Post-Growth in the Global South: The Emergence of Alternatives to Development in Latin America

Rebecca Hollender*
Doctoral student, Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy, The New School

DRAFT: 15 March 2014

*Citation of draft article with permission from author only. Please contact hollr061@newschool.edu
Post-Growth in the Global South: The Emergence of Alternatives to Development in Latin America

Rebecca Hollender
Doctoral student, Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy, The New School
February 2014

Abstract

The gradual rejection of official development processes by Latin American civil society mirrors a wider exhaustion and abandonment of development taking place across many levels and scales across the Global South. Alternatives to Development are just one example of many post-growth frameworks that address the urgent need to limit economic activity to within the biophysical limits of the planet. The emergence of Alternatives to Development in Latin America can be seen as the reaction of civil society to four interrelated political, social, and economic processes: 1. the expansion of the extractive development model despite its detrimental impacts; 2. the disillusionment with progressive governments to bring forth alternatives; 3. the obstacles facing regional integration; and 4. regional geopolitics and the rise of Brazil as regional hegemon. Proposals including Buen Vivir, Post-extractivism, and local-level lived initiatives (solidarity economies, etc.) are gaining headway beyond the grassroots level where they first took form. As they reach academic and policy circles, proposals transform from conceptual-based values, principles, and ideologies into technical and policy recommendations. The convergence of Latin American alternatives with processes and proposals from other regions reveals that, beyond national contexts, local movements trace their problems to a global system. Despite facing serious obstacles to implementation, the resulting Alternatives to Development proposals have important potential for transforming the embedded assumptions, structures, processes, and policies of the development model and global economy.

I. Introduction

The concept of sustainable development has been weakened and even rejected after decades of failed attempts to meet environmental and social objectives. This rejection comes from diverse actors ranging from civil society movements to academic sub-disciplines including post development, political ecology, and degrowth. While the international sustainable development agenda has made progress in some areas, in most regions of the world social inequality and poverty have worsened, and a global environmental crisis is imminent. These conditions are well documented. They persist despite myriad attempts to make the development system more inclusive, representative, and sustainable. Priorities that are embedded in today’s development vocabulary, such as alternative indicators, participatory development, gender equality, and sustainability owe their existence to lengthy processes advocating

\[1 \text{ The UN defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Its sustainable development agenda aims to balance economic, social, and environmental objectives. This is the understanding of sustainable development referred to in this paper.}\]
the insertion of these once-alternative proposals into the system. Despite significant resource investment, coordination, and program implementation at multilateral levels\(^2\), increasing government discourse and legislation in favor of sustainability\(^3\), and the burgeoning of diverse sector initiatives around the world\(^4\), the root causes of social and environmental problems continue to be eschewed.

As a result, a gradual exhaustion and shifting away from official development processes is taking place among civil society groups around the world. Instead of continuing efforts to improve and change the development system from within, the alternatives addressed in this paper are being deliberately elaborated outside of the system. Alternatives to Development proposals (A2D) were born from the post-development (PD) school of thought, which sites the current development model as a major root cause of social inequality and environmental problems, evidencing the negative effects of four decades of failed prescriptions designed to promote economic growth (Gudynas 2012, Escobar 2010, Esteva 2013, Lang et al. 2012). Post-development questions much of development’s underlying logic about participation, decision-making, hierarchy, human-nature relationships, governance structures, the [economic] value of nature, etc. Post-development sees the development system as a tool employed by capitalism in order to fulfill its constant need for expansion and domination over other forms of economic and social organization and points out that the social and environmental goals of development are in direct contradiction with the inherent characteristics of capitalism, resulting in an irreconcilable clash of interests. In addition, PD questions whether the official development system, with its own embedded institutionalism, culture, and economy, is actually designed to reach its objectives, given that its continued existence depends on the very problems it purports to address.

Alternatives to Development have emerged on the basis of post-development critiques as concrete proposals for transitioning towards an environmentally sustainable, post-capitalist society. A2Ds are just one example of many that address the urgent need to limit economic activity to within the biophysical limits of the planet. Broadly labeled as “post-growth\(^5\),” they include frameworks based on the following joint tenets: (1) that current growth patterns cannot be sustained\(^6\) and (2) the primacy of economic growth in public policy must be undone. Post-growth recognizes that growth patterns will inevitably change and thus, proposes tools, policies, and transition measures that could mitigate a complete economic crisis and/or ecological collapse, as well as reduce the potential upheaval brought on by widespread transformation.

\(^2\) For example, the UN Millennium Development Goals, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD).

\(^3\) Bolivia and Ecuador have incorporated the Rights of Nature into their constitutions, among other progressive environmental measures. See Section II.2

\(^4\) Including private sector corporations and small businesses, non-profit and civil society, private-public partnerships, etc.

\(^5\) Post-growth frameworks stem from schools of thought including limits to growth, post-growth (self defined), degrowth, alternatives to globalization, political ecology, alternatives to development, post-capitalism, ecological economics, and others. See Section IV.

\(^6\) Ecological economists explain the inevitability of slowed or stagnated growth using the concept of throughput, while others focus on the trends and characteristics inherent to capitalism. See Section IV.
Alternatives to Development originate in the Global South and thus hold a unique place within post-growth thinking, because their analysis takes into account the historical and spatial complexities of poverty, inequality, and environmental problems in Southern societies, thereby involving different audiences and policy frameworks than proposals constructed in the Global North. The development lens allows for an analysis of the expansion of the growth-based economy (including current extractive models) from the standpoint of the Global South, whose encounter with modern economic globalization has been most often mediated through development policy. Among the contextual factors incorporated in A2D analysis are historical responsibility and equity, which recognize the disproportionate social, economic, and environmental burden that has fallen upon Southern countries. Addressing this context is essential if post-growth proposals are to be appropriate and feasible.

However, these shared historical factors do not overlook the diversity of experiences that Southern countries and communities have had with development, and therefore their current priorities and needs. This is best illustrated by the multiplicity of Alternatives to Development initiatives that are emerging out of dramatically different contexts across the Global South. It is striking that in their efforts to address unique, local circumstances, A2D are tracing the root of their problems to a global system. In summary, A2D converge in their recognition that the capitalist system is the root cause of ecological and social crises, and the development system is part and parcel of the problem.

This paper will examine the specific contextual factors that underpin the current burgeoning of Alternatives to Development discussions and initiatives in Latin America and reveal some of the content and processes related to the construction of A2D proposals. Section II will examine four interrelated political, social, and economic processes that are helpful in understanding the rise in popularity of A2D in the continent. These include: 1. the return to and expansion of the extractive development model in the region; 2. the disillusionment by civil society with progressive governments to bring forth alternatives; 3. the obstacles facing regional integration; and 4. regional geo-politics and the rise of Brazil as regional hegemon. Section III will outline the theoretical approaches to A2D in Latin America and summarize three prominent examples: post-extractivism, Buen Vivir, and solidarity economies. It will introduce some of the most influential actors and processes involved in the construction of A2D in the region, including some of the leading thinkers and institutions, as well as the wider civil society networks from which they draw support. Section IV will explore some of the questions about the appropriateness, contradictions, and feasibility of A2D and wider post-growth frameworks, as well as the significant challenges they face. Section V will review the experience of post-extractivism advocates in Peru in order to illustrate strategic attempts by Latin American civil society to overcome some economic and political barriers faced by A2D agendas. The conclusion will highlight the potential of A2D for transforming the embedded assumptions, structures, processes, and policies of the development model and global economy, and reveal the linkages between efforts in Latin America and global movements for change.
II. Contextualizing the Rise of Alternatives to Development in Latin America

Alternatives to Development in Latin America emerge out of multiple political and social landscapes, which are tied together by a common trend: the increasing reprimarization of the economy (and particularly South American economies), or the return to economic dependence on the export of primary natural resources and energetic commodities (Gudynas 2013, Villegas 2013, Webber 2012, Cerezal 2013, etc.). A closer examination of four regional trends will highlight their role in perpetuating the region’s subordinate economic position and its devastating social and environmental conditions. The section will introduce the reactions of Alternatives to Development to these trends and develop the argument for the urgent need for alternatives.

1. Expansion of the Extractive Development Model

Although the past seven decades of development in Latin America have been marked by different periods of thought and policy, many countries in the region never moved away from their colonial legacy of providing primary materials to fuel foreign industrialization. More recently, the region has seen a return to economic dependence on extractive activities, aided by policies that foster the expansion of this model. Called the “reprimarization of Latin America” by some (Algranati 2012, López and Vértiz 2012) and the “commodities consensus” by others (Svampa 2012), this trend restores the historical role of the region in the now globalized world (Webber 2013ii). The evidence of this expansion can be seen, in part, in the continued expansion of foreign direct investment (FDI) in natural resources, energy, and extractive projects in Latin America (CEPAL 2012). In 2012 FDI patterns in South America showed a preference for natural resource sectors, capturing 51% of total FDI and comprising the largest share of FDI income in the region (Ibid.). An example is the 250% increase of FDI in mining in Latin America from 2003 to 2011 (Algranati 2012). Of the total FDI in the region since 2000, 39% has gone to natural resources and 37% to manufacturing (Ibid.). Also significant are the growing number of mergers and acquisitions of oil, gas, and mining companies operating in Latin America (Ibid.).

The extractive model has changed from earlier decades and colonial times. Alternatives to Development authors label the current model as “predatory extractivism” for a number of reasons. For one, its reach has moved beyond hydrocarbons and minerals to agriculture, forestry, and fishing.7 Some would even include the increasing tendency for the foreign control of arable land and water resources to fall within extractivism’s scope8. Other features of the current form of extractivism involve the use of increasingly riskier technologies and practices (such as fracking and deep-sea drilling), and reduced regard for

---

7 While FDI trends in agriculture and agro-industry vary significantly by country and it is difficult to find statistics for the region as a whole, CEPAL notes that FDI in agricultural sectors has grown significantly in certain countries from 2005-2010 (including Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Uruguay). In addition, CEPAL notes the increasing involvement of transnational corporations in agriculture and agro-industry in Latin America as global corporations reorient their production chains to gain access to cheap raw materials and/or gain competitive advantage in growing industries such as meat and bio-fuels. This in turn has resulted in an adaptation of country policy environments to create favorable conditions for investment by agro-industry. (CEPAL 2012)

8 According to the World Bank, from 2008-2009 over 56 million hectares of land were either sold or rented in countries of the Global South. (Seoane and Algranati 2012)
ecosystem integrity and social rights (as witnessed via the expansion of extractive activities into protected areas and indigenous territories) (Gudynas, 2013, Svampa, 2012, Escobar, 2010, Acosta, 2012, Monje, 2011, etc.). The new legal environment and cast of players, including multilateral trade organizations like the WTO and transnational corporations create an entirely different playing field. The power and expertise of these international players results in the decreased bargaining capacity and weakened sovereignty of Latin American states. The new “Green Economy” agenda taken up by the UN development system, which favors market mechanisms as a way to achieve sustainability, is seen as promoter and accomplice of the expansion of extractivism.\(^9\)

Some authors attribute the renewed investment in primary export activities in Latin America to the global economic crisis and current phase of capitalism. This phase, as explained by Algranati (2012), involves the commodification, appropriation, and assertion of control of natural resources in peripheral Latin America economies by the centers of capitalist power. It represents a deepening of the process of “accumulation by dispossession,” originally theorized by Harvey (2003). López and Vértiz (2012) use the global crisis to illustrate this trend. They argue that the global crisis in 2008 sparked the fleeing of significant quantities of investment capital from housing markets in the Global North to commodities sectors in the Global South.\(^10\) Latin America has been the recipient of the largest percentage of these capital flows (Algranati 2012).

There are different reasons for the movement of global capital to extractive sectors. For example, the growing investment in extractive activities in Latin America is linked to the high international prices for raw materials, driven by demand from emerging economies like China (CEPAL 2012). Until now, the rise of China and other emerging Asian industrial countries has resulted in an overall reduction of FDI in manufacturing in Latin America and a return to investments in primary materials (trend varies by individual country) (Zibichi, 2013, Cesarin, 2013, Gudynas, 2013). For example, China, whose three main development banks comprise the biggest source of lending to Latin America (totaling more than World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and US Ex-Im Bank lending combined in 2010) issued two thirds of its loans as “loans-for-oil” (Gallagher, 2013). Although the provision of primary materials by Latin America to China has sheltered the region from global economic decline, it has also resulted in the

---

\(^9\) A series of development institutions and international treaties like the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and UN Conference on Sustainable Development promote the commercialization and control of natural resources and ecosystem services via their backing of Green Economy, carbon markets, carbon offsetting, biofuels, and other market based proposals for sustainable development (Lander, 2012, Moreno, 2013, Algranati, 2012, Svampa, 2013, etc.). This new development strategy is being vehemently opposed by environmental and social justice movements around the world, including Alternatives to Development groups.

\(^10\) López and Vértiz claim that the current favorable conditions for capital investment in Latin America were laid out during the neoliberal development era in the 80s and 90s (Ibid.). Neoliberal policies opened the continent to transnational corporations, participation in global production chains, reduction in transport and communication costs, and unrestricted capital flows. The economic growth that was promised via structural adjustment and liberalization policies of the neoliberal development agenda resulted in the current attractive climates for foreign investors, however, at a high cost to the people and ecosystems of the region. This discussion is well documented elsewhere, but it merits mentioning here because it provides an important basis for the current rejection of development processes by the post-development school and the subsequent objectives of Alternatives to Development proposals.
continued dependence of Latin American economies on the export of price-volatile commodities. Another reason for the increased investments in natural resource sectors is the increasing financialization of capital, which facilitates quick capital flows and allows for enormous profits to be made on speculative activities (Algranati, 2012). Less research has been done on the possible role that current and predicted resource scarcity plays in increased investments in extractive sectors.

The negative economic, social, and environmental impacts of the new wave of extractivism are widely documented. Economic ills include: dutch disease\textsuperscript{11}; increased consumption of imported goods; deteriorating terms of trade; the consolidation of export enclaves with low connectivity to local production chains; denationalization of the economy and consolidation of foreign control; exit of profits; vulnerability to volatile commodities prices; failure of macroeconomic policies to adjust to boom and bust cycles, leading to overspending and debt; low employment in extractive sectors; increased opportunity for rent seeking; failure to diversify the economy; etc. (Acosta 2012). Environmental and social impacts include: loss of food sovereignty and self-sufficiency in food production; environmental contamination, loss of biodiversity, and climate change; the dispossession of land, resources, and territory from local communities and reversal of progressive land reform programs; the overriding of participatory, democratic decision-making and legal consultation processes; increased pressure on governments to modify national social and environmental legislation to create attractive investment environments; increased violent and non-violent conflict; increased economic inequality with resource rents being concentrated by the powerful few; manipulation of popular discourses in order to mask conventional development; embedding of global and regional asymmetric relationships; the role and value of nature is monetized, ignoring intrinsic, cultural, spiritual, and ecosystem values; etc. (Svampa 2012).

Alternatives to Development thinkers use cite these myriad negative impacts of the extractive development model to explain their rejection of the processes that promote extractivism. Specifically, A2D argues that the justification of extractivism on the basis of economic growth is erroneous due to the proven failure of growth in GDP to result in improved quality of life. In addition, they point out that current growth patterns are dependent on non-renewable resources and the irreversible alteration of natural ecosystems, which will eventually lead to resource depletion, ecological collapse, and stagnation of growth. Thus, post-growth alternatives become necessary in order to avoid complete economic and environmental crises.

Different countries in Latin America vary in their policy approaches to extractivism and these approaches change over time. Domestic policies adjust in reaction to fluctuations in the external global economy as well as to changes in the political environment at home. While it is possible to present a range of policy approaches, no pure form of any political ideology exists and current global volatility may result in countries changing from one area of the spectrum to another seemingly overnight. In general, policies span three broad areas: (1) heavy state control over resource ownership, extraction processes,

\textsuperscript{11} Dutch disease refers to the decline in non-resource sectors of a country due to the appreciation of the real exchange rate that frequently results from the rise in value of natural resource exports.
and rent collection and distribution, (2) partial state control over the companies and rents from resource extraction, but with stable investment and operating conditions for foreign companies, and (3) the absence of protective restrictions on the primary export model, most often through participating in free trade agreements. Regardless of their political environment, many Latin American countries are currently contributing to the expansion of extractivism by relying on extractive revenues to finance public spending, buffer their economies from global instability and decline, and improve trade budgets (Acosta 2012, Webber 2012). The impact of such behavior by progressive governments of the region has been a major contextual factor for the rise of A2D in the region, examined below.

2. Abandoned Agendas and Popular Disillusionment

Progressive Latin American governments took the international spotlight in the early 2000s with promises to transition away from the destructive, unjust, and economically unstable extractive model. The campaign platforms of Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador were firmly rooted in such promises, which were central for garnering the wide indigenous and civil society support that brought them into power. Early on in their administrations, the international environmental community heralded Morales and Correa as environmental leaders for incorporating Buen Vivir and Rights of Mother Earth into their constitutions. However, this initial step of inserting indigenous principles into policy texts did not translate into the adoption and implementation of progressive agendas by governments. Instead, not only have these governments abandoned the principles outlined in legislation, they have been active participants in the expansion of predatory extractivism (explained above) in their countries. Examples since 2005 include the opening of national parks and indigenous territory to fossil fuel exploration, exploitation, and pipelines, the reversal of community-based land reforms to favor private interests and large landholders, the inauguration of new open pit mining and mega-hydroelectric projects without appropriate consultation processes, and the weakening (and complete disregard) for social and environmental legislation and safeguards (Bjork-James 2012, Villegas 2013, Webber 2012i and ii).

However, as extractive activities flourish in Bolivia and Ecuador, the governments employ a series of rhetorical and political tools to mask the implications of the model and their betrayal of political promises. First, reforms taken in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela to nationalize resources, increase state involvement and control over extractive projects, and redistribute natural resource rents, have resulted in economic growth and widely publicized social programs, creating an “illusion of development,” that is used to justify extractive activities. Indeed, economic growth statistics in Bolivia have received attention from the International Monetary Fund (Neuman 2014), but belie the growing social discontent with the government. The incorporation of indigenous concepts, styles of dress, rituals, and language into the governments’ promotion and celebration of new extractive projects is another manipulative and contradictory tool (Bjork-James 2013, p257). A third example is the increase

---

12 Social programs include subsidized school breakfasts (Bono Juancito Pinto in Bolivia), infant and mother healthcare (Bono Juana Azurduy in Bolivia), and public housing (Misión Vivienda Venezuela). They have fallen under critique for their insufficiency in meeting human development indicators (Svampa 2012) and unsustainability (Gudynas 2012).
in accusations by progressive governments of the dangers of subscribing to imposed environmental agendas from the North (Svampa 2012). This serves to minimize the importance of environmental criteria in decision making and distract from the fact that current budget booms are based on finite resources.

The state-heavy, nationalistic model is being called “new extractivism,” because although it appears to offer a unique, “Latin American pathway,” to development, it ultimately sustains the subordinate role of extractivist states in the global economy with minor social gains and no environmental improvements. Also, new extractivism has sparked serious internal problems, which have been costly, both in economic and political terms. For example, as local populations find their livelihoods and environments disrupted, and their countries increasingly subservient to traditional structures of economic dependency civil unrest has grown. Environmental problems also bring economic burden and social repercussions (Acosta 2012). Many conflicts between governments, companies, and civil society, such as the TIPNIS highway controversy, have attracted global attention due to their magnitude. Public discontent with the devastating impacts of the extractive model is not limited to progressive countries, but is a regional phenomenon. A recent study ranks Latin America as having the highest number of public protests from 2006-2013, with the highest concentration related to environmental justice (Ortiz et. al. 2013).

Less visible than the TIPNIS case are the near daily instances of local communities defending their social and environmental rights from extractive projects and policies. The multiple forms of protest, including marches, road blocks, occupying public spaces, hunger strikes, etc., embody the discontent with the failure of progressive “governments of social movements” to carry out the changes that their initial supporters expected. These forms of protest, in which indigenous and social movements strive to

---

13 The labeling by Evo Morales of Northern environmentalism as a new “predatory colonialism” at the UN “Rio+20” Conference on Sustainable Development and in other international forums has resulted in mixed messages to the international environmental community. See Bloomberg article: http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-06-21/bolivia-s-morales-calls-environmentalism-predatory-colonialism.html AND ejolt article: http://www.ejolt.org/2013/10/full-belly-environmentalism-of-lead/

14 Perhaps the most visible of these is the conflict surrounding the highway project in the Isiboro-Sécure National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS) in Bolivia. In 2008 the Bolivian government signed an agreement with Brazil to finance and build a 177km highway through the legal territory of three indigenous groups (64 communities in total). TIPNIS is also a national park renowned for its globally significant biodiversity. The Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) agreed to finance 80% of the highway construction leaving the remaining 20% to the Bolivian government. In a questionable bidding process, the Brazilian construction company, Constructora OAS Ltda., was hired to carry out the project. Also involved in the deal was preferential access for Brazil to the phosphates that were to be extracted along with lithium from the Salar de Uyuni, another controversial project (Hollender and Shultz 2010). The TIPNIS highway project was approved without a consultation process with local communities, and was met with fierce opposition. Among the most notable protest activity was a 65 day, 526 km march from TIPNIS to La Paz, known as the “8th Indigenous March.” The march met violent government repression resulting in 72-280 protesters injured. The highway project has been temporarily suspended, but the conflict has yet to be resolved. (See Bjork-James 2013, Villegas 2013, and www.territoriosenresistencia.org)

15 The main policy demands of environmental justice protests, as categorized by the study, include “Policymakers to secure adequate taxation/public revenues from natural resource extraction; Policy makers to solve conflicts related to infrastructure construction with negative social and environmental externalities; Policymakers to stop nuclear plants and use other more environmentally friendly forms of energy.” (Ortiz et. al. 2013)
redefine the state, regain sovereignty, and secure participation in decision-making, meet with varying levels of success. They have become so prevalent that they are credited with constituting new, legitimate ways of participating in the political process in these countries (Bjork-James 2013).

The response of progressive governments to the growing public outcry is disconcerting. Oppressive and anti-democratic backlash tactics have marked the second terms of Presidents Morales and Correa. Where these governments rhetorically tout values of plurinationality, indigenous sovereignty, Buen Vivir, and respect for Mother Earth, their actions resemble a survival-based return to party-politics (Bjork-James 2013). Government backlash tactics include: violent oppression of indigenous protest (as seen in the TIPNIS march); stigmatization of government critics as “counter-revolutionary” or secretly allied with imperialist powers; deliberate division and weakening of opposition social movements; and nepotism exercised through political and material rewards for pro-government counter-mobilizations that “defend the process of change” (Ibid.). This unabashed defense of a development model that progressive governments once so vehemently rejected has fueled the growing recognition that change will not be possible within the current socioeconomic system. This has been an important factor in the rising popularity of Alternatives to Development proposals.

3. Difficulties and Potential of Regional Integration

Given the failed efforts of individual states like Ecuador and Bolivia to reduce economic dependence on extractivism, Alternatives to Development look to the necessary role that integration will play in reaching transformative social and sustainability objectives. However, integration has also faced a variety of difficulties in reducing inequality, improving quality of life, and sustainably managing natural resources across the region.

Since the 1960s, Latin America has embarked on a series of efforts toward regional integration, which have been instrumental in defining regional identity, shaping relationships and cooperation, and determining economic success. The first example was the formation of the Latin American Association for Free Trade (ALALC), led by CEPAL in attempt to overcome the problems of import substitution industrialization policy (ISI). Eventually ISI was abandoned and integration organizations adapted to reflect new economic strategies. The ALALC was transformed into the Latin American Integration Association (Aladi), the Andean Pact into the Andean Community (CAN), and the Common Market of the South (MECOSUR) was established in 1991. The liberalization of capital and macroeconomic convergence that resulted from these initiatives facilitated the arrival of foreign direct investment and transnational corporations to the region, and provided impetus for mutually beneficial economic cooperation between the largest economies, Brazil and Argentina (Cerezal 2013). According to Cerezal (2013, p110), three trends that began with early integration initiatives continue today: 1. production of primary materials for export, 2. importation of manufactured goods, and 3. the primacy of the Dollar in

---

16 The ALALC was an initiative to liberalize trade between member countries in order to overcome the difficulties faced by small states with no consumer markets. ISI was eventually abandoned due to devastating economic results.
López and Vértiz (2012) claim that these policies laid the foundation for the current favorable investment conditions in extractive sectors in Latin American.

Of the early integration initiatives, the CAN was the only one to incorporate a social agenda along with economic measures. The social benefits were limited to the area of migration, by allowing free movement of citizens between countries (Cerezal 2013). More recently a new wave of advances in regional integration aim at a more democratic and participatory integration process, and include a wider agenda of social rights, economic equality, and environmental sustainability. They include the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), defeat of the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (ALCA) in 2005, and the creation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in 2006 and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in 2011. This renewed political cooperation and development of policies and instruments for regional economic integration, as well as political negotiation, marks an important recovery of positive expectations for Latin America after the decades lost to ISI and neoliberalism (Cesarin 2013). However, these initiatives face a series of difficulties as a result of structural and political barriers at national levels. Criticisms target their inaction on developing supranational trade and production policies, failure to increase commerce between countries of the region, maintenance of unequal economic and geopolitical relationships, persistent political conflicts between countries, and limited advances in social and environmental agendas (Cerezal 2013, Gudynas 2013, Cesarin 2013).

Another concern surrounds the opposite pathways taken by different groups of Latin American countries. While some countries opt for regional integration (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela), others opt for an outward looking economic agenda based on free trade and transpacific agreements. The most recent of these, the Pacific Alliance, was founded in 2011 by the four countries that hold free trade agreements with the US (Colombia, Chile, Mexico, and Peru). It is believed by some analysts that the creation of the Pacific Alliance was a competitive move to undercut the regional hegemony of Brazil, whose possibilities for zero customs duties trade agreements are prohibited by UNASURs policies (Zibichi 2013). Others believe that the Pacific Alliance was a response to stagnation in MERCOSUR, disputes between its founding members (Argentina and Brazil), and its failure to increase intrastate commerce (Ibid.). Regardless of the motives, differences of opinion exist as to whether the two strategies are ultimately incompatible and what they mean for the future of regional integration (Zibichi 2013, Cesarin 2013).

The future of Latin American integration is uncertain, not only because of the difficulties faced by integration and the rift between integration vs. free trade strategies, but because of open-ended questions about how the role of China and the global economic crisis in expanding extractivism in the region will play out (examined above). Alternatives to Development authors emphasize the importance of integration in order to selectively delink the region from the exploitative patterns of globalization. They believe that as long as some Latin American countries maintain their dependence on primary resources while others have more diversified economies, asymmetries will persist in the region and Latin America will not be able to overcome its inferior place in the global economy, let alone improve quality of life for its citizens (Cerezal 2013, Gudynas 2013). Country cases such as Bolivia and Ecuador
(examined above) make it clear that escaping economic dependence on natural resource exports will involve more than individual country efforts. To illustrate this point Gudynas (2014) predicts that the recent fall in commodity prices will be detrimental to primary export based economies as well as regional integration in two ways: 1. by raising competition between producers of the same primary commodities, and 2. by providing an incentivize for countries to enter into bilateral treaties independently of regional agreements, in order to keep economies afloat.

Recent initiatives like ALBA, UNASUR, and CELAC are encouraging in that they are based on wider visions and principles of solidarity, social rights, sustainability, and redistribution. However, they face significant challenges to overcoming the structural inequalities maintained by globalization, such as the prices of primary materials, rules of commerce and capital flow, and governance structures that prioritize the rights of corporations and capital over those of states and citizens (Cerezal 2013, Gudynas 2013). The institutions and mechanisms developed by recent initiatives including condition-free finance mechanisms (Banco del Sur, Banco del ALBA, and national development banks/funds) and common currency regimes (Sucre and regional payment systems developed by ALADI, MERCOSUR, and ALBA) are still in incipient phases and at risk of becoming conventional instruments of economic development, especially until participatory mechanisms are activated (ibid.). Also, the lack of supranational common policy creation stems from the inability of nations to balance national sovereignty with regional autonomy. In order to transition away from extractivism, supranational obligations such overarching social and environmental norms, regional food sovereignty and energy policies will be essential (Gudynas 2013) as well as tax and royalties reforms for natural resource extraction, labor laws, and social security and education benchmarks (Cerezal 2013). Additional A2D recommendations for integration are outlined in Section III.1. An examination of Brazil in the expansion of extractivism in Latin America further illustrates the difficulties and potential Latin American integration.

4. Regional Geopolitics and the Rise of Brazil as Regional Hegemon

As co-founder of MERCOSUR and supporter of UNASUR and CELAC, Brazil has been a key player in the push for Latin American regional integration (Rivarola 2013). However, Brazil has been critiqued for using integration initiatives to strengthen its own role as a regional and global power. The accusations behind the frequent labeling of Brazil as regional hegemon range from its catering to US military and economic interests (Boron 2013) to reproducing capitalist patterns of accumulation by dispossession (Algranati 2012). This section will examine how regional integration takes a backseat when Brazil’s own economic interests are at stake. It will also show how Brazil plays an important role in consolidating and expanding the extractive development model in Latin America, another important factor explaining the rise of Alternatives to Development.

Like many countries in Latin America, Brazil’s economy has become increasingly tied to China. Brazil is one of four Latin American countries who together received 91% of all Chinese lending to the region since 2005 (Gallagher 2013)17. Chinese investors sustain Brazil’s iron and steel industries,

17 The other countries include Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela.
agribusinesses, and technology sectors. Chinese loans to Brazilian steel industries gained attention for their incomparably low interest rates, made possible by Chinese government subsidies to international lending banks (Ibid.). The importance of Chinese lenders and investors to Brazil’s economic growth gives them significant influence in dictating market and trade conditions in the country (Cesarin 2013). In addition, Brazil depends on Chinese demand for its own commodities exports. As mentioned above, China’s voracious appetite for natural resources and moves to flood Southern markets with manufactured products have resulted in continent-wide investments in extractive, energy, and infrastructure projects by Chinese firms. In 2009, 85% of lending to Brazil went to a massive off-shore oil drilling project that used Chinese drilling equipment (Ibid.). This 10 billion $USD loan was a commodity backed loan, guaranteeing the sale of Brazilian oil to China at market prices, which results in China receiving a supply of oil far greater than the loan’s original value (Ibid.). China also puts pressure on its main trading partners, like Brazil and Peru, to promote energy and transportation infrastructure integration efforts (Cesarin 2013). Such efforts are in obvious contradiction to the socially transformative integration ideals put forth by Alternatives to Development, as described above. In addition, Chinese social and environmental investment standards are greatly lacking when compared with those of Western countries and lenders, which has already resulted in documented negative impacts in Brazil and elsewhere (Gallagher 2013).

However, while China is an important contextual factor in understanding Brazil’s foreign policy, Brazil’s regional behavior cannot be explained entirely by its economic dependence on China. Long before China’s rise in importance to the Brazilian economy Brazil faced grave social and environmental problems, and ranked among the most unequal countries in the world, despite being the largest economy in Latin America. In addition to Brazil’s failure to resolve its interior problems, the country has been accused of reproducing asymmetric relationships in the region. One well-known example is Brazil’s promotion of the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA) 18. Brazil’s involvement in IIRSA is as primary promoter and beneficiary: Brazilian construction companies are implicated in the design and construction of infrastructure; Brazilian banks provide loans to other South American countries so that they can carry out the projects; loans are conditioned on preferential access by Brazil to primary commodity supplies and market access for Brazilian manufactured goods; the transoceanic infrastructure allows Brazil to cut costs in exporting soy and other primary goods out of the continent, as well as for the transportation of imports from prime trading partners like China; energy infrastructure, such as mega hydroelectric projects in neighboring Bolivia, will provide energy to Brazil’s cities and industries while damaging natural ecosystems and dislocating thousands of communities, etc. (Villegas 2013). 19 Extensive analysis of Brazil’s role in IIRSA has been done elsewhere. This brief summary merely illustrates the economic, social, and environmental threats posed by the project, and contextualizes the fierce civil society resistance. The

---

18 IIRSA is a series of continent-wide transportation and energy mega-projects that has been vehemently opposed by Latin American and global civil society for concerns of the impact of IIRSA on nation sovereignty, social rights, and environmental devastation. See www.iirsa.org for project details.

19 See the TIPNIS highway example, above. TIPNIS is directly related to IIRSA, if not included in the project outline. The TIPNIS highway would provide an essential link from Brazil’s most rapidly expanding region of agroindustrial soy production to Pacific Ocean ports, enabling easier export to China. (See Villegas 2013)
urgency of these threats has provided impetus for the development of alternative proposals, including Alternatives to Development.

Brazil’s involvement in IIRSA is both a symptom and effect of the expansion of the extractive model in the continent (Algranati 2012). The expansion of extractivism in Brazil is made evident by the increase in percentage of primary commodity exports from 42% of total exports in 2000 to 63% in 2010 (Gudynas 2013, p135). The extractive model is detrimental to the people and ecosystems of Brazil, but it is the pressure applied by Brazil to expand this model across the region that has resulted in accusations of regional hegemony and neo-imperialism. Despite claiming to be a progressive country, Brazil replicates the center-periphery model of capitalist production at a regional level, by looking to neighboring countries for cheap primary and energetic inputs in order to manufacture value-added products at home, allowing it to compete with other industrial economies on a global scale (ibid.). Examples of such behavior include: rejection of supranational regional integration policies in favor of its own bilateral trade agreements, credit agencies, and local private investments (Zibichi 2013); the expansion of Brazilian extractive industries to other countries (agroindustry, mining, and hydrocarbons) via transnational corporations including Vale, Petrobrás, and Odebrecht (Gudynas 2013); the influence of Brazilian corporations in neighboring country legislation in order to loosen protectionist policies, and undermine social and environmental norms (Villegas 2013); and provision of government loans by Brazil’s development bank (BNDES) to controversial infrastructure projects in the region (for example, hydroelectric projects and the TIPNIS highway in Bolivia) (Gudynas 2013, Villegas 2013). The regional recreation by Brazil of the extractive model that maintains Latin America’s role as provider of primary materials is ironic as Brazil itself becomes increasingly relegated to this role in its relationship with China.

In response, A2D proposals offer an option to escape the continuous replication of these patterns, via policies to gradually delink the continent from the global socioeconomic system.

III. Introducing Alternatives to Development – Concepts, Processes, and Actors

The first part of this section will introduce the types of Alternatives to Development approaches that are taking place in Latin America and outline three examples of A2D proposals that are rising quickly in popularity at local levels and gaining recognition from international academic and policy audiences. The second part of the section will map some of the most influential stakeholders and processes involved in the construction of A2D in Latin America.

1. Theoretical Approaches to Alternatives to Development in Latin America

As explained in the Introduction, Alternatives to Development are a practical follow-up to the post-development critique of conventional development theory and practice. Whereas post-development provides the conceptual framework for questioning the ideological foundations of development, Alternatives to Development offers political positions, policy tools, and implementable steps to transition away from growth-based development paradigms in the Global South (Gudynas 2012).
The only existing map of Alternatives to Development in Latin America was done by Eduardo Gudynas, who identifies the emerging frameworks and outlines their shared theoretical foundations (2012, p33). His list of A2D, or “Alternatives that get beyond progress and modernity” include: Conviviality; Super-strong sustainability, biocentric approaches, deep ecology; Feminist critique, the care economy; Dematerialization of the economy, degrowth (partly); Interculturalism, pluralism, relational ontologies, expanded forms of citizenship; and Buen Vivir (some proposals).

Gudynas (2012, p36-37) identifies a wide range of themes being explored within each of these Alternatives:

- Traditional, historic debates about the role of the state and market are taking place from new lenses and rationalities, such as diverse economies (i.e. barter and reciprocity);
- Practical ways to break the link between development, economic growth, and well-being, such as looking to new indicators for quality of life that go beyond conventional physical and individualistic measurements to include collective, spiritual, and ecological dimensions;
- The promotion of biocentric positions that do away with modernity’s approach to human-nature relationships;
- Ethical and practical debates on the valuation of Nature;
- The role of technology and science as a means of solving problems vs. precautionary approaches;
- The necessary reexamination of structures, definitions, and relationships related to politics, citizenship, and justice;
- The restoration of other systems of knowledge including indigenous and gender-based knowledge;
- How to transition away from the idea of modernity as progress inherent in both capitalist and socialist systems.

In addition, diverse Alternatives to Development approaches coincide in their view that the dichotomy between environment and development that is frequently presented to justify growth-centered projects represents a false choice. They argue that, regardless of how convincing the economic justification, quality of life improvements cannot happen at the expense of the environment. The time frame for the changes they envision range from immediate to long-term, discussed below. They point out that the explosion of conflicts over land and natural resources, or the “environmentalization of struggles,” (Leff 2006) is grounded on wider debates about progress, human-nature relationships, the role of indigenous people in the construction of national and continental identities, etc. (Svampa 2012). Often untouched in the debate is the mistaken association of increased consumption with quality of life (Acosta 2012).

The most tangible work on Alternatives to Development in Latin America has resulted in policy proposals and/or lived experiences including: post-extractivism, Buen Vivir, and local initiatives such as the Zapatista movement and solidarity economies. However, A2D processes with diverse stakeholder participation are burgeoning across the continent, and it is impossible to pinpoint them to contained, measurable units. They are all rooted in the theoretical foundations listed above and range from sets of ideological principles to technical policies and from written proposals to actual, lived initiatives. Most draw from wider, international A2D discussions including those on the commons model (or
“commoning”) and degrowth, and/or are directly linked to international movements on climate, human rights, etc. They do not happen in isolation from each other, nor are they mutually exclusive, but rather contribute to and complement each other, forming a vast web of activity. This set of interconnected, dynamic processes upholds the very principles of diverse epistemologies and plurality of methods that A2D thinking deems necessary for global sustainability.

A brief summary of the most visible examples of Alternatives to Development in Latin America, post-extractivism, Buen Vivir, and solidarity economies is provided here.

Post-Extractivism

The post-extractivism framework represents one of the most thoroughly developed Alternatives to Development proposals in the Global South, at a technical, political, and popular level. Its contributions come from years of collaboration by a diverse range of civil society, academic, and political stakeholders, and include inputs across disciplines and continents. Post-extractivism proponents link the dependence of resource rich countries on natural resource extraction with a conventional development agenda that has failed to address the structural causes of poverty and environmental crisis, such as those acutely felt by primary economies of South America. The extractive and new-extractive economies of Latin America are subordinated to industrialized countries and transnational corporations whose ability to add value to primary exports gives them political and economic advantage. These players also have superior bargaining power due to technical, legal, and financial resources and clout.

As mentioned above, post-extractive authors are concerned with the expansion of the extractive model into an ever more “predatory extractivism.” Their proposal consists of a series of transitions, including economic policies, education programs, and public participation. The transitions to post-extractivism aim to move extractive economies from the current, predatory extractivist model to an initial “sensible extractivism” and a final “indispensable extractivism” phase. The characteristics of sensible extractivism include the deliberate selecting of extractive projects that meet strong environmental and social criteria, such as those outlined in national and international legislation. For example, extractive projects that risk irreversible environmental damage or species lost should be immediately halted. During this phase a country would implement additional macroeconomic reforms such as price correction for primary materials, tax and royalty reforms, subsidy reductions, etc. The transition to an indispensable phase of extractivism involves eliminating all extractive activities that cannot be directly linked to human needs and quality of life improvements. Each policy phase would require complementary socio-cultural measures to facilitate the long transformation of consumption patterns and materialistic values. (Gudynas 2012)

Reducing the dependence of countries on the export of extractive goods involves reforms and transformations across society and economy, which must be applied in coordination across national borders. The joint implementation of post-extractivism policies is necessary due to the highly competitive nature of globalized capitalism and the financialization of capital, which allow for the easy relocation of investment to the most auspicious economic climates. Post-extractivism author Eduardo
Gudynas (2013) argues that a “new regional autonomy” is necessary in order to transition the continent away from a predatory extractivism model to eventual sensible and indispensable phases. He provides a detailed outline of many possible policy measures for enhancing current integration measures in order to achieve regional autonomy that aim to selectively delink Latin American economies from the global economy. They include: a reorientation of economic, productive, and commercial chains to continental scales; prioritizing the fulfillment of regional need for resources and industrial goods; reducing natural resource extraction; expanding other economic sectors, especially agricultural and industrial; implementation of supranational obligations (outlined above); and structuring production chains based on ecologically defined aptitudes depending on bioregion (ibid.).

Additional regulatory measures included in the post-extractive proposal include strong national-level regulations for environmental and social control, price correction to include externalities, reconfiguration of trade in natural resources, the elimination of subsidies and redistribution of royalties from extractivism, the diversification and expansion of other economic sectors (agriculture, tourism, services, manufacturing, etc.), regulations on markets and capital, strengthening of solidarity economies, the regulation of markets and the state by civil society, incorporation of other sorts of non-monetary values of nature and resources, quality of life and social policies, autonomous regionalism and selective decoupling from globalization, dematerialization of production and changes in consumption patterns, etc. Post-extractivism authors highlight the need for parallel cultural changes, social participation, regional coordination, and political transitions to democratic structures in order for transitions to be effective. They also acknowledge that the process of change will be lengthy and diverse.

In summary, post-extractive policy proposals aim at gradual transitions away from the current development model and eventually the capitalist socioeconomic system, where the structural drivers of extractivism are rooted. While they do not deny the positive contributions that reformist policies make to improving transparency, income distribution, consumer awareness, and production practices, it is the growth-based development model that post-extractivist proponents seek to transform. Until the root causes of poverty and un-sustainability are targeted, the ills of extractivism will not be eliminated, and social and environmental problems will only deepen and expand.

**Buen Vivir**

The literal translation of *Buen Vivir* is “Good life,” and was originally made popular by Kichwa, Quechua, and Aymara populations in the Andes, but similar concepts can be found in diverse indigenous cosmovisions around the world. Unlike post-extractivism, which offers concrete policy proposals for reducing Latin American economic dependency on natural resource extraction, *Buen Vivir* is a concept that has been translated into a political ideology and used as the basis for progressive political and social agendas in South American countries including Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

There is not just one definition of *Buen Vivir*, but as authors Gudynas and Acosta (2012) show, *Buen Vivir* is a proposal under construction that incorporates a plurality of concepts, allowing for an intersection of
indigenous and occidental knowledge. Instead of promoting traditional, modern views of material and monetary progress, *Buen Vivir* focuses on human well-being, the “fullness of life,” the need to coexist with Nature, recognize its intrinsic value, and respect its physical limitations. *Buen Vivir* also focuses on the need to change the market’s role, position, and mechanisms, and the way in which humans relate to each other economically.

The electoral platforms of Ecuadorian and Bolivian presidents Correa and Morales brought *Buen Vivir* into regional and international spotlights. Correa and Morales promised to construct a new socio-political-economic system based on the principals of *Buen Vivir* and to reject the destructive model that enabled the opulence of industrialized countries. The incorporation of *Buen Vivir* into legislation in these countries results in an emphasis on food security and sovereignty; autonomy in education, governance, and justice; and making Mother Earth a subject with rights, etc., on paper, at least, if not in practice. *Buen Vivir* has also found its way into the discourses of other Latin American governments (Cuba, Venezuela, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Peru) and regional integration organizations like ALBA, UNASUR, and CELAC (Rodríguez 2013).

Within Latin America, *Buen Vivir* has gained popularity and become a unifying concept for different groups working on Alternatives to Development. Academic and popular writings have proliferated on the subject, with popular authors including Gudynas (2012, 2013), Davalos (2008), Acosta (2012), Souza Santos (2007), Ibanez (2012), and Boff (2009). Many groups agree that the conventional development model and capitalist system create a shared problem and look to *Buen Vivir* for solutions via different conceptualizations and indicators of well being. One example is post-extractivism’s employment of *Buen Vivir* principles to conceptually bolster the need and feasibility of transitioning to sensible and indispensable extractivism phases.

Outside of Latin America, the progressive government discourse in Ecuador and Bolivia has been followed closely, especially by academic and environmental circles, because of the perceived potential of these governments to construct viable alternatives to the devastating and unsustainable capitalist system. This outside interest has created important opportunities for Latin American academics and civil society leaders to publish their writings and bring Alternatives to Development proposals to international stages, at both political and grassroots forums.

**Solidarity Economies**

The term Social Solidarity Economy was coined in Lima, Peru 1997 at the First International Meeting for the Globalization of Solidarity. It was originally defined as “all economic activities and practices with a social finality, which contribute to building a new economic paradigm” (RIPESS 2013). Currently, the umbrella of Solidarity Economies encompasses the myriad alternative approaches towards sustainability, self-sufficiency, and economic independence that are taking place at local scales around the world. Examples include communal resource ownership and management, models for local/regional production and consumption of organic foods, fair trade, harnessing locally renewable energies, the revaluation and use of traditional and ancestral knowledge, non-monetary barter,
community networks of mutual support based on local needs and the provision of basic services (education, health, childcare, domestic work, etc.), the formation of community cooperatives for industry and financial services, etc. Also included are numerous examples of local communities that are actively recognizing the value and incorporating traditionally unpaid services into local economies, such as care-based activities, natural resources, and ecosystem services (Perkins 2007).

Solidarity Economies are heterogeneous, and vary according to economic, cultural, and institutional contexts. However, they converge in their organization around three shared principles: market, redistribution, and reciprocity (Laville 2010). These three principles create the conditions for market engagement, social coordination, and ethical orientation to work together, which is the objective of Solidarity Economies (Amin 2009). The importance of Solidarity Economies to Alternatives to Development lies in their potential to transition society beyond capitalism “to a fairer and more sustainable society based on popular mobilization to meet local needs” (Amin 2009, p16). Mance (2007) and Gibson-Graham (2006) characterize solidarity economies as post-capitalist because they are based on the redistribution of wealth, not the accumulation of capital. The expansion of solidarity initiatives is predicted to eventually result in a reorganization of productive chains, facilitating an environmentally sustainable and socially just economy (Mance 2007, Gibson-Graham 2006, etc.). The compatibility with post-extractivism and Buen Vivir is striking.

The expansion of Solidarity Economies in Latin America is significant and well-documented. Local economies are often organized and affiliated with wider networks, ranging from national to global. Certain cases are especially well known due to their magnitude and importance in responding to dramatic economic crises, such as the 170 “recovered” firms which employed more than 9000 workers in Argentina in 2003, and the explosion of barter groups with between 2-5 million participants in response to the Argentinean currency crisis. In Brazil it is estimated that 1.2 million workers are involved in solidarity economy and over 1,250 worker-owned enterprises exist. In Venezuela, Brazil, and Mexico, there are vast networks of community banks that issue local currencies. (Mance 2007) In many Latin American countries, Solidarity Economies have grown so much that they have become a sector in themselves, influential enough to warrant the creation of government departments and legislation, for example, the Colombian Ministry of Labor Special Administrative Unit for Solidarity Organizations (Ministerio de Trabajo Unidad Administrativa Especial de Organizaciones Solidarias).

International organizations like the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS), Grassroots Economic Organizing (GEO), and International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) track the spread of the Solidarity Economy movement and mention thousands of initiatives on their websites. In 2013 the UN founded the Inter-agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy with the aim to promote international and national political frameworks that are hospitable to Solidarity Economies. The mainstreaming of Solidarity Economies into national and international governance structures may eventually undermine A2D principles, a progression which will be important to monitor and evaluate.

2. An Overview of Participants and Processes

18
Since the ends and the means of Alternatives to Development involve broad participation, it is appropriate that the stakeholders involved range from local communities to political elites. Appendix I includes a map of the most visible A2D initiatives and actors in Latin America. Civil society actors include universities, NGOs, international funders/donors, and indigenous and social movements and organizations. These groups target different political representatives in order to advance their proposals, mainly former and current government officials from environmental ministries, country delegations to international conventions, and regional integration organizations such as UNASUR, CELAC, and ALBA.

Multi-stakeholder networks have become a common way for diverse stakeholders to organize, coordinate joint actions, and capture and administrate funds. Networks are also an effective way for actors who focus their day-to-day activities around a single theme (like trade agreements or debt restructuring) to broaden their scope. For example, many civil society actors who work on A2Ds are also deeply involved in climate change activism. Furthermore, networks provide a way of channeling communication between government/political levels and wide grassroots bases, allowing for increased civil society influence and participation. Network structures allow leading academic and NGO thinkers to share policy proposals across different levels of society, receive feedback, and garner popular support. These civil society leaders often have political connections or are involved themselves in political processes that allow policy proposals to gain headway in governments (for example, post-extractivism in Peru, see Section V). In addition, networks and working groups provide a way for groups and individuals working on theoretical and technical Alternatives to Development proposals to share ideas, gain visibility, publish, and interact with foreign audiences. Cross sector thematic working groups have been prolific in publishing over the past few years, often with support from foreign donors and regional and international universities.

A handful of foreign donors and NGOs have been influential in shaping the movement around Alternatives to Development, through funding, linking actors, and providing guidance for advocacy strategies. Some of these are simultaneously involved in Latin American country delegations to international negotiations on climate change and sustainable development, and to a lesser extent in regional economic integration discussions. Country delegations are key facilitators of communication between governments and civil society, and are often officially responsible for implementing political participation agendas in their respective countries, but with little formal monitoring, and thus varying degrees of accountability to local populations. Their reliance on assistance from foreign donors and NGOs for funding, thematic expertise, and strategic guidance is a reflection of the low levels of resources, capacity, and authority of these delegations. Nevertheless, interaction with country delegates is frequently the most effective means for civil society to directly participate in political processes around sustainable development in their countries. However, foreign NGOs and donors who work with local actors outside of these formal processes are increasingly becoming targets of backlash and expulsion by governments.

In addition to the above mentioned actors and organizing processes, a series of regional and international forums provide essential meeting spaces for different stakeholders to come together,
network, share and exchange ideas, gauge the political environment, and consolidate efforts on Alternatives to Development. At the UN level, the conferences around Climate Change and Sustainable Development are critical. Other alternative spaces shadow UN, G20, G8, WTO, and other official intergovernmental negotiation processes. However, as mentioned in the introduction, a gradual abandonment of these processes is taking place as groups opt for more legitimate, participatory spaces. Civil society-created, alternative, international meeting forums include the World Social Forum, World Peoples Conference on Climate Change, Peoples Summit on Sustainable Development, and myriad civil society annual thematic conferences.

IV. Conceptual and Practical Impediments to Post-Growth and Alternatives to Development

As mentioned in the introduction, Alternatives to Development proposals form part of a wider set of frameworks for socioeconomic change called post-growth that start from the premise that limitless economic growth is not possible and that it no longer makes sense to base political and economic decisions on growth alone. Post-growth schools include limits to growth, post-growth (self defined), degrowth, alternatives to globalization, political ecology, alternatives to development, post-capitalism, ecological economics, and others. In order to understand some of the obstacles facing Alternatives to Development and the post-development conceptual framework, part 1 of this section situates the position of A2D within wider post-growth debates about the root cause(s) of the ecological and social crises. Parts 2 and 3 will show how post-growth frameworks that advocate for eventual paradigm shift, such as A2D, face significant conceptual and practical impediments. Two examples are given to illustrate the challenges involved with confronting the pervasiveness of growth and in generating publicly and politically feasible strategies.

1. Post-Growth Debate about the Root Cause(s) of Ecological and Social Crises

The main conceptual dilemma facing post-growth frameworks is locating the root cause(s) of the ecological and social crises. Post-growth perspectives diverge on whether the failure to reach sustainability objectives lies in fatal flaws of the capitalist economic system and/or the development model, or whether the failure can be attributed to poor policy implementation or a lack of respect for ecological throughput. This divergence has radically different policy implications because it determines whether policies will be transformative or reformist.

Authors who trace the root causes of global environmental problems to the capitalist system claim that sustainability objectives are in fundamental contradiction to the intrinsic characteristics of capitalism (Blauwof 2012, Gibson-Graham 2006, Lang et al. 2013, McMurtry 1999). At least five characteristics of capitalism can be argued as being incompatible with sustainability: (1) the tendency towards commodification (‘marketization of social life’), (2) the dependence on continued growth, (3) the tendency towards inequality, (4) the elimination of other options (‘universalization of economic
contexts’), and (5) the de-moral nature of capitalism and the pervasion of this into social norms. If we look specifically at the dependency of capitalism on continued growth and expansion of the market, it is interesting to point out the prediction that the very dynamism of capitalism will lead, if not to its downfall, then to continued instability and crisis (Arrighi 1994, McMurtry 1999, Streeck 2011). Similarly, there is an interesting convergence between economic stagnation theorists (Gordon 2012, Foster and Magdoff 2009) and post-growth theorists (Heinberg 2011, Miller, Asher and Hopkins 2013) who predict the end of capitalist growth. The resulting policy approaches are transformative, and call for deliberate steps to transition away from capitalism as the dominant socioeconomic paradigm. As explained in the introduction, the post-development conceptual framework falls within this group and gave rise to Alternatives to Development policy proposals.

A contrasting group of reform oriented post-growth proposals do not see sustainability as being incompatible with the capitalist model or the development system. Post-growth proposals, such as Herman Daly’s (1997) Steady State Economy and Jackson’s (2009) Prosperity without Growth, do not challenge the fundamental organization and characteristics of capitalism, but call for a decoupling of throughput from growth and GDP via socioeconomic reforms. In other words, these authors argue that ecological concepts such as the source and sink functions of ecosystems, carrying capacity, adaptation, and resilience should be used to calculate appropriate limits for human activity and economic growth (Daly, 2005). This viewpoint is in blatant contradiction to the post-development view, which argues that while reforming the system from within may bring initial benefits, (such as the incorporation of principles like participation, gender, and sustainability into development), they ultimately face limitations when they confront the overarching logic of capitalism, which is the drive to accumulation (Blauwof 2012). Blauwof also points out two concerns related to the feasibility of these welfare and redistribution policies, especially related to their appropriateness in the Global South (see Section IV.3, below).

The different starting points for analyzing and addressing the roots of ecological and social crises have important policy implications, namely whether the solutions needed involve reform of the current system or transitions to a paradigm shift. Both approaches face obstacles related to scale and feasibility. However, the magnitude of change required for paradigm shift, the long-term ideal put forth by Alternatives to Development, presents both conceptual and practical obstacles. Pieterse (1996) outlines three minimal conditions necessary for paradigm shift: a new paradigm must (1) provide a meta-theory, (2) be accepted by a community of practitioners, and (3) have a body of successful practice, including exemplars that can be held up as paradigms in practice. He questions the relevance of the concept of paradigms in social science, especially given their linear logic, their need for intellectual convergence despite diverse populations, and the fact that large-scale political processes are reflexive in nature and not necessarily implementable frameworks. He points out the serious conceptual contradictions involved in attempting to replace one paradigm with another, given that most

paradigm shift proponents state the importance of respecting diversity, plurality, local level construction/participation, valorization of diverse knowledge systems, etc.

Also, the mechanisms for paradigm shift are unclear. For example, the issue of how to create widespread transformation at a cultural level is one of great contestation. Folke et al. (2010, p7) use a social-ecological systems approach to point out the importance of crisis for opening opportunities for the emergence of transformations. They show that ecosystems are forced to transform when certain thresholds are reached because previous strategies of adaptation and persistence can no longer maintain stability, thus threatening survival. Folke et al. point out that such socio-ecological transformations do not occur in a vacuum, rather draw on existing experience and knowledge in order to transition towards a new “regime” (p8). They explain that such transformations often start with change at local scales, which eventually enables large-scale resilience (Ibid.). Similarly, post-growth alternatives, including alternatives to development, draw from multiple knowledge bases in order to reach the shared objective of constructing an “alternative civilization model capable of radically transforming how the economy and politics are understood, so as to insure the survival of life on the planet” (Escobar 2010, p19). One concern with this approach is the extent to which the current incipient ecological and material crisis will have to reach previously sheltered, affluent populations before the need for large scale change is acknowledged and acted upon. The limitations of paradigm shift must be taken up by post-growth perspectives, such as A2D, that aim to transition away from capitalism instead of system reform. Challenges related to confronting the pervasiveness of growth and overcoming popular and political resistance to change are examined below.

2. Confronting the Pervasiveness of Growth

Post-growth approaches face considerable challenges due to the pervasiveness of growth across social, political, and economic structures and processes. Identifying the multiple spaces where economic growth is present raises questions about the processes by which growth got to these places, the implications of growth as it relates to certain concepts, and what can be done to address it.

Post-growth claims draw from the well-known critique on the limitations of using GDP as the universal measurement for success and the primacy that economic growth is given over social and environmental priorities. Nearly all processes of political decision making can be ultimately traced back to their relationship with economic growth. The limitations of GDP and the negative effects of the economic influence over politics are widely recognized. However, financial resources cannot be substituted with idealistic post-growth principles. The daily lives of nearly every person on Earth are structured around meeting their financial needs for survival. In addition, public institutions, especially in countries of the Global South, are seriously lacking the financial resources they need in order to provide basic services, infrastructure, and social programs. One of the main challenges for post-growth proposals is how to meet the need for financial resources in situations of restricted growth. While most post-growth approaches do not overlook the effect that need has on the pervasiveness of growth, the alternatives they put forth will face significant obstacles if financial need is not addressed in a realistic manner and in a way that is sensitive to Southern country realities. Blanket de-growth prescriptions will not be
acceptable. When post-growth proposal content is examined closely, it becomes clear that they do not call for stopping growth across the board, but rather, for placing strict criteria on where growth is allowed to happen. The example from Peru in Section V provides an empirically-based A2D strategy for meeting Peruvian government budget needs at the same time as gradually decreasing growth in the socially and environmentally damaging extractive sector.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing post-growth frameworks is the way that growth has become embedded in cultural norms, values, and behaviors. The tendency to equate economic growth with a singular vision of progress, modernity, and development is widely discussed by most social science disciplines. The universal aspiration for material wealth has resulted in a deeper penetration of growth into the very ways that humans interact with each other. Another challenge that is widely discussed in social science literature is the influence that growth has in shaping human-nature relationships. The extent to which growth has permeated human cultures and societies requires that any attempt to constrain or modify growth address the need for change at these levels. A number of post-growth authors take this up this challenge in their writing. For example, post-extractivism authors (Alayza and Gudynas 2011) recognize that any transition of the magnitude deemed necessary for achieving sustainability will be gradual and lengthy. They insist that the most important means to cultural change is the persistent promotion of dialogue and education, which is necessary not only to create an understanding of the negative environmental and social impacts associated with growth, but also to show that other ways to improve quality of life are possible.

In addition, Alternatives to Development authors including Escobar (2010), Gibson-Graham (2006), Gudynas (2012), and Sousa Santos (2007) emphasize the importance of making visible the myriad alternative approaches towards sustainability, self-sufficiency, and independence that are already taking place at local scales around the world. Examples such as worker cooperatives, communal resource ownership and management, solidarity economies, food co-ops, etc. illustrate that concepts of plurality, economic difference/otherness, and southern epistemologies are more than post-growth ideologies, but real life alternatives. Feminist authors promote the use of feminist economics as a bridge to sustainability, and cite numerous examples of local communities recognizing the value of unpaid inputs into local economies, such as care-based activities, natural resources, and ecosystem services (Perkins 2007). However, it is not clear how locally generated solutions will achieve the scale necessary for global sustainability (Harvey 2008) or if depending on the spread of local initiatives will adequately respond to the urgency of the problem.

3. Generating Feasible and Appropriate Post-Growth Strategies

As pointed out in the Introduction, post-growth proposals must take into account factors such as historical responsibility and equity in order to ensure that they are ethically appropriate for Southern countries. The inclusion of Southern agendas is a central aspect of Alternatives to Development, accounting for their increase in popularity in the South. In addition, issues of culture, autonomy, and

---

21 Some authors even point out that the pervasiveness of growth has even influenced child-rearing methods. (Streeck 2011)
sovereignty are important for post-growth approaches everywhere, especially considering that many post-growth critiques are based on the inappropriate and unjust imposition of a hegemonic economic system without the inclusion or participation of the majority of the world’s people and without respect for diverse decision-making processes and power structures. As pointed out above, the implicit contradictions associated with paradigm shifts (Pieterse 1996) pose an obstacle to post-growth policy prescriptions as to how they can avoid replicating the very top-down process that they seek to undo.

The history of redistribution policies illustrates the need to question the appropriateness of post-growth policy recommendations from a Southern lens, especially since redistribution is an important component of any post-growth strategy. Since the 1970s the idea of redistribution of wealth and resources as a policy for reducing inequality and achieving social justice has been controversial. Originally championed by Chenery et. al. (1974) for use within conventional growth-centered development, redistribution has taken on many forms under different political economic contexts and has resulted in criticism on economic and ethical grounds, both in the North and South (Pieterse 1996, p19). Its importance in the growth and sustainability debate stems from the question of whether redistribution policy (either from North to South or within highly unequal societies) is an effective and appropriate substitute for economic growth, if it is politically feasible, and if it is even possible without continued growth.

Other practical concerns about post-growth relate to the feasibility of proposals. One common criticism is the tendency of post-growth approaches to outline principles for sustainability without directly taking on the question of growth or offering up concrete, technically sound proposals. In a similar vein, Barnet (2004, p530-531) puts forth the critique that post-growth proposals are not fully developed and may have some economic side effects that the public will reject, not to mention politicians and politically-vested interest groups. Additionally, he is pessimistic about solutions that involve putting too much faith in the UN or multilateralism, such as those found in alternatives to globalization proposals (Cavanah and Mander 2004). This concern is also relevant for Alternatives to Development, due to the heavy reliance they place on regional integration initiatives. Given the radical nature of post-growth alternatives, Barnet doubts that many of these changes are likely to happen soon if at all, but believes they are worth considering.

Echoing this concern, Svampa (2012) states that a major challenge facing post-growth proposals, and post-extractivism specifically, is the “horizon of desirability” of such proposals in terms of lifestyles and quality of life. What Svampa refers to by this “horizon” is the Northern model of consumption associated with a better quality of life. She claims that the new redistribution policies of progressive Latin American extractive economies are making this horizon more reachable for once-marginalized sectors of Latin American populations. She states the need, as many have before her (Sen 1993, etc.), to redefine human and social needs in a way that supports strong sustainability as well as cultural diversity. She suggests three possibilities for re-framing human requirements including: (1) the human needs approach (Max-Neef 1993), which includes the process by which human needs are fulfilled as part of the indicator (i.e. via devastating vs. sustainable means), (2) the economy for life approach (Hinkelammert et. al. 2005), which only values the organization and social division of work if they allow for the
reproduction of life over time, and (3) the ethics of care approach by eco-feminists (Aguinaga, Lang, et al. 2012, Perkins 2007, etc.), which places the culture of care at the center of a sustainable society. Svampa’s proposal for redefining human needs, while necessary for the sweeping cultural transformation called for by post-growth, will not result in the automatic acceptance of reduced consumption (and in some cases reduced wealth), either by affluent or poor members of the global population. Despite the increased recognition at local levels and in intellectual circles of the inadequacy of economic measures to determine well being (Perkins 2003), it will be difficult for the global consumer class to move beyond a consumer mentality. The public and political rejection of such policies will pose a significant impediment to the possibility of post-growth.

A final concern with the feasibility of post-growth strategies refers to the reliance of policy responses on intensive political intervention and public regulation. Regardless of whether post-growth policies aim at system reform or transitions to paradigm shift, all responses involve a series of regulatory policies designed to shift away from two of capitalisms recent tendencies: deregulation by the state and excessive influence by corporate actors (Reich 2007, Shutt 1998, etc.). Blauwhof (2012) points out two problems with post-growth solutions that outline a highly interventionist role for the state: (1) the state is directly dependent on financial capital, which makes acting against economic growth directly in counter to its interests and (2) reforms that limit the economic growth prospects of businesses will eventually result in the evasion, overturning, or co-opting of such reforms in order to return to growth. Streeck (2011) echoes Blauwhof’s arguments, stating that whereas the state’s response to capitalist crisis is increased regulation, capitalism cannot function under any restrictions on growth and expansion. Under such restrictions capitalist innovation seeks to increase profit and evade regulation. These tendencies are exemplified by the expansion of extractivism by the progressive Latin American governments of Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela, despite their stated intentions to do otherwise.

For the moment, post-growth policies, including Alternatives to Development, are nearly impossible to assess in terms of outcomes or impacts because they either haven’t yet been implemented, face significant obstacles to implementation, or haven’t been in place long enough. Also, little has been done to evaluate the specific content put forth by groups who propose that growth must be limited or halted. The discussion about the technical, political, and popular feasibility of Northern post-growth proposals is more developed than similar discussions on the proposals that target the Global South. Additional work is needed to explore the content of Southern oriented policy proposals and when possible, analyze the outcomes and impacts of these proposals. Such work must take up the question of political will. Feedback at a political level will be an essential input in assisting post-growth proposals advance towards more plausible scenarios. The case study below on post-extractivism in Peru provides an initial attempt.

V. Alternatives to Development in Practice: Post-Extractivism in Peru

This section examines a specific attempt by a Peruvian post-extractivism group to gain headway in national policies. The case illustrates some of the actors and processes involved in developing post-
extractivism proposals and the strategies used for presenting them to political audiences. It also provides a real-life example of some of the challenges outlined in the previous pages, faced by all post-growth and Alternative to Development frameworks.

In 2011 a Peruvian civil society network, the RedGE (Peruvian Network for a Balanced Globalization – Red peruana por una Globalización con Equidad), composed of academic institutions, NGOs, social movements, and trade unions, presented a proposal to the Peruvian government outlining a set of policy measures for transitioning toward a post-extractivist economy (Alayza and Gudynas 2011). The proposal responded to the need for Peru to look for more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable activities and included measures for sustainable land use, strengthened environmental regulation, economic diversification, and the right of local people to be consulted (Svampa 2012). The group bolstered its proposal with calculations of the economic benefits of adopting the recommended policies, which were outlined in a study by Peruvian economists Sotelo and Francke (2011). They also provided empirical evidence of the economic benefits that resulted from the previous application of a similar measure in Chile.

Economists Sotelo and Francke (2011) examined the viability of transitioning economic dependence away from extractive industries by looking at three different scenarios specifically related to the mining, oil, and gas industries. Sotelo and Francke analyzed the viability of alternatives with respect to the current pattern of economic growth in the country, starting with an examination of the principal contributions of primary-extractive activities to employment, public revenue, and external sectors of the national economy. They then predicted the effects that applying strong restrictive policies on extractive industries would have on each of these sectors. First, they found that the extractive sector was not a significant source of employment (only 1.5% of the economically active population). This supported their recommendation for promoting high-employment sectors such as sustainable agriculture (not the low-labor intensive model), tourism, construction, and industry. The second finding confirmed that extractive activities were an important source of public revenue streams (22% of direct internal earnings and 42% of total tax earnings), but exhibited a high level of vulnerability due to price volatility of commodities. Finally, Sotelo and Francke (2011) found that extractive activity revenues were most significant for the external sector, with primary exports making up 70% of all exports and extractive sector foreign direct investment (FDI) making up 34% of total FDI. The high dependency of the Peruvian economy on extractive exports was found to result in high instability in the face of price fluctuations.

Sotelo and Francke (2011) examined three different scenarios in order to determine the viability of implementing policies to restrict extractive activity. The first scenario, a complete halt in mining, oil, and gas, was rejected because of the detrimental impacts it was predicted to have on political, economic, and social stability. The second scenario, a suspension of mining, oil, and gas projects that began operations from 2007-2011, found a much less dramatic result, with only slight deteriorations in the balance of payments and decrease of foreign reserves. The third situation, which combined a suspension of mining, oil, and gas projects that began operations from 2007-11 with the application of a tax on extractive industry profits, yielded optimal results. The implementation of a tax reform policy was found more than sufficient for covering the earnings lost by the reduction of exports. Sotelo and
Francke (2011) showed how a similar tax reform was successful in Chile, where it helped to address structural deficit problems through the reduction of economic informality in the extractive sector and by increasing the percent of taxes collected. The positive results from scenario three included a positive balance of payments, increased foreign reserves, and an increased capacity by the central bank to respond to exchange rate appreciation. Thus, Sotelo and Francke concluded that a gradual suspension of extractive activities combined with a tax on extractive industry profits is a viable step for transitioning away from extractive sector dependence.

However, the Peruvian government has not taken any measures that reflect its receptiveness to the RedGE proposal for constricting growth in the extractive sector. What’s more, and in line with the tendencies of most Latin American countries, Peru demonstrates political dedication to expanding extractive activities. In addition, unlike its Andean neighbors, Bolivia and Ecuador, Peru’s version of extractivism is not the new-extractivist model of heavy state involvement in decision making, industry shareholding, and greater receipt and distribution of profits. Rather, the Peruvian model follows the conventional concession model, which relinquishes state regulatory control and offers preferential treatment to private businesses in order to attract investment. The result of this “neoliberal extractivist” approach is that Peru’s primary commodities are exported and turned into value-added products elsewhere, largely driven by the demand for primary commodities in external markets such as the US, Europe, BRICs, and China (Monje 2011). Ironically, many of these value-added products eventually make their way back to Peru to be purchased by consumers, who not only pay a premium for these imports, but who also face the environmental and social costs of extraction. As Monje explains, this model is not limited to mining, oil, and gas sectors, but includes fishing, agriculture, and energy sectors as well. An institutional dimension of the expanding extractivist model is the granting of private concessions directly by the central government in Lima without consulting local populations and governments or environmental authorities (ibid. p89). The dependence of the Peruvian economy on extractive industries has made the country economically unstable, due to its vulnerable to primary commodity price volatility. The social and environmental impacts of extractivism fuel conflict, protest, and other forms of unrest, which add to the instability.

Whereas the Sotelo and Francke study presents an important contribution in terms of assessing feasibility of post-extractivism, its failure to be taken on by Peruvian policy makers illustrates a significant obstacle to implementation.

**VI. Conclusion**

The Alternatives to Development examined in this paper, post-extractivism, *Buen Vivir*, and solidarity economies comprise the three most visible examples of post-growth frameworks being elaborated in the Global South. At a community level their impetus comes from different sources. Solidarity economies are examples of local communities building their own organizational structures and economic practices to better meet their needs and aspirations. These often arise in the face of failure by the state to provide adequate social services or worker powerlessness around decisions about wage levels and profit distribution. In the case of *Buen Vivir*, deep seated cultural values and traditional forms
of governance and organization are making headway into policy spaces as indigenous communities achieve new levels of autonomy. Post-extractivism looks to solidarity economies and *Buen Vivir* as necessary components of an integral shift towards more sustainable and equitable local practices, to be framed within transformed national and regional macroeconomic policy environments. All three A2D examples coincide in that they emerge as responses to the four contextual factors examined in Section II.

Regardless of whether Alternatives to Development are born out of the necessity to survive or from ideological convictions, they have important potential in contributing to wide-scale socioeconomic transformation, far beyond Latin America. A2D are just one example of a series of post-growth frameworks that are burgeoning on every continent in response to the increasing recognition of the limits of economic growth and the inevitable change and/or collapse of the current growth-based global economy. The quantity of post-growth initiatives around the world is striking. It is also significant that diverse local initiatives trace the roots of local problems to a global system at a time when ecological and economic crises are real possibilities. The growing global concern is reflected by the steady increase in protests every year, especially since the onset of the global financial and economic crisis. A 2013 study found that 843 protests in 87 countries from 2006-2013 encompassed over 90% of world population (Ortiz et. al. 2013). The four main grievances and causes of outrage, as identified by the study, included (1) economic justice and anti-austerity, (2) failure of political representation and political systems, (3) global justice (including environmental justice), and (4) rights of people (Ibid.). As communities discover their commonalities, they are linking together across borders, as well as between political, academic, and grassroots levels, forming a vast, and quickly growing web. The diversity of stakeholders and plurality of responses to injustice, inequality, and environmental problems is embraced as the only way to build ethically appropriate and technically viable alternatives. The acceptance of plurality or “otherness” is a central component in the building of A2D, and a marked contrast to the top-down, one-size-fits all tools of the growth-based development paradigm.

Alternatives to Development and post-growth frameworks in general face significant obstacles, including many that have been explored in the previous pages. Perhaps the least thoroughly developed discussion surrounds the issue of consumption. The growing middle class in countries of the Global South will soon surpass middle class populations in the Global North. While there are ethical complications in prohibiting the new middle class from following the consumption patterns that affluent Northern societies have enjoyed for so long, the Earth’s physical limits will not support a tripling in resource use and consumption. However, Svampa’s concern about “the horizon of desirability” for any citizen of the world to constrain their consumption raises doubt about the feasibility of educational and consciousness campaigns. While skeptics predict that only ecological and/or economic crisis will lead to changes in consumption patterns, A2D thinkers believe that a mix of strict policies and popular education hast the potential to catalyze change. This debate requires a much deeper practical and logistical examination.

Continued political analysis and development of advocacy strategies by Alternatives to Development groups will be just as important as fine tuning technical proposals and garnering public support. While
many A2D lived initiatives, such as Solidarity Economies and the Zapatista movement have been enormously successful by operating on self-implementation and learn-by-doing methods, skirting the traditional policy process, this will not be possible for all A2D approaches. For example, the aspects of post-extractivism and *Buen Vivir* that involve changes in social attitudes do not depend on policy implementation in order to advance. However, the macroeconomic reforms and strict environmental regulations deemed necessary by A2Ds require that policy-makers support and pass proposals. Even if A2Ds are taken up at national levels, the introduction mentioned that few Latin American countries have sufficient geopolitical clout to have an impactful voice in international arenas. This is yet another reason why A2D thinkers emphasize the importance of strengthening regional integration initiatives (Gudynas 2013, Cerezal 2013).

Despite the failure of Latin American governments to reverse the inferior roles of their economies in the global economy or to curb the expanse of extractivism, the political climate of the region continues to offer interesting possibilities for change. The progressive environmental legislation in Bolivia and Ecuador is an important step towards eventually adapting sustainable policies, even if it has not yet resulted in changing priorities on the ground. In addition, the mission, discourse, and political experiments taking place among different integration bodies such as CELAC and UNASUR offer potential spaces to advance innovative regional policy frameworks, such as those developed by post-extractivism. There is no doubt that the transformations envisioned by Alternatives to Development thinkers will not take place in the short-term, but the political environment in Latin America is certainly more conducive to alternatives than that of other regions of the world. Despite the barriers, work on A2D continues to expand in Latin America and beyond; demonstrating the dedication of civil society to improving its own conditions. The magnitude of the change needed to reach sustainability and equality warrants an equally significant process to obtain it.
References


Aguinaga, Lang, et. al., 2012, “Critiques and alternatives to development: a feminist perspective”. in Miriam Lang and D. Mokrani (eds.), 2013, Beyond Development: Alternative Approaches from Latin America, TNI/Rosa Luxembourg Foundation

Alayza, Alejandra y Eduardo Gudynas (ed.), 2011, El Perú y el modelo extractivo: Agenda para un nuevo gobierno y necesarios escenarios de transición, RedGE


Cavanah, John and Jerry Mander (eds), 2004, Alternatives to Economic Globalization, Berrett-Koehler Publishers

CEPAL, 2012, La inversión extranjera directa en América Latina y el Caribe. 2011, CEPAL: Santiago de Chile

Chenery, H. et al,1974, Redistribution with Growth Oxford, OUP

Cerezal, Manuel, 2013, "Dialectica de la integracion latinoamericana", in Lang et al. (eds.), 2013, Alternativas al capitalismo-colonialismo del siglo XXI, Rosa Luxembourg Foundation


Daly, H. E., 1997, Beyond growth: the economics of sustainable development, Beacon Press

Dávalos, Pablo, 2008, “El ‘Sumak Kawsay’(‘Buen vivir’) y las cesuras del desarrollo” Alai Amlatina (mayo)


Gudynas, Eduardo, 2013, "Transiciones hacia un nuevo regionalismo autonomo", in Lang et al. (eds.), 2013, Alternativas al capitalismo-colonialismo del siglo XXI, Rosa Luxembourg Foundation


Harvey, David, 2008, “The right to the city”, New Left Review, no 53


Hinkelammert et al., 2005, Hacia una economía para la vida: Preludio a una reconstrucción de la Economía, San José, Costa Rica: DEI.


Jackson, Tim, 2009, Prosperity without growth : Economics for a finite planet, London: Earthscan


Max-Neef, Manfred, 1993, *Desarrollo a Escala humana: Conceptos, reflexiones y algunas aplicaciones*, Barcelona: ICARIA


Reich, Robert B., 2007, Supercapitalism, New York: Alfred A. Knopf


Villegas, Pablo, 2013, “Geopolítica de las carreteras y el saqueo de los recursos naturales”, Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia – CEDIB
Webber, Jeffery R, 2012i, “‘Revolution Against Progress’: The TIPNIS Struggle and Class Contradictions in Bolivia”, *International Socialism 133* (spring), www.isj.org.uk/?id=780


Appendix 1: Map of Alternatives to Development in Latin America – Actors and Initiatives

This section maps the most prominent actors in the construction of Alternatives to Development in Latin America. All websites are listed below, when possible.

Universities, Research Institutes, and Academic Working Groups

Many of the leading voices in Alternatives to Development have institutional support from universities and research institutions. Increasingly, they are linked together in working groups with support from international donors and NGOs in order to promote publication, diffusion, and promotion of A2D. In most cases, publications are available for free on institutional and/or personal websites.

- Centro Latinoamericano de Ecología Social (CLAES): CLAES is a research institute based in Montevideo, Uruguay that it dedicated to social ecology. Since 2010 CLAES has worked in partnership with local host organizations in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay to conduct workshops and seminars on post-extractivism and Alternatives to Development. It has also participated in a number of publications on Alternatives to Development in coordination with the RedGE (Peru). It is home to one of the lead thinkers and writers on post-extractivism, Buen Vivir, and Alternatives to Development, Eduardo Gudynas. Gudynas is a contributor to nearly every compilation publication on Alternatives to Development in Latin America as well as regularly contributing to his own blog, “Acción y Reacción.” He forms part of the Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development and sits on the steering committee of the Alianza Latinoamericana de Estudios Críticos sobre el Desarrollo.

Transiciones: The joint CLAES – RedGE portal dedicated to transitions to Alternatives to Development is where many publications and notices about events can be found. Membership includes wider participation of NGOs in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador.

- Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) Quito, Ecuador: The work being done at FLACSO - Ecuador on Alternatives to Development revolves around the Department of Development, Environment, and Territory. The most well known of the faculty in this department, Alberto Acosta, was former Minister of Mining and Energy for Ecuador. Acosta writes and speaks prolifically about political ecology, new-extractivism and post-extractivism, Buen Vivir, and to a lesser extent on Solidarity Economies. He also forms part of the Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development and sits on the steering committee of the Alianza Latinoamericana de Estudios Críticos sobre el Desarrollo.

- Universidad de la Tierra, Oaxaca, Mexico: This University was created by the Zapatista movement and functions without formal requirements, in a horizontal manner, in order to meet the needs of local communities in order to answer questions central to improving well being and sustainability. Alternative approaches to learning and education are encouraged, such as
learning by doing. This is the institutional home of Gustavo Esteva, who has written extensively on post-development, Alternatives to Development, and the Zapatista movement. Esteva is on the steering committee of the Alianza Latinoamericana de Estudios Críticos sobre el Desarrollo.

- **Alianza Latinoamericana de Estudios Críticos sobre el Desarrollo (Latin American Alliance on Critical Development Studies) – alecd:** Perhaps the largest network of academic and activist leaders on critical development studies in Latin America. The website contains the largest quantity of publications on the topic. The list of members provides a comprehensive look at university faculty and independent researchers who are involved with alternative thinking about development in Latin America, although not all are working explicitly on A2D. It includes researchers from Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Spain, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Members of the steering committee include some of the most influential and active thinkers on Alternatives to Development and include: Alberto Acosta, FLACSO (Ecuador), David Barkin, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Xochimilco (México), Luiz Carlos Bresser Periera, Universidad Sao Paulo y Fundación Getulio Vargas (Brazil), José L. Coraggio, Universidad Gral. Sarmiento (Argentina) and Network of Latin American Researchers on Social and Solidarity Economy, Arturo Escobar, University North Carolina (USA, Colombia), Gustavo Esteva, Universidad de la Tierra en Oaxaca (México), Eduardo Gudynas, CLAES (Uruguay), Esther Iglesias Lesaga, investigadora titular del Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, UNAM (México), Johannes Jaeger, Journal für Entwicklungspolitik (Austria), Edgardo Lander, Universidad Central de Venezuela (Venezuela), Enrique Leff, Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, UNAM (México), Pedro Paéz, Comisión Presidencial Nueva Arquitectura Financiera Internacional (Ecuador) and UN Commission on Global Financial System Reform, Maristella Svampa, Conicet, Buenos Aires (Argentina), and Koldo Unceta, Hegoa, Universidad País Vasco (Spain).

- **Grupo Permanente de Trabajo sobre Alternativas al Desarrollo (Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development) –** The Working Group was formed in 2011 under the auspices of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. The Group includes thinkers from eight Latin American and European countries and focuses its analysis on Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela. The Group has published two compilation books to date, “Beyond Development: Alternative Approaches from Latin America” and “Alternativas al capitalismo/colonialismo del siglo XXI,” which are available from its website. It organizes regular events in the countries where Rosa Luxemburg operates in the region.

- **Universidad de la Cordillera, Bolivia:** This University is interesting because its principal staff members are members of the Bolivian government delegation to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention on Sustainable Development, and regional organization, CELAC. Delegates use the university to publish articles on critical development and Buen Vivir, as well as to form an outreach platform for engaging civil society in discussions related to
sustainable development and alternatives to development in the country and region. Useful publications are posted on the website.

- **Other prominent authors and research interests:**
  - **Anthony Bebbington** - Clark University, Geography Department. Political ecology of rural change with focus on extractive industries and socio-environmental conflicts, social movements, indigenous organizations, livelihoods. South and Central America, primarily in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and El Salvador. Publications available from personal website.
  - **Pablo Davalos** (Ecuador)- Extractivism, plurinationality, power discourses, social movements, *Buen Vivir*, post-neoliberalism, etc. Publications available from personal blog.
  - **Arturo Escobar** - University of South Carolina, Chapel Hill, Anthropology Department. Publications available from personal website. Critical studies of globalization and development, cultural studies of science and technology, political ecology, social movements, and pluriversal studies, transitions, and design. Publications available from personal website.
  - **Edgardo Lander** – Universidad Central de Venezuela. Member of the Latin American Social Science Council’s (CLACSO) research group on Hegemonies and Emancipations. Associated with Transnational Institute. Alternative regionalisms, corporate power, environmental justice, public services and democracy.
  - **Enrique Leff** - Universidade Nacional Autônoma do México (UNAM). Political ecology, environmental sociology, environmental economics.
  - **Boaventura de Sousa Santos**- University of Coimbra (Portugal), University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Warwick. Southern epistemologies, globalization, sociology of law and the state, democracy, and human rights. Publications available from personal website.
  - **Raul Zibechi** (Uruguay)- Political theory, social movements, capitalism.

- **Contacts in European Universities**
  - **Koldo Unceta** - Universidad País Vasco, Spain
  - **Ulrich Brand** - University of Vienna, Austria
  - **Klaus Meschkat** - University of Hannover, Germany
  - **Kristina Dietz** - Institute of Latin American Studies of the Free University of Berlin, Germany
  - **Observatorio de Multinacionales en América Latina (OMAL):** In cooperation with five Spanish state Universities and in-country host NGOs in Latin America, OMAL carried out the online course “Rethinking Development.”

- **Online publications that include Alternatives to Development**
Donors

As mentioned above, there are a number of funders who support activities in Latin America related to Alternatives to Development. In some cases these organizations overlap with the NGO category, below.

- **Rosa Luxembourg Foundation** – Headquartered in Germany, Rosa Luxembourg operates internationally, with Latin American programs in Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Colombia. The Foundation founded and supports the **Grupo Permanente de Trabajo sobre Alternativas al Desarrollo (Permanent Working Group on Alternatives to Development)** (outlined in detail above). Frequent seminars on Alternatives to Development in the countries where it operates.
- **Transnational Institute of Policy Studies (TNI)** – A network of activist researchers which provides support and publication opportunities for researchers and movements who work on: radical informed analysis on critical global issues, building alliances with social movements, developing proposals for a more sustainable, just and democratic world. TNI supports and publishes the work of various Latin American A2D authors and is frequently present at international organizing spaces, such as the World Social Forum.
- **MISEREOR** – German funder, supports publications on the structural causes of climate change and economic inequality, support for Southern civil society networks who work on Alternatives to Development, climate justice policy advocacy in Europe.
- **Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)** – (Berlin, New York, Geneva) Provides support to organizations to strengthen the voice of the Global South on economic and social development, as well as serving as a liaison between Southern civil society and the UN. Organizes regional seminars. Publications available on critical development issues in Latin America.
- **Broederlijk Delen** – Belgian funder supporting small Latin American NGOs including those involved in A2D processes.
- **ICCO** – Belgian funder supporting small Latin American NGOs including those involved in A2D processes.

NGOs, Social Movements, and Networks

The multitude of NGOs, Social Movements, and networks working on Alternatives to Development in Latin America is too large to map. This section lists some of the leaders in this category, including those working on a regional and international level as well as a list of country-level focal points. Most of the country level focal points form part of the **Latin American Alliance on Critical Development Studies** or are affiliated with **CLAES** and **Rosa Luxembourg** supported networks. There is some overlap between these and university/research institute actors, since they often take on an activist role in addition to academic and popular publications.

- **Red Peruana por una Globalización con Equidad (RedGE):** Network of nine Peruvian NGOs that coordinates extensively with **CLAES**, with whom it co-coordinates the **Transiciones** virtual...
platform. RedGE is one of the leading networks on post-extractivism. Its activities include citizen campaigns, seminars, and publications on alternatives to development, especially post-extractivism. Also conducts advocacy with the Peruvian government to insert post-extractivist proposals (See Alayza and Gudynas 2011).

- **Construyendo Puentes**: A network of networks, encompassing around 19 networks and 1200 members in Latin America. Focus on sustainable development, alternatives to development, and climate change policy. Close ties with country Delegations to Climate Change and Sustainable Development UN conferences.

- **La Red Latinoamericana sobre Deuda, Desarrollo y Derechos (Latindadd)** – Latin American network on responding to the economic crisis through equitable North-South financial relations such as debt relief. Support for Social Solidarity Economies. Encompasses 17 organizations in 11 Latin American countries.

- **Minga Informativa de Movimientos Sociales** – Network to facilitate communication between regional social movements, including various sources for news, publications, and analysis.

- **La Via Campesina** – The largest international peasant movement working on alternatives to development paradigms in order to promote food sovereignty.

- **Alianza Social Continental** – Hemispheric network for organizing initiatives to oppose free trade agreements. Critical role in the overturning of the controversial ALCA trade proposal.

- **Coordinadora andina de organizaciones indígenas (CAOI)**: Coordinating body for the indigenous organizations of Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador. Advocacy at negotiations, consolidation of indigenous demands and proposals on CC, positioning of indigenous groups and Mother Earth in international spaces. Increasing focus on Alternatives to Development, especially *Buen Vivir*. The **Global Indigenous Caucus** has Official Observer Status at UNFCCC conferences.

- **National focal points for Alternatives to Development Organizing:**
  - **Argentina**
    - Asociación Argentina de Abogados Ambientalistas (AAdeAA)
  - **Brazil**
    - Observatorio brasileño sobre la explotación del petróleo marino y las industrias extractivas
    - INESC
  - **Bolivia**
    - Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario (CEDLA)
    - Liga Boliviana Defensa del Medio Ambiente (LIDEMA)
    - Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia (CEDI)
    - Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios (CESU), Universidad Mayor de San Simón
    - Centro de Documentación y Desarrollo Andino (CENDA)
    - Fundación Solón
    - Colectivo Casa
    - Plataforma Boliviana Frente al Cambio Climático
- Grupo de Trabajo Cambio Climático y Justicia (GTCCJ)
- CIDES de la UMSA
- Wayna Tambo-Red de la Diversidad

Colombia
- Grupo de Investigación, Derecho y Política Ambiental (UNIJUS) Universidad Nacional de Colombia
- Universidad del Cauca
- CIASE
- RECLAME
- Corporación para la Educación y el Desarrollo de la Investigación Popular (CEDINS)
- CENSAT – Agua Viva

Cuba
- Grupo América Latina, Filosofía Social y Axiología (Galfisa)
- Instituto Cubano de Investigación Cultural "Juan Marinello"
- Departamento Internacional de la Central de Trabajadores de Cuba
- Comité Cubano del Foro Social Mundial
- Yoandris Sierra Lara, Universidad de Pinar del Río, Pinar del Río.

Ecuador
- Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental (CEDA)
- Centro Andino de Acción Popular (CAAP)
- Universidad Tecnológica de Loja
- PLYDOS
- Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales del Ecuador (CDES)
- Observatorio de Derechos Colectivos del Ecuador
- Observatorio del Cambio Rural (OCARU)
- Sistema de la Investigación de la Problemática Agraria del Ecuador (SIPAE)
- Consorcio Taisan
- Instituto de Estudios Ecologistas del Tercer Mundo
- Instituto de Estudios Ecuatorianos (IEE)

Mexico
- Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades y otras unidades de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)

Peru
- Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR)
- Centro Bartolomé de las Casas
- CooperAcción
- CONADES
- Revenue Watch Institute
- Programa de Democracia y Transformación Global

Venezuela
- Foro Social Mundial Temático de Venezuela
Red Nacional de Sistemas de Trueke

Political Actors

Very few political actors in Latin America have taken up an Alternatives to Development agenda in practice. Nevertheless, A2D proponents monitor and analyze the political climate in the region in order to eventually find points of insertion for proposals to become policy. The following actors include those which are directly and indirectly involved in policy making in Latin America. They include regional economic integration and negotiating blocks as well as civil society organizations that have close relationships with government officials.

- Regional Integration and Negotiation Blocks:
  - Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA) – While Alternatives to Development are not being constructed from within the ALBA, its founding principles of solidarity, complementarity, justice, and cooperation, and mission for regional independence and self-determination align it ideologically with certain A2D principles. ALBA’s thematic areas include Climate Change and a People’s Trade Treaty, both which challenge certain tenants of the conventional development model and call for sustainability and equity to be central to economic activity. Also, ALBA leaders have adopted the concept of Buen Vivir, at least in the political rhetoric of the alliance. Finally, ALBA is an important political actor because it has been identified by authors who work on post-extractivism and Buen Vivir as a potential political ally for bringing A2D proposals to policy spaces (Gudynas 2012). Current member countries include Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Commonwealth of Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

  - Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC): This organization of 33 Latin American and Caribbean states is pushing for deeper and sovereign integration in the region. Some of the government officials involved in this process also engage with civil society groups that work on Alternatives to Development. They have conducted strategy and policy meetings on climate change and the development model at the Vice-ministerial level and with leadership from the ALBA countries. In preparation for the COP20 in Lima, Peru in 2014, CELAC is supporting the innovative proposal of Venezuela to hold preparatory meetings in which civil society participates in negotiations while government officials receive observer status.

  - Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR): Inspired by the European Union, this South American version was formed in 2008 to promote regional integration on issues of democracy, education, energy, environment, infrastructure, and security and to eliminate social inequality and exclusion. In discourse, UNASUR is committed to sustainability, energy self-sufficiency, and reducing dependence of member countries on natural resource exports outside of the continent. Members include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay, and
Venezuela. Panama and Mexico are observers. In 2013 UNASUR deepened its commitment to the sovereign management and protection of natural resources (Rodríguez 2013). Although the details have yet to be published, this initial political commitment is complementary to the post-extractivism proposal for transitioning to sensible and indispensable phases of extractivism through a transformation of international natural resource markets as well as regional self-sufficiency. Post-extractivism actors engage with UNASUR representatives and promote its potential to further a post-extractivism agenda.

- **Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR):** MERCOSUR was founded in 1991 to create a common market in South America based on universal trade policy in order to lower inequalities between member states as well as improving the economy of the region as a whole. Current members include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. While MERCOSUR has not generated as much interest by A2D proposal makers as UNASUR for its potential in allowing for the insertion of A2D policies in the región, its integration principles and potential transformative impacts on regional relationships and economies makes it an important political actor for sustainability in the region.

- **Asociación Independiente de Latinoamérica y el Caribe (AILAC)**—This regional negotiation block includes Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Peru, Guatemala, Panamá, and the Dominican Republic. These states have allied together at UN Climate Change negotiations around the objective to launch a low-carbon development model, which would result in emissions reductions for developing countries. This objective overlaps with the interests of many groups that work on A2D.

- **Political advisory organizations:**
  - **Third World Network:** Network of organizations and individuals working on North-South issues, including climate change and Alternatives to Development, including Buen Vivir. TWN produces policy briefings, reports, and opinions, and is very inside UN Negotiating spaces on Climate and Sustainable Development. Deeply involved in supporting certain Country Delegations in information, capacity building and strategy, including Bolivia.
  - **South Centre:** This is an intergovernmental organization of developing countries established by an intergovernmental agreement, headquartered in Geneva. South Center has official observer status to many UN treaties, including the UNFCCC and is a key strategic player in advising civil society and developing country governments. They are also involved in advising many developing country Delegations. South Center produces many publications, policy briefs, etc.
  - **IBON International:** IBON conducts research-education and information activities on the roots, impacts and solutions to the climate crisis among Southern and Northern civil
society organizations and social movements. Involved with social movements in Latin America and supports the construction of A2D.

- **Focus on the Global South**: Run by the former head of the Bolivian Delegation to the UN Conference on Climate Change, Pablo Solón. This NGO conducts written analysis and engages in strategic activism around post-development and post-capitalist paradigms in alternative forums such as the World Social Forum.

**Websites** (all accessed January 2014)

- **América Latina en Movimiento (alain)**: [http://alainet.org/index.phtml](http://alainet.org/index.phtml)
- **Alianza Social Continental**: [asc-hsa.org](http://asc-hsa.org)
- **Anthony Bebbington**: [http://anthonybebbington.com/](http://anthonybebbington.com/)
- **Arturo Escobar**: [http://aescobar.web.unc.edu/](http://aescobar.web.unc.edu/)
- **Asociación Argentina de Abogados Ambientalistas (AAdeAA)**: [www.aadeaa.org.ar](http://www.aadeaa.org.ar)
- **Broederlijkdelen**: [www.broederlijkdelen.be](http://www.broederlijkdelen.be)
- **Centro Andino de Acción Popular (CAAP)**: [http://www.ecuanex.net.ec/caap/](http://www.ecuanex.net.ec/caap/)
- **Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia (CEDIB)**: [http://www.cedib.org/](http://www.cedib.org/)
- **Centro de Documentación y Desarrollo Andino (CENDA)**: [www.cenda.org](http://www.cenda.org)
- **Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental (CEDA)**: [www.ceda.org.ec](http://www.ceda.org.ec)
- **Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario (CEDLA)**: [http://www.cedla.org/](http://www.cedla.org/)
- **Collectivo Casa**: [www.colectivocasa.org.bo](http://www.colectivocasa.org.bo)
- **Consortio Taisan**: [http://toisan-intag.org/](http://toisan-intag.org/)
Corporación para la Educación y el Desarrollo de la Investigación Popular (CEDINS): http://www.cedins.org/

Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR): www.dar.org.pe

Eduardo Gudynas: http://gudynas.com/

Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) Quito, Ecuador: https://www.flacso.org.ec/portal/

Focus on the Global South: http://focusweb.org/

Foro Social Mundial Temático de Venezuela: http://www.forosocial.org.ve/


Grassroots Economic Organizing (GEO): http://www.geo.coop/

Grupo América Latina, Filosofía Social y Axiología (Galfisa): http://cvirtual.filosofia.cu/sub-comunidades/galfisa/textos-galfisa


José el Corragio: http://www.coraggioeconomia.org/

IBON International: http://www.iboninternational.org

ICCO: www.icco.nl/en/

Instituto de Estudios Ecologistas del Tercer Mundo: http://www.estudiosecollogistas.org/

Instituto de Estudios Ecuatorianos: http://www.iee.org.ec/


International Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy: http://www.ripress.org/about-us/?lang=en

La Via Campesina: www.viacampesina.org

Latindadd: http://www.latindadd.org/

Leonardo Boff: http://www.leonardoboff.com/site-eng/lboff.htm

Liga Boliviana Defensa del Medio Ambiente (LIDEMA): www.lidema.org.bo

Luiz Carlos Bresser Periera: http://www.bresserpereira.org.br/
Maristella Svampa: http://www.maristellasvampa.net/


MISEREOR: www.misereor.de


Observatorio del Cambio Rural (OCARU): http://ocaru.org.ec/

Pablo Davalos: http://pablo-davalos.blogspot.com/

Plataforma Boliviana Frente al Cambio Climático: www.cambioclimatico.org.bo

Programa de Democracia y Transformación Global: http://www.democraciaglobal.org/

Rebelión: http://www.rebelion.org/portada.php

RECLAME: http://www.reclamecolombia.org/

Red Nacional de Sistemas de Trueke: http://rednacionaldetruke.blogspot.com/

Red Peruana por una Globalización con Equidad (RedGE): www.redge.org.pe

Sistema de la Investigación de la Problemática Agraria del Ecuador (SIPAE): http://www.sipae.com/

South Centre: http://www.southcentre.org/

Third World Network: http://twinside.org.sg/

Transiciones: http://transiciones.org/

Transnational Institute (TNI) – www.tni.org

Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR): www.unasursg.org

Universidad de la Cordillera: http://www.ucordillera.edu.bo/

Universidad de la Tierra, Oaxaca, Mexico: http://unitierra.blogspot.com/

Wayna Tambo-Red de la Diversidad:
http://perso.wanadoo.es/web_osqui/principal.htm?largo=48.9&poo=100%25&x=48.9