

**THE AMAZON:
DESTRUCTION AND RESISTANCE
WORLDVIEWS IN CONFLICT¹**

MARCOS ARRUDA²

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Development as “Your money or your life”, or as Freedom?

Chapter 1 - Amazon – General Overview

Chapter 2 – The Colombian Amazon: A Poor Wealthy Region

1. Gold: Gran Colombian Gold, Canada
2. Coal: the Cerrejón Mine
3. Oil: Canadian Pacific Explorer & Producer Corp. and Sinochem, China
4. Highways and Agribusiness
5. Lumber Extraction and Others
6. Another Free Trade Agreement that Damages Indigenous Communities
7. The Peace Process, Ongoing Oppression and the Hope for Freedom

Chapter 3 – The Brazilian Amazon: Past and Future are Now

1. The Amazon Basin: Paradise Being Lost?
2. Indigenous Peoples and the Belo Monte Dam
3. Preliminary Conclusions about the Belo Monte Dam
 - a. Drought
 - b. Energy
 - c. Costs
 - d. Jobs
 - e. Neglect regarding the rights of traditional populations

Chapter 4 – Criminalization of Social Movements and Killing of Leaders

1. Cases of Aggression against Indigenous Peoples presented in OAS Hearing
2. AWÁ Resist Logging Companies who Violate their Indigenous Land
3. Ka’apor Indigenous Rights Violated
4. Maró Indigenous Rights Violated

Conclusion – Development, Good Living and Spirituality

INTRODUCTION:

¹ Essay to be presented during the Bhutan Conference on Theory and Practice of the GNH – Gross National Happiness Indicators, Paro, Bhutan, November 4-6, 2015, organized by the Institute of Bhutan Studies, with Speri/Hanoi.

² Economist and educator, researcher and consultant of PACS – Institute Alternative Policies for the Southern Cone of Latin America, professor at the International University for Peace (UNIPAZ), and the Gaia Education Program, associate of the Transnational Institute (Amsterdam).

DEVELOPMENT AS “YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE!” or AS FREEDOM?

1. The whole purpose of the economy should be to serve the needs and wants of human beings, in the present and the future, in harmony with the natural environment. I consider this the deep meaning of sustainability. In this paper, I want to share with you some stories of human communities, in particular those of native peoples of the Amazon Basin – Brazilian and Colombian. The economics of this paper only has a meaning if it serves to question its own premises, and those of socioeconomic development, and gives place to innovative proposals and strategies that redirect its current paths and trends.

2. Considering the continuous and ubiquitous conflicts between private capital and national States, on the one hand, and Indigenous populations - especially those who live in villages and whose lives depend on community ties - on the other, what is at stake? In my view, it is a shock of civilizations. The dominant civilization is driven by a linear, one-dimensional worldview, understanding accumulation of material wealth, power and prestige as synonym of happiness and as the purpose of human life. It is also characterized by no consideration with the social and ecological consequences of economic activity. A new civilization that is struggling to come to light is rooted in a holistic, biocentric worldview, oriented to well-being, limited material possessions, and enjoyment of life. Such a view acknowledges the interconnection of humans with all other forms of life, all of nature and the Cosmos. It is both traditional, because it relates to the cosmology and modes of living of non-Western traditions in different parts of the world, and is always more warranted by the contemporary advancements of science.

3. Each one of these worldviews defines **development** in a distinctive manner. The dominant view sees it as the attainment of increasing levels of industrialization and of accumulation of material wealth. Human/Social development is reduced to economic development, and economic development is reduced to unlimited growth of consumption and production. The holistic, biocentric worldview conceives **development** as related to the potentials and attributes inherent in human persons, communities, nations and humankind; in order to unfold these potentials these subjects need to educate and empower themselves in order to exert their power to manage this process as subjects of their own development. In this sense, economic development would mean increasing productivity gains towards enough material goods for all, fairly distributed according to needs, as a means to free the time dedicated to necessary work, so that growing periods can serve the expansion of awareness, knowledge, research, two-way communication, education, self-management and co-management of collective spaces, development of the various types of intelligence inherent in the human species, including mental and psychic potentials, creativity, esthetics, ethics, affection, friendship and love.

Some Indigenous Peoples reject the notion of evolution and development. They explicitly reject the economic growth they see as a factor of painful destruction of human communities and ecosystems; but they also claim for a steady-state

situation, in which people should be happy with enough, and should not aspire to go beyond their present state. (Huanacuni, 2015: 69ss)

4. The dominant mode of measuring wealth has a peculiar conception of wealth as a premise. The GNP/GDP binomial only measures the material production that is traded by monetary means, disregarding peoples', communities' and society's quality and enjoyment of life - individual and collective - in harmony with the natural milieu. Likewise, it does not consider social and environmental costs of investments aimed at producing material gains and profits for those who own the capital. Indicators tend to shape the mind of people according to what they are measuring. If accumulation of material wealth, power and prestige through competition, not cooperation, is what the economy works for, then it is only 'normal' to consider accumulation of money and assets, endless production and unlimited consumption as the goals of oneself and of one's company.

5. The dominant paradigm is ego-centered in a pathological way: it leads one to abstract from relations, feel disconnected from others and from Nature, and consider the 'success' of others as opposed to one's own. The market economy is an impossible, unsustainable utopia because it centers economic planning in the individual person and enterprise, disregarding the social dimension of the human being. The firm makes plans to maximize its gains and its share of the market. The assumption is that if all firms do the same the market forces will 'naturally', or 'automatically' balance each other and the whole of society will reach satisfaction and abundance. The real world is different. The illusionary satisfaction of power *over* others and more money and assets than everybody else, pushes a firm not only to compete with other firms, but also to try to become richer and more powerful than they. The emotions of greed and voracity take the lead of our behavior. The thrust to appropriate material wealth and common goods, even beyond their capacity to use or consume them, gradually becomes the meaning of their lives. Thus, they lose touch with their real selves and with others. Their world is condensed in a single logic: I-without-We. They become accomplices of the maintenance of a war-and-waste economy. Ignorance, poverty, exclusion of their sisters and brothers do not touch them anymore, because they no longer have sisters and brothers - all are just objects, parts of the big 'machine' that is human society, the world, the Cosmos. Various forms of escape become attractive to countervail their boredom and frustration: alcohol, prostitution, and drugs, anti-depressants even suicide! The truth is that no quantity of material goods can fill one's heart and soul.

6. Then, the GNH of Bhutan entered the scenario. This small country became world famous for having devised and adopted a creative means of focusing political power, the art of public management, and economic activity on **people and their good living and happiness**. Bhutan questioned the concept of wealth as only accumulation of material goods. The question how to support and enhance good living and happiness became central. Identifying the causes of the shortages of both allows the communities and the government to focus scarce resources on policies and programs to remove or overcome those causes. The main problem is not the shortages - the symptom - but rather the factors that give place to the shortages - the pathology. Social and economic planning, then,

become one of the most crucial arts of government. **Development**, conceived as the endless endeavor to unfold and fulfill our individual – physical, mental, psychic and spiritual – and collective – family, community, territory – potentials, becomes the main goal of politics, economic, social and cultural activities. No more social programs are needed, for the economy is planned to respond to social needs, to increase productivity and share its gains equitably, thus freeing people's time from the tasks of mere survival, and to enhance individual and social good living and happiness. The logic now is **I-and-We at the same time!**

7. In other countries than Bhutan, we are still submerged in the culture of I-without-We. Some have tried to invert this expression as a means to liberate humankind – We-without-I has proved to be illusory just the same. In most of Latin America and the Caribbean³ we are still struggling to overcome the causes of social and economic injustice, inequalities, domination and dependence, productive capital, wealth and income concentration, common goods and public assets privatized to serve the interests of only a few at the expense of all. New forms of mental and psychic colonialism maintain their grip over peoples' awareness. The global North wants all the money and material wealth for itself, and for that it promotes corruption, assassination of politicians and social leaders who resist the temptation of bribery, and wars to conquer the natural wealth of other nations. Attempts at electing politicians and parties that have an explicit commitment with the people have seemed to fail – the power of money, fear, prestige overwhelm the elected to the point that they forsake their original mandates and choose to serve god-money, and to practice power *over*, rather than power *with* the people. For years we have talked about a change in the paradigmatic statement of the Brazilian Constitution to: "All power comes from the People and *to its service* (instead of *in its name*) will be exerted". Power to serve, this is the key to democracy. And democracy can only take place if direct democracy becomes the foundation of representative democracy.

8. Direct democracy means the protagonism of the society of 'common people' with respect to public and private agents on questions related to the common good. In this perspective, "national interests" should be understood as "people's interests". It also means working people's empowerment to become the subjects of development. It means shared participation in harmony, by State and civil society, in the administration of the various territories, from local to national and the planet.

9. The means to achieve a truly democratic socio-political order include:

- 1) Link the right to property of productive goods and possession of common goods to work, instead of capital.
- 2) Make consumption/demand and social needs, instead of supply, the reference of socioeconomic planning. "From each according to her/his capacity, to each according to her/his needs".

³ See Galeano, Eduardo, 1973/1997, "Open Veins of Latin America: five centuries of the pillage of a continent", Monthly Review Press, NY, USA.

- 3) Share the surpluses and the gains of productivity, creating the material basis for the gradual reduction of the necessary work journey, towards emancipated work.
- 4) Liberate human work from the chains of wage and mere survival: towards a collaborative, solidarity economy with emancipated work.
- 5) Adopt fair prices according to the win-win ethic: transparency of cost/price.
- 6) Promote the use of community currencies based on relatively sovereign territories, with no interests and no usury.
- 7) Center the economy on communities: promote Society – family units, communities, district and village associations, cooperatives, solidarity networks and chains of production-distribution – as the main protagonists of development. Convert private companies into communities/cooperatives.
- 8) Restructure the financial sector, replacing the private management of money and finance with public and social management only, in such way that two types of banks would exist – State banks and community banks.
- 9) Mandate the State to play the following roles:
 - a. To coordinate the transition from the existing market and money-centered war-and-waste-oriented economy to a people-centered, collaborative, solidarity-based, socially and ecologically sustainable economy.
 - b. To serve as the orchestrator of social diversity and communities.
 - c. To facilitate the self-empowerment of citizens and communities
 - d. To coordinate participatory development planning and implementation at the national level; to regulate the use of common goods so that they serve the whole of society taking into account future generations.
 - e. To consult civil society on strategic decisions which affect their livelihood's sovereignty.
 - f. To be accountable to society for its acts.
- 10) Always consider solidarity logistics as part of solidarity chains and networks.
- 11) Create an extensive network of communities in a territory, and of territories in a biome and a country, for the purpose of planning and implementing endogenous and participatory development, in a flow, first, from the periphery to the center and, then, from the center to the periphery.

10. These is the contemporary context in which I write this essay, focusing on the Amazon Basin, particularly on the plight of Indigenous Peoples under the siege of enterprises and politicians whose purpose is to exploit the Amazon at the cost of destroying the forest, the water sources and paths, and disempowering the local populations, in particular the Indigenous Peoples.

11. However, we should not think that oppression and ecological destruction are the only real traits of today's world. A new world order is on the rise, and ecovillages, permaculture and agroecology rural and urban networks, transition districts and towns, community development experiments, and practices of

solidarity social economy worldwide illustrate positive trends in dealing with tropical forests for food production, logging and other activities in harmony with nature. The Global Ecovillage Network provides some stimulating examples.⁴ Ecovillages in the various continents show that we can regenerate the soil, replenish water tables, look more carefully at how nature functions, how the Earth makes energy flow with minimum input and maximum output; how we can replant the forests, rebuild a planetary ethos of sharing and solidarity, celebrate the diversity of our cultures, combining the very best solutions to reestablish an enabling environment for the production and reproduction of life. Social Solidarity Economies are being organized not to serve profits but life on the planet. They prove that networking diverse local solutions we can respond to global challenges. They are developing lifestyles that are fulfilling and meaningful, with conscious consumption practices in tune of the natural environment, and taking care of what is around us.⁵

On the Amazon, we have chosen to concentrate on Colombia and Brazil, because we intend to develop a project on two levels: one, participatory research on Well Being and Happiness involving the members of Amazon indigenous villages, especially women, in both countries; second, promote exchange among representatives of those villages for mutual knowledge and mutual support. This project is made viable through the partnership between PACS (Institute Alternative Policies for the Southern Cone) and Speri/Hanoi.

4 <http://gen.ecovillage.org>. Here, Kosha Joubert speaks in TEDx about practical examples of innovation and hope:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=gGbuOBCGfmQ

5 “This is a call for the creation of an ecovillage inside the Amazon Forest: “The Amazon is an immense city of trees ready to be populated (foundation, base and skeleton ready). If only one person lives in a square 100 meters by 100 meters, Amazon fits 550 million people. Rich in biodiversity, fish and medicinal plants have the ability to receive and supply a mass invasion. And there the land is cheap. Let's create Our Space in the Amazon, an independent new world, a magical civilization in the trees! A world full of culture, light and sustainable based on the festive spirit with the least amount of work. Aimed at human happiness and based on cooperation will produce the best mode of human life, with lots of parties, fun, free time and rest. Return to live in magical state of Being.”
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1554923388089716/permalink/1554935458088509/>

CHAPTER 1

THE AMAZON BASIN – GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Amazon Basin comprehends nine countries and constitutes the Earth's largest biome with the richest biodiversity. Its area is 6.9 million square kilometers, distributed mainly between Brazil (60%) and Peru (13%), of which 5.5 million are covered by the planet's largest tropical forest.

Among the seven richest in biodiversity, five are part of the Amazon region – Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. Colombia is one of the richest countries in biodiversity, second in the world, hosting more than 10% of the world's species of plants and animals. However, 40% of the Colombian territory is under concession or solicited by transnational corporations for the extraction of ores and fossil fuels. This is evidence that the Colombian government intends to convert the country into a mining power, with serious consequences for the ecosystem, and to indigenous and rural communities. Changes in legislation and norms have opened the way to the intensification of extractive activities in protected zones, such as mountains, Indian reservations and territories of afro-descendants.

According to the Brazilian legislation, the Amazon Biome belongs to the Legal Amazon, which covers the whole territory of the states of Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará, Amapá and Tocantins; and parts of Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul e Rondônia. Legally, the Amazon biome covers more than 60% of Brazil's surface, with only 12% of the country's population living there. Its main water current, the Amazon River, has more than 1,000 tributaries, and throws nearly 175 million liters of water per second into the Atlantic Ocean.

The Brazilian Amazon region is the largest reserve of tropical wood – about 2,500 species, or one third of the entire world's tropical wood, and 30 thousand species of plants, of the 100,000 species already registered in the whole of South America. A great variety of minerals is also part of its material wealth. In this Green Ocean the presence of Indigenous Peoples across thousands of years has not upset or harmed the environment; they have used its resources harmoniously, without altering the landscape or endangering its natural wealth.

The current population of Indigenous Peoples, according to the 2010 Census, was nearly 900 thousand, nearly 64% rural, in contrast with 48% in 2,000. 20.4% of that total lived in the Amazon region. After a time of serious decrease, especially during the two decades of dictatorship, the indigenous

The largest single aboriginal nation is the Yanomami, located in the extreme North of Brazil, in the Amazon Forest.

Nowadays, the total population of the Amazon region is now 35 million, of which 2.6 million are natives.

The invasion of the region by the market system led to chaotic forms of domination of the forest and brutal destruction of local populations. 'Progress and development' seemed to justify every sort of violence and violation of the rights of peoples and Nature. Today at least 70% of South America's gross domestic product are produced in regions under the climatic and hydrologic influence of the Amazon.

A research paper by scientist Antonio Donato Nobre, of the Brazilian Institute of Space Research – INPE, entitled **The Climatic Future of the Amazon** shows the climate potential of this Green Ocean, and the impacts of its destruction by deforestation and fire, perpetrated by human greed and voracity for immediate financial earnings. The report shows what action should be taken to contain the anthropic effects of climate change. Facts such as 20% of the planet's oxygen coming from the Amazon, and almost 10% of the planet's biodiversity dwelling in the Amazon cannot be ignored. Nobre's research reveals secrets that make the Amazon a unique ecosystem in the planet. One of them is that the forest maintains the air humid and constantly flowing, carrying rain to an area whose diameter reaches nearly 16,000 km, towards the North and South of the Americas, and thousands of kilometers away from the sea. The Amazon helps form rain in clean air, since the trees emit water vapor that is effective in forming the nimbus clouds responsible for abundant rain.

Another secret is that the Amazon Forest exports humidity by means of aerial rivers of water vapor, irrigating the center and south regions of Brazil, the Pantanal and the Chaco, Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina. Without these forest services these regions would have a semi-arid to desert climate. The trees have a natural ability to transfer great volumes of water from the soil to the atmosphere by transpiration: 20 billion tons of water are evaporated per day, or 20 trillion liters. "The trees function as wood geysers, outpouring this immense volume of water vapor in the atmosphere." The physicist's theory is that the trees' abundant transpiration – greater than that of the oceans around the continent, - added to the intense condensation that forms rainy clouds, generates a lowering of atmospheric pressure above the forest towards the inner part of the continent, maintaining a regular rain cycle. These favorable effects make the forest a friendly Earth structure and a valuable partner of human activities that demand and adequate amount of rain, a fair climate and protection from extreme events.

But deforestation may put all these forest attributes at risk. Studies show that the forest, in its original condition, having evolved over dozens of million years, has great resistance to climatic catastrophes. Chainsaws, tractors and fire are breaking its immunity. Nobre estimates that the industrial occupation of the Amazon has destroyed at least 42 billion trees – or 2,000 trees per minute with no interruption – in the last 40 years. This anthropic devastation – which amounts to nearly 17% of the Amazon forest, is harming the climate near and distant from the Amazon, and the perspective is that it will become even more devastating if deforestation continues and the forest is not restored. The drought that affected São Paulo, in Southeast Brazil, is related to the Amazon deforestation. If climate change continues at the current pace it may have

This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015

destroyed nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Amazon forest by 2030, degrading the soil into savannah or even desert.

Among the measures Nobre proposes is the political will of governments to declare a “war campaign” against deforestation, and “the universalization of the access to scientific knowledge that will reduce one of the main causes of deforestation – ignorance”.

CHAPTER 2

THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON: A POOR WEALTHY REGION

Colombia has signed Free Trade Agreements with the USA and other rich countries. The equality of terms to be applied to the respective partners ignores the enormous differences among them in terms of income, quality of life and level of industrialization. The illusion that 'development can be attracted' to the country through concessions is the cause of subordination, disempowerment and social and environmental injustice. Development cannot be imported, if we talk about *true* development. What is to be developed? It is the potentials, attributes and resources of those who own these potentials. Thus, they are the main protagonists. Development is endogenous process of qualitatively unfolding those potentials. The help of external human, knowledge and financial means may contribute to development, but should not violate the sovereign autonomy of the community or nation who carries the potentials and attributes to be developed.

Corporate spokespersons and government officials deceive unprepared audiences when they switch their speech from "sustainable development" to "sustainable (or sustained) growth". Growth is the quantitative volume of products being traded in a territory (municipality, country, region, planet) aimed to generate material satisfaction of human needs. Development is the qualitative unfolding of the potentials and attributes that tend to generate increasing levels of mental, psychic and spiritual satisfaction, and good living and happiness.

The "market system" can only function according to the logic of unlimited economic growth.

In the recent decades, the Colombian national government strengthened its commitment to focus its economic development strategy on the growth of the extractive mining industry. It defines, in its National Development Plan, that the mining sector is one of the five locomotives of the country's development. This sector is now responsible for 7% of the GDP and more than 50% of Colombian exports. As a consequence, the environment has been gravely affected, the quality of life of human communities has deteriorated, in particular that of the women.

The three products on which mining-energy development relies are gold, oil and coal; it also exploits emeralds, silver, platinum, nickel and copper.

1. COAL: CERREJÓN MINE.

Carrejon Coal Ltd (Carbones del Cerrejon in Spanish), owned by three enormous London-listed mining companies - **Anglo American, BHP Billiton and Glencore Xstrata** - owns and operates the mine. This hides the choice of the Colombian governments to forsake the nation's sovereignty over this energetic natural resource. The mine's construction and expansion have

forced numerous small farming communities, many of indigenous Wayu people and Afro-descendants' communities, to move.

It is considered one the largest opencast mines in the world, with a productive capacity of 30 a 32 million tons of coal per year, almost totally for export. The productivity of this mine led to a total export of 500 million tons of coal in its 26 years of operation, which means 40.5% of Colombian exports (El Cerrejón, 2011). This company is the target of the highest number of union actions in the country. The communities affected by the mine are struck by high incidence of poverty, health problems, land expropriation, violence, and insecurity. The most affected are Indigenous and Black communities.

This is a case that leads to the upsetting question: For whose benefit? For whose development? The ecological impacts include erosion, drought, destruction of water sources and water tables, contamination of water with toxic wastes, affecting persons, animals and the quality of food and agriculture, and growing desertification. In 2014 drought struck the zone very badly, causing the death of many children of the Wayu ethnic group, and of a catastrophic number of animals. Colombia is now the main coal producer in the Continent ...

No Sovereign Livelihood

Solly (2014) reports "the company's lack of respect for people's views is a constant complaint. One of the residents of the community of Las Casitas, ⁶which is in the process of relocation, told us:

"The company makes proposals, we reject them and they ignore us. They are determined to get what they want."

At a community meeting there, people spoke with great anxiety about the future:
"What will I do in another location? I am a farmer, I make my living through agriculture. They say they'll give us houses and it'll make our lives better, but for me it'll make it worse: it will take away my livelihood."
"I live by raising cattle, pigs and chickens. In the new place I won't be able to have my animals."
"What's the point of having a nice house if your wallet is empty and you haven't any food?"
"Cerrejon owners are trying to threaten and destroy our community. They are offering misery in exchange for our property."

⁶ The Solly article focus on the Las Casitas eviction:
http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/2655307/stop_forced_displacements_by_cerrejon_coal_in_colombia.html

This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015



On the 9 October, 2015, as part of global #ReclaimPower mobilisations, London Mining Network and other groups in London held an action tour in Central London, stopping at various companies and government agencies that are enabling and financing dirty energy projects around the world, and delaying the swift and just energy transformation we so desperately need. The list of stops included **Vedanta, Glencore, BP, Anglo American, Rio Tinto, the UK Export Credit Agency, and the offices of the World Bank.**

The mine has been the object of international criticism over the forcible displacement of communities when mining began, and decades of air and water pollution, which have had disastrous impacts on the health and traditional ways of life of neighboring communities. In 2013 the company came under fire for a plan, now on hold, to divert the only major river in the semi-desert province. Yasmin Romero Epiayu, an Indigenous Wayuu woman from the Epiayu clan, has travelled from the blockade in Colombia to London to take part in the **BHP Billiton AGM**, to tell shareholders why the Wayuu people have been driven to take such drastic measures against the Cerrejón mine. This struggle is part of the Global South movements against opencast coal mining, as reported by Richard Solly.⁷

⁷ <http://londonminingnetwork.org/2015/09/voices-from-the-global-south-stand-in-solidarity-with-uk-groups-to-oppose-english-opencast-mines/>

This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015



Yasmin Epiayu, 2013

Solly concludes that “BHP Billiton is one of many mining companies listed on the London Stock Exchange, which violate the rights of communities around the world. BHP Billiton is among the better London-listed mining companies. The fact that at Cerrejon it has trampled over the rights of local people and caused massive environmental damage shows that UK regulation is completely inadequate.”



Local communities struggle against the Cerrejón complex to defend their water, health and environment.

2. GOLD – GRAN COLOMBIA GOLD, CANADA

The free trade agreements have opened the gate for gold mining by transnationals, especially Canadian, in officially protected ecological zones such as mountains with water sources, contaminating waterways and poisoning animals and people.

Currently in the Marmato zone, Caldas Department, villagers are leading a struggle against a concession given Canadian company.

Mining in the zone comes from centuries ago as part of the socioeconomic tradition of the region. In 2006, the Colombian government granted a concession to **Gran Colombia Gold, a Canadian-based mining company**, for a massive mining project. The company's ridiculous claim that it is "environmentally and socially sustainable" is a cover-up for its open-pit mining practices – one of the most destructive extractive processes nowadays. If the proposed project were implemented, it would reduce Marmato's gold-bearing mountain to a deep scar in the earth and force the relocation of the entire town.

Gran Colombia bought the local mine owners' holdings without revealing its intentions to make a giant operation that would have a brutal impact on the livelihood of the local villagers and of mine workers. Ever since, violation of the rights of villagers and the natural milieu is a permanent feature of the presence

This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015

of this transnational mining company.⁸ This contrasts with the company's verbal commitment to sustainability:

"The Company is committed to being a responsible steward of the environment, to respecting communities within which it works and to maintaining industry best practice health and safety standards. Our social and community programs are designed as catalysts to make positive, lasting contributions in the communities where we do business, while working in partnership with host governments, local community groups... with a focus on human rights and maintaining a principled, conscientious approach to corporate citizenship."

With the government on the company's side, reducing local miners' activity by cutting off dynamite sales, protests have systematically erupted in Marmato, and confrontation between villagers and the company has been ongoing.

3. OIL – CANADIAN PACIFIC EXPLORER & PRODUCER CORPORATION AND SINOCEM, CHINA

Nowadays, oil is the main Colombian export product. It is extracted mainly in the zone of Orinoquia, one of the areas of the Colombian Amazon by the Canadian Pacific Explorer & Producer Corp. Pacific, a State-owned corporation. It has great impact on the livelihood of indigenous communities of the zone, contaminating the waterways and water table with oil. The outcome in 2014 was intense drought and lack of drinking water. Many people were forced to abandon their land, and thousands of animals died, their remnants lying on the ground.

Puerto Gaitán is a small village of Orinoquia that has been deeply affected by big oil and agribusiness activities. Since their presence polarized a mass of migrant workers looking for a job, child prostitution has become a serious social illness. As if the occurrence of mineral riches was to be a curse for local people, instead of a source of improvement and a support to true development. A local indigenous leader Sikuni, whose settlement with about 300 families is located in the area of Puerto Gaitán, lives in one of the poor huts with walls made of black canvas. He reports:

"We need the basics. There is no water, the streets are not paved, most families need a house to live in. Today they treat us as displaced, but we are not, we live in this territory since much before they came to exploit oil..."⁹

In July 2015, CIDSE (International Alliance of Catholic Development Agencies) issued an urgent action to draw attention to the violent repression suffered by

⁸ On Marmato mining: <https://vimeo.com/101333564?from=outrio-embed>

⁹ <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/orinoquia-entre-suenos-y-pesadillas-articulo-430951>

the villagers from El Nogal, a village in the Valparaíso municipality of Caquetá, southern Colombia. The villagers were standing in peaceful resistance against the entrance of Emerald Energy plc, a China/UK subsidiary of the Chinese conglomerate Sinochem, into their territory, and were met with a highly violent repression from the special police forces.

“Named by its villagers as ‘the doors to the Amazon forest’, this region is known for its rich underground resources in oil and minerals, and therefore falls under the radar of one of Colombia’s five main growth and economic development strategies, as stated by the National Government in its National Development Plan – the ‘mining and energy locomotive’ of development. While reaping high profits for national and transnational mining and fossil fuel corporations, these activities have put fragile ecosystems, as well as indigenous, afro-Colombian and peasant farmer communities at risk. Strong social resistance from most affected communities is therefore a natural response to the exploration and exploitation activities of transnational corporations in potential mining and fossil fuel rich territories.”

The government in recent years has allowed a highly damaging technique for extracting gas - fracking¹⁰ - to be practiced in Colombian territory. Fracking is destructive of landscapes, highly expensive, abuses water sources and pollutes underground water.

“The affected communities seek to defend and protect their rights to land, water and a healthy environment, while also advocating for the rights of nature. They know too well that, contrary to the mainstream discourse that justifies the presence of transnational corporations on the basis that these are potential motors of development and employment, their lives, the environment and their well-being will be endangered by forced displacement, highly polluted air and water resources, as well as soil erosion – all consequences of extractive activities.”

Having in mind the experiences of nearby villages and municipalities, in particular within the Putumayo state – that has experienced 50 years of oil extraction – peasant farmers from El Nogal, decided to unite against the pressures of the Chinese subsidiary. However, their peaceful resistance was met with violent repression, the criminalization of its leaders.”¹¹

This particular case is not unique to Colombia; it is a reality for many communities across Latin America, Africa and Asia. This is an important reason why CIDSE and its member organizations are working together towards an

¹⁰ <http://www.eltiempo.com/economia/sectores/entrevista-con-el-presidente-de-la-anh-mauricio-de-la-mora-rodriguez/15674899>

<http://outraspalavras.net/outrasmidias/destaque-outras-midias/fracking-ja-ameaca-tambem-o-brasil/>

¹¹ <http://www.cidse.org/publications/business-and-human-rights/colombia-the-mining-and-energy-locomotive-against-the-people.html>

international legally binding instrument to ensure that corporations exercise the full respect of human rights especially within transnational business activities. We believe that such an instrument would be an important additional tool to support the struggles of these communities.

4. HIGHWAYS AND AGRIBUSINESS

Public money has financed the construction of costly, technically advanced highways and tunnels connecting the Eastern plains that are entries to Orinoquia, in the Amazon Forest, the West of the country, breaking through the mountains and allowing for tractors, trucks and other equipment to transfer oil, wood and mineral wealth from the Forest to the capital, Bogotá. Industrial, monoculture crops, genetically modified palm oil, soy, maize, sorghum are replacing the native wealth of the Forest region, eliminating biodiversity, traditional modes of land and forest management free from chemical products and from dangerous biotechnological methods. Large companies dislodge local peasants and indigenous villages in order to control huge plots of land and there to establish monocultural, highly capital-intensive agriculture. Those who lose their roots are forced to migrate to already overcrowded cities in search for survival. Poverty increases, wealth and income are concentrated in always fewer hands, at the expense of values, identity, biodiversity, culture, etc.

In Puerto Gaitán, Orinoquia, agribusiness has also been a factor of change of the landscape.

“Formerly rich in palm trees and estuaries that could be seen on both sides of the road since Villavicencio. Now, national and foreign powerful conglomerates bought the land, like La Fazenda, a consortium of entrepreneurs from Antioquia and Santander have invested more than US\$ 100 million in 13 thousand hectares, to raise pigs that are fed from local plantations and then killed, cut and packed for human consumption.”

What part of this wealth remains in the area? This cannot be called *development*, except for the individual enterprise that uses the farm. Its means of evaluation of the economic viability of the investment do not include the social and environmental impacts, which market-centered economic theory considers *externalities*. Externalities are costs that remain exterior to the account of the firm. Who pays for them? The local communities (with lower quality of life, less food available for basic human consumption, loss of control over their plots of land); the ecosystem (pollution of soil, water and air, higher greenhouse gas emissions), perhaps also the local and even the national governments (fiscal benefits for private business, social control using police and equipment, compensatory expenses not covered by the private firm) pay for them.

5. LUMBER EXTRACTION AND OTHERS

This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015

The Amazonian and the high mountains of the Colombian Andes are wealthy with ancient trees that took centuries to grow and are being quickly cut for the lumber and wood industries. The rivers are the liquid roads for their removal from the region to the richer parts of the country and the world. Lumbers and Indigenous Lands invaders refuse to answer the disquieting question “what benefits remain in the region and are shared with the local population?” Each year there is less forest due to logging, burning, and the expansion of the ‘agro industrial border’.

6. ANOTHER FREE TRADE AGREEMENT THAT DAMAGES INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

In 2015 the Colombian government is negotiating a free trade agreement with China. In exchange for financial loans, the government intends to grant China the dredging of the Magdalena River, the largest in the country. This will have serious implications since China intends to use the river as a conduit to withdraw and export Colombian natural goods, thus impoverishing the country and impacting the livelihood and identity of the native communities along the river basin.

7. THE PEACE PROCESS, ONGOING OPPRESSION AND THE HOPE FOR FREEDOM

Colombia has been a process market by war since its foundation as a nation. But the longest conflict is the present civil war that lasts now 60 years.

The guerrilla, the paramilitary, drug trafficking, the presence of illegal groups, the mafias and widespread corruption within the State are characteristic of contemporary Colombia. This adds to free trade agreements, which have negatively affected agricultural production and other key productive activities.

In the past, Colombia was a wheat producer, and now the country imports from the USA and Canada most of the wheat she consumes. Corn, a native, traditional food, now is also imported. Colombia has more than 600 varieties of potatoes and the peasant population largely depends on potatoes to live. Now Colombia imports potatoes from Canada and the USA.

Ironically, Colombia is one of the main producers of the most tasteful coffee in the world. Yet, now it imports coffee for domestic consumption.

The conclusion is that colonialism, in the past, and modern free trade agreements under the banner of the free market system, (de-)regulated by the WTO (World Trade Organization), have historically promoted impoverishment, de-development and dependence, rather than true progress and development of a wealthy country like Colombia! In particular, indigenous and peasant communities, who lived for centuries in balance with the natural milieu are now being seriously affected, and the bio and cultural diversity is being weakened.

This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015

People today say that they lived quite happily in the past, and now they merely survive. They want back their “*Vivir Bien*”.

CHAPTER 3

THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON: PAST AND FUTURE ARE NOW!

The current area of the Brazilian Legal Amazon is about 5.020.000 sq km, or nearly 60% of the country's territory. It encompasses nine states and its population nears 13% of that of Brazil, about 24 million people, according to the 2010 Census distributed in 775 municipalities. The area includes 20% of the savannah biome; the tropical rain forest is the largest biome in the continent, 1/3 of the total area of tropical rain forests in the planet. 60% of the country's total indigenous population lives in the region.

1. THE AMAZON BASIN: PARADISE BEING LOST?

Since the years of the enterprise-military dictatorship (1964-1985) the Amazon has been subject to a process of 'colonization', based on the premise that 'development' can be transplanted or exported, that it consists of introducing new techniques and submitting nature and local populations to the designs of private enterprises and government-related projects. 'Progress' began with increasing economic activities on other peoples' land, which the dictators called "no man's land", because they would not consider the Indigenous Peoples and the extractive communities 'human'. "Whoever stands against progress must be removed" ... said a political authority of those times. They knew what and whose 'progress' they meant, when they steamrolled devastating the forest and the life it bred. The technocratic mythology is not over. Modern governments and entrepreneurs seem unable to understand how folly it is to destroy our sources of life, beauty and well being – the forest, the climate, the water, the soil, the wood, the sustainable communities and teach us the way to live simply in harmony with mother-Earth!



This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015

Deforestation of the Amazon Forest with chainsaw and fire. Visible are also already deforested areas in the upper left and top of the photo; a watercourse on top, victim of deforestation, and the ranch of those who perpetrated the destruction.

Vast areas of the Amazon rainforest are still untouched. In the 2,000s, 7,595 companies were registered in the Brazilian Amazon and deforestation rates are growing at an alarming rate, even if there are eventual decreases. The region supplied 12 percent of the Brazilian log production in 1970, now produces some 30 million cubic meters of logs a year, or 90 percent of Brazil's total tropical timber production.¹²

Amazon deforestation grew from one to 15 percent between 1970 and 2005 and these trends have not been inverted as promised by the Lula and Dilma administrations. Predatory 'selective' logging affects areas almost the same size as those clear cut annually. This practice, however, is not part of the official deforestation figures.



Group of Kuntanawa, state of Acre, struggles to keep control over their territory

According to Greenpeace, in 2005 between 60 and 80% of the timber extracted from the Brazilian Amazon were estimated to come from illegal logging. "Selective extraction of valuable trees can directly change the forest structure and its species composition, as in most cases other trees are destroyed in the process. Amazon logging companies extract or damage 10 to 40 percent of the live biomass of a forest area, and open up the canopy by 14 to 50 percent." The reduced green cover makes the forest more vulnerable to forest fires. Road building and forest clearance opens up the forest to further destructive activities including large-scale hunting, fuel wood gathering and clearing for agriculture.

Intensive illegal logging does not prevent important timber consumer nations (the USA, UK, Spain, France, Japan and other Asian countries from importing

¹² <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/forests/amazon/logging-in-the-amazon/>
Article published in 2005.

Amazon wood, taking few, if any, steps to ensure that those products come from legal, let alone ecologically well-managed sources.

Besides logging companies, the protagonists of deforestation are mining mining corporations, big oil firms, cattle raisers, agribusiness – like Continental and Monsanto -, pulp and paper companies, and their political partners in the three spheres of government. Their goal is economic growth at any cost. If you ask “whose economy?”, their answer is “my own company’s!” This is because “society” for them goes as far as their stockholders. Their practice is: remove those who pose obstacles to ‘progress’, which is the same as economic growth. And they seem convinced of a lie: that their individual, corporate interests are the same as the Nation’s interests.

I choose to detail the case of the Belo Monte Dam because it serves to illustrate the dominant ‘development’ paradigm expressed in corporate and governmental behavior regarding ‘progress’ and the Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin.

2. THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE BELO MONTE DAM

During the Lula administration (2003-2010) an old project of a large dam in the Xingu River, in the middle of the Amazon forest was brought back to life. The project was conceived during the years of dictators Geisel and Figueiredo. The study presented in 1980 by a private construction company, Camargo Correa, proposed seven dams that would generated 19 thousand megawatts (MW), half of Brazil’s hydroelectric capacity at the time. These dams would flood more than 18,000 sq km and would affect seven thousand people in 12 Indigenous Lands, and a few scattered groups in the area.

In Jan. 1988, two Kaiapó leaders – Paiakan and Kube-I - and ethnobiologist Darrel Posey of the Goeldi Museum in Pará speak about the Xingu dams at the University of Florida, I a symposium about adequate management of tropical forests. They stress that the World Bank is intending to fund a project of hydroelectric dams in the Xingu basin that would flood millions of hectares of forest and would displace 13 indigenous groups, remarking that, despite being directly affected, these groups had not been consulted. By invitation, they went also to Washington DC. In March, the two Kaiapó leaders were sued and framed in the Foreigners’ Law! It took almost one year and intensive campaigning on their behalf by the Ecumenical Center of Documentation and Information (CEDI) for a Federal Court of Appeals to approve a *habeas-corpus* for their release and the closure of the penal suit. The practice of criminalizing the victims of megaprojects has continued until these days.¹³

¹³ This historic account of the struggle against the Belo Monte complex draws largely form the website of the Socio-environmental Institute, based in São Paulo.
<http://www.socioambiental.org/esp/bm/hist.asp>

This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015

In Feb. 1989 the Kaiapó nation sponsored the 1st Meeting of Indigenous Peoples of Xingu, inviting authorities, denouncing the unilateral governmental decisions without consultation with the affected people, and opposing the construction of the Xingu Hydroelectric Complex. More than 3,000 participants surprised the authorities, among them 650 Indigenous representatives, the English musician Sting, and national and foreign authorities.



1989 – Tuíra Kaiapó makes a symbolic assertion of her nation's commitment to fight for her rights, touching the face of the Federal Government representative, Muniz Lopes, with her knife.

Muniz Lopes delivered his speech ignoring the opposition of the local dweller. He said that the original name of the dam, Kararaô, which meant in Kaiapó language “war song”, would be changed. Speakers denounced the dictatorial imposition and demanded space for dialogue. The meeting launched the National Campaign in Defense of the Amazon Peoples and the Forest, demanding the revision of the ‘development’ projects in the region, publicizing a Native Peoples’ Altamira Statement and listening to a message from renown singer Milton Nascimento. The meeting was a landmark of Brazil’s socio-environmentalist movement.

The federal government ignored the opposition of the dwellers of the area, and went head on with deforestation and excavation. During the 90s reports were presented to the government’s environmental and water management agencies for approval and license. In 1994, a new version of the project was presented with a significant reduction of the area to be flooded – from 1225 to 516 sq km – thus preserving the Indigenous area Paquiçamba.

Complementary studies related to the viability of the mammoth project were demanded. During Cardoso’s eight years as president the project was declared a strategic project not only to increase supply of electric energy, but also as a structuring project of the Development Axis Madeira/Amazon Rivers. Here again the term development is employed as a synonym of economic growth.

In 2001 a Foundation linked to the Federal University of Pará is mandated to prepare the Studies of Environmental Impact of the Hydroelectric Complex of Belo Monte. An emergency plan was adopted, at the cost of US\$ 30 billion, to increase electric energy in the country. It included the construction of 15 hydroelectric plants, among them the Belo Monte Complex. In 2001 the government issued Provisionary Measure n. 2,152-2 creating the simplified licensing system for electricity works that will have low environmental impact, which, from then on, can be approved without the legal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). That same year the Movement for the Development of Transamazônica and Xingu, that gathers 113 social organizations, issues a document entitled “SOS Xingu: a call to the common sense about dams in the Amazon Basin”. In Sep. 2001 the Federal Justice approves the suspension of the EIA of Belo Monte.

In 2002 a group of social movements, foundations and Trade Union Federations, with the Indigenous Peoples’ Missionary Council of the Catholic Bishops’ Council of Brazil send a letter to President Cardoso demanding the cancellation of all the works with great social and environmental impact in the Amazon, subject to the promotion of an exemplary debate, and the building of a consensual agreement with local society. Instead, the Commission of Mines and Energy of the Federal government calls a public hearing about the construction of Belo Monte, inviting only participants who are in favor of the project. Cardoso declares that “beyond the respect of for the environment, respect for the Brazilian people’s needs is urged, so that the ‘prejudice’ of different sectors do not damage the works, for they imply more jobs.” He adds that the Belo Monte project was reshaped many times and has a satisfactory “degree of rationality”. In the wake of the Cardoso administration, Indigenous Peoples of the region, together with social organizations and pastoral commissions took a number of initiatives to continue the struggle against the project and for a true dialogue between the Government and those affected by the project.

Before the 2002 presidential elections, Luiz Inácio LULA da Silva issued a paper, “The Place of the Amazon in Brazil’s Development”, saying that “the blind reproduction of the recipe of hydroelectric dams being conducted by Eletronorte [in the Amazon Basin] is not commendable”. One month later, Supreme Federal Court president Marco Aurélio Mello rejects a demand from the Executive and maintains the suspension of the EIAs for Belo Monte, arguing that Art. 231 of the Federal Constitution declared null and extinct “every and any act” that has the purpose of occupying, submitting and the appropriation of Indigenous lands, or the exploration of natural resources in the ground, rivers and lakes existing therein.

In 2003 Lula’s administration reinitiates the EIAs for Belo Monte in accordance with the recommendations of IBAMA and the Ministry of the Environment. In 2004 the project is declared “of national interest” and will be conducted through consultations and negotiations among those interested and those affected by the project. In mid-2005 the Chamber of Deputies authorizing the construction of Belo Monte approves Legislative Decree n. 1,785/05. Local communities were not heard or consulted. The Federal Constitution determines that others can only

use water in Indigenous Lands with “the authorization of National Congress, in consultation with affected communities”. One week later the Senate also approved the project, without any consultation with the nine indigenous nations who would be seriously affected by the enterprise. In July 2005 the book “Tenotã-Mõ - Alertas sobre as Consequências dos Projetos Hidrelétricos no Rio Xingu” was launched. Prof. Oswaldo Sevá, of the Federal University of Campinas, points out that the plant could only generate 1.356 MW, with 5,000 MW peaks, during three months each year.

The lack of a truthful and open dialogue with the affected populations creates, then, an open confrontation between the Lula administration and all those involved in the struggle against the Belo Monte project. The latter resort to the Attorney General’s Office, who then starts a Direct Unconstitutionality Action in the Federal Supreme Court against the Congressional decree that authorizes the construction of the Belo Monte Plant and the environmental impact assessments on the works. In December the Federal Supreme Court decides to refuse as inappropriate the Direct Unconstitutionality Action, against the opinion of the rapporteur of the process, Minister Carlos Britto, who argued on behalf of the Action.

In March 2006 an injunction suspends the process of environmental licensing of the Belo Monte plant; the Indigenous Peoples affected should first be listened to by the Federal Congress. One year later, the Federal Justice of Altamira changes its opinion and allows the environmental licensing of Belo Monte to proceed, thus demoralizing the Federal Prosecutor Ministry. The decision implied that the Federal Congress could authorize the construction of the dams in Indigenous Territories with no obligation to consult with the affected peoples, and with no need of a specific law as ruled by the Federal Constitution.

In October a representative of the International Rivers Network, Glenn Switkes, in a meeting promoted by the Federal Prosecutor Ministry in Pará, reveals the plans of the Brazilian State company Eletrobrás for the Xingu River dams. The information presented in the revision of the energetic inventory of the river is that at least five dams were considered possible and important. If all were built, the total flooded area would reach 12,000 sq km. This information had been hidden from the affected populations and the general public until that moment.



Above, some of the natives Lula's Minister of Mines and Energy, Edson Lobão called "demonic forces".

Lobão attacked those who resisted Belo Monte: "demonic forces are trying to hinder the construction of the Belo Monte Plant, in the Xingu River... and they try to hinder the construction of a plant with this magnitude and this importance for the future of Brazil". For him, "demonic forces" are the Indigenous Peoples and the social and church-related organizations opposing the massive destruction of the dwelling and the means of livelihood of thousands of humans, of the Xingu River ecosystem, and of thousands of square kilometers of the Amazon forest. These social forces met in May 2008 in the Meeting Xingu Alive Forever, including researchers and specialists to discuss the probable impacts of the hydroelectric project. They held this meeting 19 years after the First Meeting of Indigenous Peoples, in Altamira, PA. In the 2008 Meeting the Indigenous representatives confronted once more the engineer who was representing the State Company, Eletrobrás, responsible for the environmental survey of the Belo Monte Complex. In the turmoil an Indian's long knife wounded the man's arm. The Letter Xingu Alive Forever, assesses the threats of the project to the Xingu River, proposes an alternative path of development for the region and demands its implementation by the Government. Soon later, the Regional Federal Court in Brasília authorizes the participation of three large construction companies in the Environmental Impact Assessments of the Belo Monte Complex. The Federal

Prosecutor Office of the state of Pará appeals against the privileges on behalf of the construction firms and argues for the bidding as the only legal form of choosing those to be responsible for the EIAs.

In mid-2009 Xingu Alive Forever issues a letter in response to a new statement by Minister Lobão that “environmentalists and NGOs are disturbing the construction of the hydroelectric plants, penalizing society with more expensive energy”. The movement asks whether the costs justify this enterprise. The economic viability studies had not yet been made publicly available; there was no indication of whether the energy from Belo Monte would be the cheapest or the most expensive. President Lula meets with representatives of the Xingu social movements, Federal Prosecutors, the Xingu Bishop Erwin Kraütler, and scientists. He guarantees that Belo Monte will only be built after broad discussion with those affected, and if it is proved viable. Ignoring Lula’s own promise, his government launched the auction for the concession of the Complex for 2009. The Indigenous Peoples hand Lula a document requesting the promotion of a free consultation previous to the auction, and based on full transparency regarding the information about the economic, social and environmental impacts of the construction of the Complex.

In September 2009 the government promoted four public hearings about Belo Monte, in a period of six days, in four different cities, revealing the weakness of the studies and the gaps in the licensing process. The government only publishes the complete EIA two days before the first hearing, with not enough time for a qualified analysis by the affected communities and their technical consultants. The Federal Prosecutors Ministry recommends that IBAMA hold at least another 13 hearings, in order to reach other regions that would be affected. According to the initial studies, the Complex would affect, directly and indirectly, 66 municipalities and 11 Indigenous Lands. In October civil society organizations and networks launched a motion against Belo Monte during the seminar “Climate and Forest in debate: REDD and Market Mechanisms to Save the Amazon?” The motion states that the alliance of the Forest Peoples can bar the construction of the plant. A panel formed by 40 specialists launched an analysis of the impacts of Belo Monte and handed it to IBAMA to serve as input for the environmental viability analysis, and to the Federal Prosecutors Office, to verify the potential violations of the Law, considering the serious consequences of the construction. Kaiapó leaders sent a letter to Lula asking to be heard in a public hearing about Belo Monte. Chief Raoni is among the signers of the letter. The government’s National Indigenous Foundation recognizes its ignorance regarding the plant’s impacts on the Indigenous Peoples. Despite acknowledging the inadequacy of the EIA, and the lack of concrete alternatives to stave off or reduce the expected impacts, the Foundation approves the Belo Monte project.

In November 2009 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, held in Washington DC, received in a public hearing the case of Belo Monte. The meeting focused the human rights and environmental impacts of large dams in Latin

America, based on the conclusions of the AIDA report “Large Dams in the Americas. Is the cure worse than the disease?”¹⁴

A meeting of 284 Indigenous leaders of 15 different ethnic groups met to express their opposition to Belo Monte and to threaten to go to war in case the works start. Representatives of affected peoples, including forest peoples, small landowners and social movements met to issue their joint evaluation of the project. They expressed in a public letter their indignation for being excluded from the licensing process and from recent hearings, and denounced the lack of clarification of the questions presented to the companies who issued the EIA.

On Nov. 10, 2009, a Federal Judge in Belém, having studied more than one thousand pages of documents related to the case, issued a preliminary injunction suspending the licensing process and called for new hearings for Belo Monte, in response to the Federal Prosecution, with the purpose of hearing all the affected communities. The following day a judge of the Court of Appeals granted the government the suspension of the injunction and IBAMA started analyzing the project once more. The auction, set for Dec. 21, was postponed. The British singer Sting met again with Kaiapó Chief Raoni after 20 years, to talk about Belo Monte.

The Federal Prosecution promoted a public hearing on Dec. 1, in Brasília, with the purpose of having final explanations from the Federal Government, and the enterprises involved in the project, about why it insisted in building the dam and what would be its real impacts and consequences. The main governmental agencies involved with the project – Funai, IBAMA, the Ministry of Mines and Energy, Eletrobrás and Eletronorte - did not attend the hearing. Representative of at least eight Indigenous Peoples (Arara, Guarani, Juruna, Kaiapó, Xavante, Xipaia, Xicrin and Yanomami) present in the hearing launched a manifesto denouncing the Government’s neglect, recalling the 20 years of struggle against the Belo Monte project and calling the government’s attention to the risk of the Xingu River becoming a “river of blood”.

The Indigenous participants also demonstrate in front of the Senate, after another public hearing of the Senate Commission on Human Rights, noting the shocking absence of representatives of the government agencies and the enterprises involved in the project. In the same week, the COIAB (Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon) sends a letter to the United Nations rapporteur denouncing the violation of free, previous and informed consultation, foreseen in Convention 169 of the ILO and the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The document describes the unilateral, exclusive licensing process and the violation of the right to previous consultation, denouncing the government’s neglect and the lack of dialogue on Belo Monte with the populations affected by the project.

¹⁴ Inter-American Association for the Defense of the Environment, <http://www.aida-americas.org/project/largedams>

In February 2010 the Ministry of the Environment gave free rein Belo Monte while ignoring the impacts of the works. The environmental license shows that key questions related to the impacts of the dam and plant were not clarified. A IBAMA technical paper not made public in the internet denounced political pressure from the Presidency of Brazil to liberate the plant and indicates that the studies were superficial and were insufficient to foresee what will happen to aquatic life in the stretch of more than 100km of the river, thus risking the survival of those whose nourishment comes from the river, in particular Indigenous communities. The auction was accomplished 'by forceps' in April that year.

The chief Megaron Txukarramãe, Kayapó, made a shocking statement: "Lula has demonstrated to be the enemy number one of the Indians". President Lula, in turn, reaffirmed that he would make the dam anyway. "When Lula says that", said the public letter signed by 62 Indigenous leaders in Altamira, "he show that he does not care about what the Indigenous Peoples say". Another leader, Sheyla Juruna, said during the Amazon Free Earth Camp, "the government only tells lies. There is no dialogue, now we are forced to move to physical fight".

Eletróbrás became an associate of the new enterprise created by those who won the auction for the concession of the Belo Monte Hydroelectric Plant. Other companies that participated in the bidding included Andrade Gutierrez, Votorantim Energia and later Vale, Neoenergia. On Feb. 24 the National Bishops' Conference insisted on the suspension of the process that allows the construction of the plant and the dam. In March the government announced that the anticipated cost of the works, R\$ 16 billion, were not realistic. And the new value should not exceed R\$ 20 billion.

By October 2015 Eletronorte, and the consortium that is completing the construction of the dam and the plant, is only waiting for the license by IBAMA (Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources) to open the dam floodgates.

3. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE BELO MONTE DAM

After more than 40 years of opposition against the construction of dams in the Xingu River, the local populations, other social organizations and researchers have gathered strong evidence about the threats posed by the project to people and Earth.

a. Drought

The reduction of the area to be flooded, from 1225 to 516 sq km, avoids Indigenous Lands, but creates another impact – a stretch of more than 100km of a curve of the Xingu River, called Volta Grande, will have its flow rate reduced, affecting the livelihood of the peoples who depend of that ecosystem to feed themselves. According to a biologist, "the area will suffer from continuous

dryness. The project will make fishing and navigation unviable. Volta Grande will have an eternal summer”, she says. A researcher of the University of São Paulo, Francisco Hernandez, who led a group of 40 specialists making an independent assessment of the Belo Monte project, says: “Regarding hydric security, the project is wrong. Nature will be drastically altered. No compensation can resolve this.

b. Energy

The Belo Monte project was announced as “the salvation of the country”. It would be the third largest in the world, producing more than 11,000 MW per year. In fact, most of the months will have much less energy than the peak production of the rainy season; estimates indicate about 4,500 MW. To circumvent this shortage, the solution would be to build other dams – returning to the Kararaô project, which proposed six dams in the Xingu River. As President of the Republic, Lula swore he would not build any other dam in the river, saying “Belo Monte would be the only hydroelectric potential explored in the Xingu River”. The Indigenous groups and the social movements, however, fear that future governments may reason that the optimization of Belo Monte demands more dams.

c. Costs

The works were estimated at R\$ 19 billion, up to 80% of which could be funded by the National Bank of Economic and Social Development (BNDES). The consortium that won the auction – made up of the large construction firm Queiroz Galvão, CHESF (Hydroelectric Plants of the São Francisco River) and seven other companies – will have a discount of 75% in their income tax during 10 years. Investors will have a 30 year-period to pay the loan, at decreasing interests. Professor Osvaldo Sevá, of the Federal University of Campinas warns, “no one can be sure of the viability of a project that, so far, has no clarity about the total cost of the investment”. Eletrobrás, Chesf and Eletronorte are State companies, and later, public pension funds were brought. They may have to provide more capital if the estimated amount proves short. Note that the total estimates does not account for tax exemptions and other benefits the government granted by the public sector on behalf of the private companies, and excludes *externalities*, i.e., the social and environmental costs of the project, which will become burdens to the local populations, the Xingu ecosystem and the public budgets.

d. Jobs

This is another questionable aspect of the project. According to the government the project will generate 18,000 direct and another 23,000 indirect jobs. What it does not say is that these are temporary jobs; after ten years only about 4% of those will have a job. Renata Pinheiro, biologist, comments: “What will this create? Violence. This jobless crowd will increase deforestation, illegal wood cutting, invasion of protected areas”.

e. Neglect regarding the rights of traditional populations

FUNAI – the National Foundation on Indigenous Peoples – has generally worked on behalf of the project, ignoring the critical postures of the Indigenous Peoples’ organizations and networks. It said that the impacts of the project could be overcome by means of mitigation and compensation programs. “Our butchery is the forest, our supermarket is the river. We cannot accept Belo Monte, for it will only bring more destruction”, says the letter signed by 62 Indigenous leaders. The lack of true consultation and dialogue with the populations to be affected by the project, and the systematic breach of promise with respect to agreements, on the part of the governments since the dictatorship are disheartening, especially for the Indigenous Peoples.

4. ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

Energy expert Eng. Ildo Sauer, ex-director of Petrobrás, says that the governments have not fulfilled their commitment to make an innovative review of the country’s energetic model. “Many other projects could be made viable and were not. Investment could have gone to better use of biomass, of wind energy, of programs rationalizing energy production that would lead to cost reduction. It was all in the list of how to reform the energetic model... It was all shoved under the carpet on behalf of the interests of the large contractors and private investors, all funded with public money and the BNDES”. Meanwhile, domestic consumers are paying one of the world’s highest tariffs for electricity.

CHAPTER 4

CRIMINALIZATION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND KILLING OF LEADERS

In this brief chapter I present cases of Indigenous and other social leaders harassed and killed by the powerful economic interests present in the Amazon. They are only samples of an ongoing tragedy that involves Indigenous Peoples and local social movement leaders. The governments, at local, state and national levels seem to contemplate the tragedy as a play on a stage, being accomplices with the aggressors mostly by omission.

In 2014, the report on Violence Against the Indigenous Peoples, CIMI (Missionary Indigenous Council) registered 138 assassinations and 135 cases of suicide. Once more, Mato Grosso do Sul, a state ruled by large agribusiness landholders converted into politicians, was outstanding: 41 assassinations and 48 suicide cases. The high rate of infant mortality is also a concern. SESAI (Special Secretariat for Indigenous Health) registers the death of 785 children between 0 and 5 years. In Altamira, municipality affected by the Belo Monte works, infant mortality reached 141.84 per thousand. CIMI also registered 118 cases of omission and slowness in the regulation of Indigenous Lands. In Pará, the state that concentrates most cases, this slowness is directly linked to the Federal government's intention to continue building megadams in the Amazon, as is the case of Belo Monte, and São Luiz do Tapajós. The Bill n. 1610/96, that intends to allow mining in Indigenous Lands, is another example of a proposal that hurts the constitutional rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Cases of Aggressions against Indigenous Peoples presented in OAS Hearing

On Oct. 19, 2015, the OAS' Inter-American Commission on Human Rights held a public hearing in Washington DC, to discuss the violence perpetrated against defenders of human rights and the environment in the whole of the American continent, and especially in the regions where mining, oil and energy corporations focus their interests. The hearing was requested by social human rights organizations who also work in the defense of the natural milieu. Constant threats and criminalization of leaders are the concern of those organizations.

Danilo Chammas, a lawyer of the Justice on Rails Network, in Maranhão, was invited to speak in the name of those institutions in the hearing. Among the cases are the assassination of Raimundo dos Santos, an environmentalist and counselor of the Gurupi Biological Reservation (REBIO), the persecution of social leaders in Buriticupu, Maranhão, and cases of espionage against the social movements by Vale, S.A., the world's second mining and steel company. In the hearing, the denunciations of aggressions against human rights defenders were made in the presence of representatives of the Brazilian government, who had to reply and propose measures to solve the problem. One of the cases presented in

the hearing focuses the recent abuses against indigenous communities in Brazil.¹⁵

On Oct. 20, Fr. Dário Bossi was interviewed about the OAS (Organization of American States) public hearing about several cases of violations of human rights against Indigenous populations in Brazil. The cases of the Guarani-Kaiowá,¹⁶ of Mato Grosso do Sul, of the Tenharim¹⁷, of the Amazon state, and the Ka'apor and Awá Guajá¹⁸, of Maranhão, were presented. The conflicts opposed the mega projects led by the Brazilian national government with big contractor conglomerates against local communities who insist in stating their right to self-determination in the territories they have occupying for centuries. In the words of Fr. Bossi:

“In Brazil, conflict are increasing regarding the right to land and to territory, due to the *developmentalist and extractivist model* that takes the land as the main source of economic exploitation. The populations who use the territory to guarantee they non-mercantile mode of livelihood, in rural and urban contexts, are the part in disadvantage in these conflicts: Indigenous Peoples, afro-descendants (*quilombolas*), dwellers in urban outskirts, artisan fishermen, Blacks and women. There is no way to solve these conflicts by only negotiating a social cost with the part in disadvantage. Individual and collective rights exist that are inalienable and nonnegotiable. In these conflicts, frequently the State and the enterprises act in an articulate manner: the first mainly by omission, the second perpetrating grave violations and escaping their own responsibility of mitigation and reparation for the damages.”¹⁹

AWÁ Resist Logging Companies who Violate their Indigenous Land

Survival International (SI) denounced that several logging firms have occupied the region of the Amazon in the state of Maranhão, in which the Awá nation lives. Until recently, this group lived in the forest and had no contact with the White civilization. SI reports that the remnants of a person burned to death were found after the Awá confronted the workers of a logging company. According to CIMI, Guajajara Indians who live in the zone reported that the body may have belonged to a girl, “burned alive”.²⁰

¹⁵ <http://global.org.br/programas/estado-brasileiro-respondera-publicamente-sobre-massacre-de-indigenas-em-seus-territorios/>

¹⁶ <http://www.ihu.unisinos.br/noticias/546456-mais-um-capitulo-sangrento-da-saga-guarani-kaiowa>

¹⁷ <http://www.ihu.unisinos.br/noticias/527166-sitiados-os-tenharim-querem-viver-em-paz>

¹⁸ <http://www.cimi.org.br/site/pt-br/?system=news&action=read&id=7354;>

<http://www.abc.es/20120110/internacional/abci-brasil-indigenas-awas-201201101802.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.ihu.unisinos.br/entrevistas/548294-comunidade-de-piquia-de-baixo-deslocamentos-forcados-e-a-ausencia-do-estado-brasileiro-entrevista-especial-com-dario-bossi>

²⁰ <http://www.survivalinternational.org/ultimas-noticias/10030>



Ka'apor Indigenous Rights Violated

In the Indigenous Land of Alto Turiaçu, in the Amazon part of Maranhão, Eusébio Ka'apor, 42 years old, was assassinated on April 26, 2015. He was one of the leaders who promoted actions to protect and inspect the Territory, which led to the closing of all branches that illegally exploited wood in their Indigenous Land. Eusébio was one of the names in the loggers' "execution list". These men serve logging companies that export the smuggled wood to the Southeast of Brazil and abroad. They are thieves. The wealth of the Indigenous Lands belongs to the Indigenous communities, and they are forcibly being deprived of it. The logging companies, the mining companies, agribusiness and cattle raisers are strongly represented in the Federal Congress. They have the power to make racist speeches attacking the Indians, the afro-descendants, gays and lesbians... "This whole bunch is good for nothing", said Congressmen Luiz Carlos Heize and Alceu Moreira, in public speeches, as they incited the population of Vicente Dutra (Rio Grande do Sul) to hire private thugs and expel the Indigenous Peoples from their territories.²¹

Maró Indigenous Rights Violated

"It hurts as if we had a knife piercing our belly", says Apolonildo de Souza Costa – nicknamed Rosi – when he speaks about the sight of timber boats transporting piles of trunks down the rivers that cross the Maró Indigenous Land, in northwest Pará. Another 239 Borari and Arapium Indians also feel the pains of deforestation in their bellies: hunger is the first consequence of environmental degradation, an outcome of hunt runaway and growing difficulty to collect fruit.

²¹ Weekly Brasil de Fato, May 14-20, 2015: 8.

The Borari are struggling against deforestation in their land. Once a month the “vigilant warriors” of the village stroll in the 42,000ha in search of invaders of the Maró Land. When they find them, they call FUNAI and stay on the ground until the inspection team arrives. The employees of the logging companies usually react with violence against the legal possessors of the land. The associate chief Dadá Borari has been offered bribes, threats, and persecutions, and suffered a violent attack. “First they offered me R\$ 30,000”. Then they began threatening me.” In 2007 “they tied my arms and legs on two trees and hit me to the ground”. Eight years later, the enquiry was never able to find the guilty ones. But Dadá continued to be threatened, and now is included in the Program for the Protection of Defenders of Human Rights, linked to the Presidency of the Republic. In the map published by FASE and shown in the weekly *Brasil de Fato* (July 9-15, 2015) there are at least ten areas inside the Maró Land, for which the state government has authorized the CAR (Rural Environmental Registry), in violation of existing laws that protect Indigenous Lands.²²

CONCLUSION

DEVELOPMENT, GOOD LIVING AND SPIRITUALITY

The drama of the Amazon Basin can quickly become a tragedy, a Paradise Lost, if all Colombians, Brazilians and the other peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean to not become aware of the urgency of radical solutions, and do not convert awareness into intelligent, effective action for change. I conclude this essay with references to a crucial subject related to Development. It is an important dimension of the Bhutan’s GNH approach and it also should be important in rethinking development from an transdisciplinary, integral perspective.²³

Spirituality has a deep connection with the philosophical search for the meaning of life. This search is inherent in almost every human being, except for those who are too alienated from their own evolutionary nature and to their thirst of “bread and beauty”. This search has to do with the deeper dimension of the human spirit, that pulsates more or less consciously within each heart. It involves communities and also the collective conscience of humankind. In sum, it is what Teilhard de Chardin refers as one of the immaterial senses of the human species, the “spirit of the Earth”.²⁴

What is the connection between Spirituality and Development? The understanding of the human being as *a natural and social individual*, with no *fixed nature*, thus in continuous movement of change or mutation in all dimension of existence – body and its senses, ancestors and posterity in space-time, mind, psyche with its complex attributes (emotion, sentiment, intuition, reason, will, memory, diverse forms of intelligence, immaterial and

²² Weekly Brasil de Fato, July 9-15, 2015.

²³ This final chapter draws inspiration from Arruda, Marcos, 2015.

²⁴ Ver Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre, 1931, “L’Esprit de la Terre”, em *L’Energie Humaine*, Seuil, Paris.

relational senses, etc.) This complex human being must engage in education in order to develop her/his ability to manage this complexity and to become the subject of her/his own development as a person, community, society, daughter or son of the Earth.

The connection between Development and Education leads to a second connection, between Development and the Human Spirit. That is, the field of the diverse consciences (*soma*, mind, psyche, *noûs*²⁵) that constitutes the *uniqueness* of each person, collective, and humanity as a species. Spirituality does not necessarily imply the choice of a religion or a faith. Buddhism is a spiritual philosophy, rather than a religion. Spirituality implies the search for connection with one's upper conscience, which hosts a sort of pulsing seed that Taoism calls one's "Gateway of life" or "Temple of Mission", or "Gateway of Destiny". The work of integral development proposed by Taoism involves the person, one's potentials and relationships with the natural, the social and the cosmic dimensions, with the ancestors and with one's own complex being. Other holistic worldviews also contemplate this wholeness and complexity of the human being, referring to the inescapable fact that life is permanent change, this being the only law of nature that does not change.

Pope Francis, in his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Sí*, launched in June 2015,²⁶ calls on each person and the whole humankind to have a caring attitude towards "Our Common Home", the Earth. He presents a critique of various dimensions of the dominant paradigm: anthropocentrism, arrogance that he qualifies as collective egotism, attributing to humans the role of rulers of Earth and life, ignoring the broader context of the diversity of life forms on the planet; technocracy, illusionary presented a panacea for each and every perverse effect of overexploitation of the finite resources of the planet, and of woman and men who live from one's labor; the vulgar, utilitarian and consumerist forms of materialism that reduce humankind to the abstract individual in his material and immediate dimension, leaving aside the immaterial Stuff that animates the evolution of Matter, and emptying Nature, Life, Humankind and human work from their sacred sense and meaning. Francis remarks that for an integral development of humans "*an integral ecology*" is needed, that clearly includes the human and social dimensions"(2015: 107). He points out that all and everybody is interconnected, and that the awareness of this interconnection implies developing attitudes such as welcoming diversity among humans as a source of immaterial wealth, cooperation and solidarity among humans and with Nature and all forms of life.

He expresses concern about the consequences of environmental degradation due to the over-exploitation of natural resources, like mining and oil. He extends his empathy to the communities affected. And he goes deeper, examining the factors that are at the root of those social and ecological illnesses. He makes an urgent appeal for "a love civilization", and calls on the mining and extractive sectors decisively to "accomplish a radical paradigm shift to improve the situation in

²⁵ *Soma* is body, and *Noûs* means the intuitive conscience, or the conscience of conscience, in Greek.

²⁶ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

many countries". He calls global society to acknowledge the protagonism of local communities from the standpoint of their own cultures. "Not even the notion of quality of life should be imposed, rather it should be understood within the world of symbols and customs the belong to each human group" (2015: 113) Here the Pontiff is talking in particular about native peoples, those who have promoted the rights of Mother Earth and the holistic worldview with most vigor and eloquence, for they capture the complementarity as the way of overcoming the dichotomy between opposing aspects of the same human reality.

One of the most perceptive, holistic, evolutionary and innovative approaches, in my view, comes from geologist and mystic Teilhard de Chardin. Out of many readings of the ample bibliography I identified four processes that he suggest are simultaneous evolutionary trends and challenges for the conscious self-making of the human being as a person (*autopoiesis*), as the human family (*anthropopoiesis*) and collaborating with the broader development process of life and all beings (*ontopoiesis*). They are: the trend towards *personalization* (developing one's unique potentials and attributes), *socialization* (responding to always more limited spaces for a larger number of people with the attitude of sharing), *spiritualization* (increasing unfolding of the non-material dimensions of the human being, beyond physical labor force), and "*lovization or amorization*"²⁷

I conclude this essay with the ancestral omnidimensional worldviews of native peoples, clearly summarized by Indigenous Bolivian author Fernando Huanacuni (Huanacuni, 2015: 197ss). For them everything is alive, and Life means the totality constituted by the visible (*Pachamama*) and the invisible (*Pachakama*) worlds. The term *Pacha*, he says, encompasses and surmounts space-time, here and now. It means the ability actively to participate in the 'multiverse', submerge and be present in it. It also means the union man-woman, referring to the complementarity of the couple in a balanced relationship. Huanacuni also stresses various meanings of the expressions Live Well/Good Living. I will share two relevant ones in the limited space of this essay:

"Live Well is a vision of harmony with nature and among humans, opposed to the egotistic, individualistic vision that postulates accumulation of capital as the meaning of life. Live Well is not to aspire to live better than others. We don't believe in the linear, cumulative conception of progress and unlimited growth at the cost of others and of nature. We must complement one another and not to compete, share and not to profit from our neighbor. Live Well means to think beyond per capital income, to value cultural identity, community, harmony among us and with Mother Nature. In our Indigenous practice authorities are servants of the community, and not people who are served by the community. Community management focuses not only on the human being, but also on nature and diversity. We should not

²⁷ "Lovization" (from German) or "Amorization" (from Latin) means the process of increasingly becoming a loving being, conceived a natural potential of social beings in general, and humans in particular.

This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015

follow a sole growth model of industrization at any cost.” (Evo Morales)

“Live Well in the Quechua and Aymara traditions means also the live and live with, with a connotation of living integrally, in the fullness of our potentials, in harmony and balance.” (Quechua and Aymara concept of Live Well)

This paper was presented for the International Conference on Gross National Happiness on GNH, held in Paro, Bhutan from 4-6 November 2015

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARRUDA, MARCOS, 2015, "Integral Development: Deep meaning of the Economy and of Life"(port.), unpublished essay, PACS, Rio de Janeiro

GALEANO, Eduardo, 1973/1997, "Open Veins of Latin America: five centuries of a pillage of a continent", Monthly Review Press, New York, USA.

GEDICKS, Al, 2003, Resource Wars Against Native Peoples in Colombia.
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10455750308565525?journalCode=rcns20>

HUANACUNI, Fernando, 2015, "Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir: filosofía, políticas, estrategias y experiencias de los pueblos ancestrales", Instituto Internacional de Integración, La Paz, Bolivia.

PERES, Christiane, "Quem Paga a Conta de Belo Monte?", in the magazine *Caros Amigos*, special edition, São Paulo, Oct. 2010.

SOLLY, Richard, member of [Colombia Solidarity Campaign](#) and Co-ordinator of [London Mining Network](#): londonminingnetwork.org/2014/06/cerrejon-coal-colombia-an-abusive-marriage-full-of-machismo/