening in the area of the Guatemalan Altiplano, fundamentally indigenous (districts of San Marcos, Huehuetenango, etc.) where a *Consejo de Pueblos del Occidente*, or Western People's Council, has been created to oppose the extractive policies of the government.

An environmental and anti-extractive approach followed by organisations such as the National Indigenous and Peasant Coordinator (CONIC) a member of the National Maya Coordination and Convergence - WAQIB KEJ, UASP, of CLOC and that has great significance in the population as a whole and the support of the Catholic Church. For example, we can cite Bishop Álvaro Leonel Ramazzini, for whom "the mining companies, largely Canadian, that mine for gold, silver and other metals in Guatemala and in Mexico "not only leave crumbs but are also the generators of social conflicts, in addition to them destroying the environment".

The fight against the mining companies at the local level has led to the rearticulation of the indigenous movement, as has been recognised in various academic papers, such as the one by Joris van de Sand on "Mining conflicts and indigenous peoples in Guatemala": "The organisational responses of the community to mining show interesting signs of a revitalisation of the indigenous identity. Some observers, for example, interpret community consultations as a recovery of the indigenous community as a collective group. Others have noted that the fight against mining has to date scarcely been discursively articulated around demands for the recognition of indigenous collective rights, and that the communities have not yet managed to translate their requirements into a clear and comprehensive political programme for the reform of the state. They suggest that the communities must relate their struggle to aspects of their identity, as a source of social-political capital".

7. CONCLUSIONS

The indigenous issue has been present in Latin America, with a strong political component, for the last 30 years. It has taken on different forms and characteristics but what seems to stand out is that it has a formidable ability to adapt, allowing it to survive over time. It had an indigenous message until the 1950s, a

marxist message (indigenous people seen as a social class) until the 1980s-1990s, and currently has an environmental and anti-globalisation message.

In addition, it is one of the few phenomena that exists on a regional scale, from Mexico, passing though Central America and covering most of the countries in South America (Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Chile and Argentina). The Observatory of Mining Conflicts in Latin America calculates that there are currently 175 socio-environmental conflicts in the region that involve 183 mining projects and 246 communities.

"The national states have been incapable of finding institutional channels to address the environmental-indigenous demands and make them compatible with the need for development in the countries"

It also has a significant ability to set or alter the political agenda in countries. The environmental-indigenous movement, although eminently local in character, has the potential to build networks of support and solidarity at a national and even international level that strengthens its presence and opportunities for influence.

Similarly, the conflicts that trigger the indigenous-environmental protests are very disruptive since they generate the sensation of a lack of governability or the loss of the monopoly for legitimate violence by the state, although in reality they rarely posses the power to overthrow institutions.

Latin America has entered a cycle of greater stability, but there are key areas, such as environmental issues, linked to land and natural resources, that could upset this balance. Some analysts believe that these conflicts will tend to escalate due to a lack of institutional routes capable of offering solutions and negotiating platforms.

Over the next few years, the pressure due to extraction, from both companies and governments, due to the high commodity prices (since even if they fall in the short-term, these are going to remain above historical prices) allows us to predict that new conflicts will arise, of a local nature but with a strong national impact in the countries where they take place. The national states have been incapable of finding institutional channels to address the environmental-indigenous demands and make them compatible with the need for development in the countries.

As argued by Salvador Martí "many of the most valuable strategic resources of the 21st century (such as water, biodiversity, precious metals, oil and gas) are present in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples... the struggle of the indigenous peoples for their rights will continue, albeit through another coalition of players, with a greater presence of local forces and less support from the international networks ... the indigenous protests will continue ... and these protests can no longer be captured

by governments... they will be quieter and with a greater emphasis on the protection of natural resources and therefore more focused on the area of land and local life".

Their ability to alter national policy may be increased if we see economic crises in which the discomfort of the middle classes combines with the indigenous protests to result in the common rejection of the institutions and the presence of foreign interests.

As Alicia Bárcena, General Secretary of ECLAC, says "the current patterns of production and consumption are unsustainable because they generate large economic and social and environmental costs that erode their own foundations for material sustainability in the medium and long term. The environmental issue is part of the public agenda ... due to the growing demands of the citizens" which in that area find common ground with the indigenous demands.

"The current patterns of production and consumption are unsustainable because they generate large economic and social and environmental costs that erode their own foundations for material sustainability in the medium and long term"

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Organisation

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

José Antonio Llorente
Founding partner and President
jallorente@llorenteycuenca.com

Enrique González
Partner and CFO
egonzalez@llorenteycuenca.com

Jorge Cachinero
Corporate Director of Reputation and Innovation
jcachinero@llorenteycuenca.com

IBERIA

Arturo Pinedo
Partner and General Director
apinedo@llorenteycuenca.com

Adolfo Corujo
Partner and General Director
acorujo@llorenteycuenca.com

Madrid

Joan Navarro
Partner and Vice-President of Public Affairs
jnavarro@llorenteycuenca.com

Amalio Moratalla
Partner and Senior Director
amoratalla@llorenteycuenca.com

Juan Castillero
Financial Director
jcastillero@llorenteycuenca.com

Lagasca, 88 – planta 3
28001 Madrid
Tel: +34 91 563 77 22

Barcelona

María Cura
Partner and General Director
mcura@llorenteycuenca.com

Muntaner, 240-242, 1º-1ª
08021 Barcelona
Tel: +34 93 217 22 17

Lisbon

Madalena Martins
Founding Partner
madalena.martins@imago.pt

Carlos Matos
Founding Partner
carlos.matos@imago.pt

Rua do Fetal, 18
2714-504 S. Pedro de Sintra
Tel: + 351 21 923 97 00

LATIN AMERICA

Alejandro Romero
Partner and Latin American CEO
aromero@llorenteycuenca.com

José Luis Di Girolamo
Partner and Latin American CFO
jldgirolamo@llorenteycuenca.com

Antonio Lois
Regional Director of Human Resources
alois@llorenteycuenca.com

Bogota

María Esteve
General Director
mesteve@llorenteycuenca.com

Germán Jaramillo
President Director
gjaramillo@llorenteycuenca.com

Carrera 14, # 94-44. Torre B – of. 501
Bogota (Colombia)
Tel: +57 1 7438000

Buenos Aires

Pablo Abiad
Partner and General Director
pabiad@llorenteycuenca.com

Enrique Morad
President Director for the Southern Cone
emorad@llorenteycuenca.com

Av. Corrientes 222, piso 8. C1043AAP
Ciudad de Buenos Aires (Argentina)
Tel: +54 11 5556 0700

Lima

Luisa García
Partner and CEO of the Andean Region
lgarcia@llorenteycuenca.com

Cayetana Aljovín
General Manager
caljovin@llorenteycuenca.com

Av. Andrés Reyes 420, piso 7
San Isidro. Lima (Peru)
Tel: +51 1 2229491

Mexico

Alejandro Romero
Partner and Latin American CEO
aromero@llorenteycuenca.com

Juan Rivera
Partner and General Director
jrivera@llorenteycuenca.com

Bosque de Radiatas # 22 – PH7
05120 Bosques las Lomas (México D.F.)
Tel: +52 55 52571084

Panama

Javier Rosado
Partner and General Director
jrosado@llorenteycuenca.com

Avda. Samuel Lewis. Edificio Omega, piso 6
Tel: +507 206 5200

Quito

Catherine Buelvas
General Director
cbuelvas@llorenteycuenca.com

Av. 12 de Octubre 1830 y Cordero.
Edificio World Trade Center, Torre B, piso 11
Distrito Metropolitano de Quito (Ecuador)
Tel: +593 2 2565820

Rio de Janeiro

Juan Carlos Gozzer
Executive Director
jcgozzer@llorenteycuenca.com

Rua da Assembleia, 10 – sala 1801
Rio de Janeiro – RJ (Brazil)
Tel: +55 21 3797 6400

São Paulo

José Antonio Llorente
Founding partner and President

Alameda Santos, 200 – Sala 210
Cerqueira Cesar. SP 01418-000
São Paulo (Brazil)
Tel.: +55 11 3587 1230

Santo Domingo

Alejandra Pellerano
General Director
apellerano@llorenteycuenca.com

Avda. Abraham Lincoln
Torre Ejecutiva Sonora, planta 7
Tel: +1 8096161975

ASIA

Beijing

Sergi Torrents
General Director
storrents@grupo-11.com

2009 Tower A. Ocean Express
N2 Dong san Huan Bei Road, Chaoyang District
Beijing - China
Tel: +86 10 5286 0338

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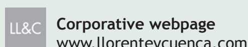
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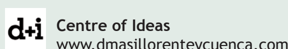
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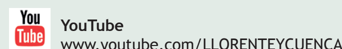
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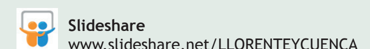
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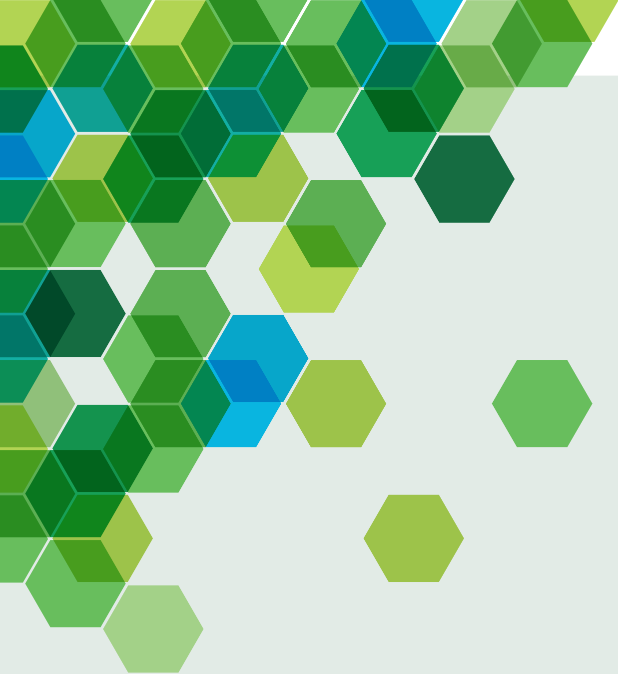

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