

SOUTH AMERICA – EXTRACTIVISM, INEQUALITY AND POSTCOLONIALITY

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POLITICAL & SOCIAL ISSUES

‘America’s backyard’ – long history of US economic & political interference

History of authoritarian governments/dictatorships

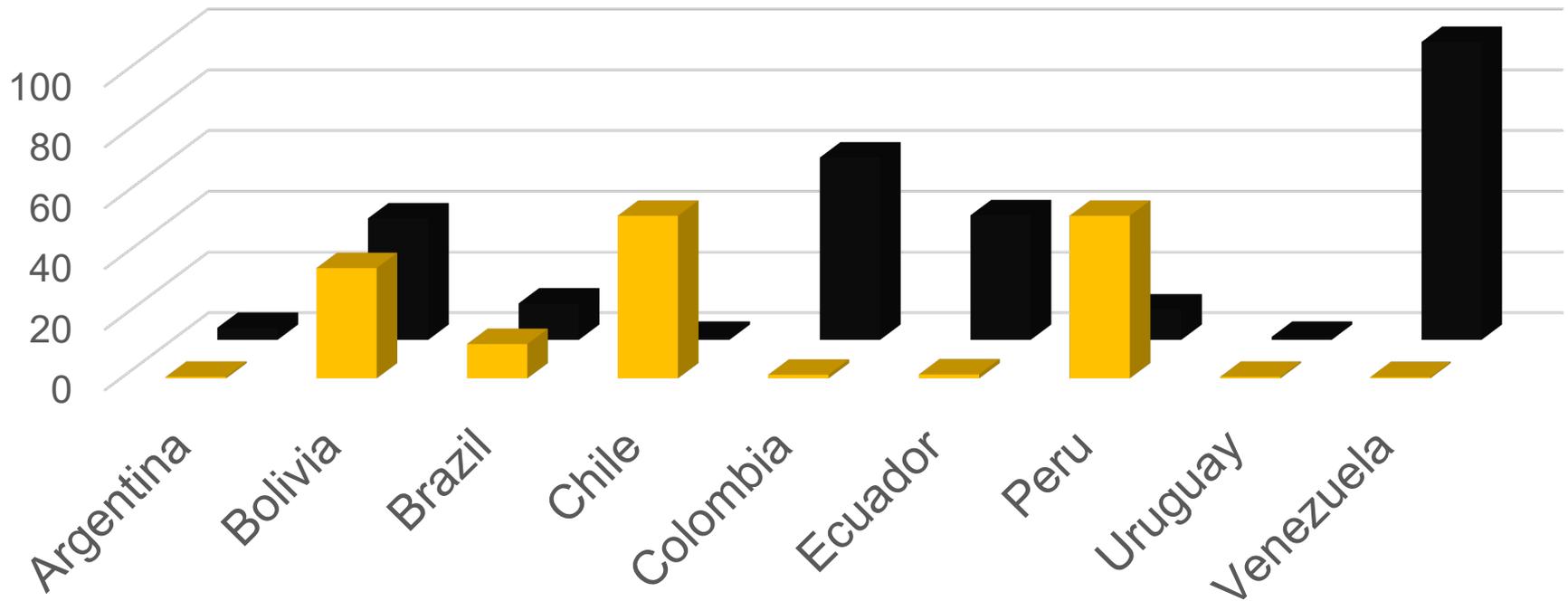
Resource-based economies rely on commodification of nature – ‘dig and ship’

High levels of social inequality – intersecting class, ethnicity & gender

INCOME INEQUALITY

Countries	Income share (%) held by lowest 10%, 2017	Income share (%) held by highest 10%, 2017	Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line, 2015 (%)	Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP), 2006-2017 (%)
Argentina	1.9	29.4	NA	0.4
Bolivia	1.2	31.7	38.6	5.8
Brazil	1.0	41.9	NA	4.8
Chile	1.9	37.9	11.7	0.7
Colombia	1.4	39.0	27.8	3.8
Ecuador	1.6	33.8	23.3	3.2
Peru	1.7	32.3	21.8	3.4
Uruguay	2.3	29.7	9.7	0.1
Venezuela	0.5	34.1	33.1	10.2

ORES, METALS AND FUEL EXPORTS, 2018



- Ores and metals exports (% of merchandise exports)
- Fuel exports (% of merchandise exports)

EXTRACTIVIST STATES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Liberal democracies in South America

Governments 'share the spoils': use mining profits to reduce poverty and improve social services

But new problems arise:

- ecological destruction
- conflict over land, water
- threat to people's livelihoods
- undermines social rights of indigenous and black social groups

(Burchardt & Dietz, 2014, pp. 478-480)

DEVELOPING THE AMAZON - BOLIVIA

"What, then, is Bolivia going to live off if some NGOs say 'Amazonia without oil'? They are saying, in other words, that the Bolivian people ought not have money, that there should be neither IDH [direct tax on hydrocarbons used to fund government investments] nor royalties, and also that there should be no Juancito Pinto, Renta Dignidad nor Juana Azurduy [cash-transfer and social programs]."

(Evo Morales, cited in Bebbington 2009, p. 15)



Bolivian President Evo Morales in 2008

Photo: Joel Alvarez

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DEVELOPING THE AMAZON - PERU

"Enough is enough. These peoples are not monarchy, they are not first-class citizens. Who are 400,000 natives to tell 28 million Peruvians that you have no right to come here? This is a grave error, and whoever thinks this way wants to lead us to irrationality and a retrograde primitivism."

(Alan Garcia, responding to protests against oil & gas exploration in 2007, cited in Bebbington 2009, p. 15)



Photo 1: President Alan Garcia, 17 July 2009; photo by TV Cultura

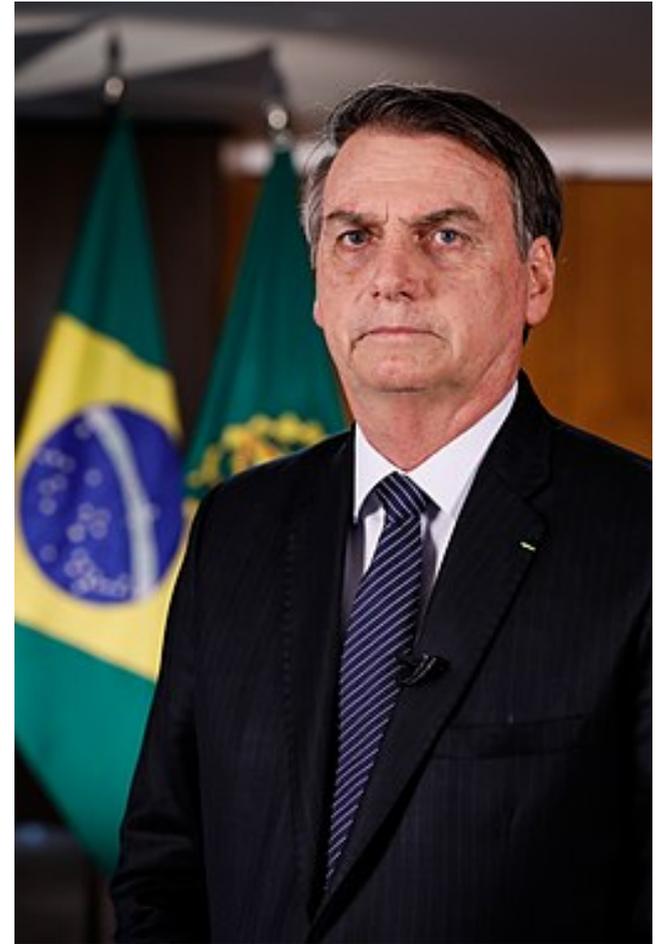
Photo 2: Police and protesters in Bagua Province 5 June 2009; photo by Thomas Quiryren/Reuters

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DEVELOPING THE AMAZON - BRAZIL

- Miners, loggers, speculators grabbing land in indigenous reserves (14% of Brazilian territory)
- Funding cuts to Funai, National Indigenous Affairs agency
- Over 400 conflicts brewing over mining (iron ore & gold)
- Growing rate of deforestation & extensive fires in 2019

(Jamasmie 2019; Phillips 2019)



Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro in 2019

Photo: Isac Nóbrega/PR

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PLURINATIONALISM AND DECOLONIAL ALTERNATIVES

Plurinationalism – state model that accommodates cultural diversity (multiple nations) within the liberal state while maintaining national unity (Merino 2018)

Plurinational constitutions in Ecuador 2008; Bolivia 2009

- Natural resources as exclusive dominion of the Bolivian people, administered by the state
- Right to self-government at local level

Decolonial framework – re-examines Western categories (Escobar 2015; Mollett 2017)

- Nature has rights
- ‘buen vivir’ as an alternative to development (‘good life’, collective well-being according to culturally appropriate conceptions)
- self-determination as a collective political right

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