Alternatives to development of the African-Colombian community and their contribution to Buen Vivir, in a context of social resistance to development

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Number of Keystrokes: 88881

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May 31, 2017

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Colombian history has been characterized by endless episodes of social injustice, violence and violation of people's rights, where specific ethnic groups such as Afro descendants and Indigenous have been the main victims of armed conflicts, land disputes and consequently social segregation and discrimination in the so-called civilized society, a society that continues to ignore the importance and potential influence of traditional and ancestral knowledges in the construction of a peaceful territories within and culturally diverse society.

Since colonial time's afro-Colombian communities have fought endless battles to defend their freedom and rights to exercise their autonomy, they have their own views on social sciences and economic systems that differ completely from those proposed by the neoliberal discourse imported from western societies and implemented by the national government (Escobar, 2010). The influence of western views on development have dominated the political and economic scenario for over 50 years with the intervention of North American policies that promised to help Latin American societies to follow their path towards wealth by opening markets and adapting to a global demands for economic activities driven by capitalist systems that would ironically bring more inequality and instability and conflicts. Based on critical views such scenario, authors of the post-development school such as Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano and Arturo Escobar have elaborated valuable work on the importance of understanding the dynamics of current world economic systems by having a closer look at history of colonialism in the global south with emphasis on Latin America. They make clear that it is important to decolonize our minds, thoughts and ideas sold by mainstream schools that have constantly tried to ignore and hide alternative, traditional or just different knowledge. Based on long terms studies on the Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific region Arturo Escobar argues that these communities offer very valuable knowledge on how to reproduce life alternatives in society towards a "Buen vivir" as proposed by the indigenous communities in other countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia, his discourse focuses on opening up for coexisting with different of cultures that are based on ancestral territories, and allowing these communities to implement their traditional economic activities and social structures within their territories.

The different Afro communities in the Pacific region chare the same history they are settle there as they scape from the colonizing power. They developed also autonomous ways of existence and very advanced knowledge in the sense of community and harmony with the environment. However they

have also been drastically affected by different actors placing their interests in the areas rich in natural reaources. Backs have suffer the worst consequences of the armed conflict in the fight over the territory, where powerful economic elites together with Guerrillas and Paramilitaries continue to threat the existence of these Afro communities.

1.2.   Brief history of Afro-Colombian community

African-Colombians are currently living in a constant threat of plunder of their cultural autonomy and genuine beliefs, a reality that dates back the beginnings of their existence in the American continent. During Colonial times black people were brought to Latin America from Africa under the category of slaves. They were traded illegally by French, Dutch, Portuguese, English and the Spanish. At the time in current Colombian territory the Spanish considered indigenous peoples to belong to the monarchy, they were therefore indoctrinated to the Catholic religion. The colonial system had as a priority the exploitation of natural resources, with gold mining as the main extractive activity. Africans replaced indigenous people for the enslaved work given that the Spanish considered Indigenous to have much lower performance. They were also systematically executed as many of them reacted hostilely to the colonial imposition, in this way most natives were exterminated together with their culture (Rodrígues, 2008).

It is calculated that around eight hundred thousand African slaves were imported to Colombia; they entered the country through the seaport in Cartagena to be spread out around the national territory. At a certain point Afro Colombian resistance took place during the 16th century when some of them started to run away seeking autonomy and freedom to reproduce their own life styles and culture. They settled themselves in "Palenques"; wooden forts for fugitive slaves placed mainly along the Pacific Region due to the hidden nature of the place and remoteness to colonial civilization. Once settled they developed their own economic activities based on mining, agriculture and fishing. The relocation of black communities in Palenques brought opportunities to reaffirm cultural identity, to become the first true independent republics in conquered land. Nowadays the San Basilio Palenque in the department of Bolivar is considered the first free town in American Continent, a genuine representation of African resistance since the colonial period (Rodrígues, 2008).

Since the times of Colonial domination Afro communities would also arrive in the northern part of Cauca since the first half of the 17th century were established and began to live and adapt to the

territories building in this way their particular ways of existence, but always connected to mining in this particular community has from the beginning of their arrival have formed their identity around with this ancestral tradition, at the time with other traditional ways of production. They have been also obliged to oppose resistance to external interest on the territory but they remain.

Furthermore the abolition of slavery took place after the independence of Colombia, it started with the manumission law in 1821wich established that from the day of issuance children born to enslaved women were free and had the right to be registered as citizens. The law would also bring slave trade to an end. However, slaveholders would demand guarantees of property rights stipulating guardianships that would prolong slavery for 18 years more. The final Abolition law was issued in 1851 and became effective January 1st, 1852. This meant that former slaves were entitled to rights and duties stated in the constitution, just like any other registered citizen. However by that time afro-descendants were deeply marked and influence by centuries of slavery, the oldest ones experienced being slaves themselves and younger generations saw their parents being brutally subordinated by the society a fact that would also define their identity and position in this very same society. They were free on paper yet not entitled to historical and special ethnic rights, neither the socioeconomic, educational nor political conditions required to exercising real freedom in the civilized context. Accordingly after the abolition of slavery, afro Colombian communities moved over to other areas by watersheds in the Pacific region and stated a process of affirmation of their culture carrying out practices of traditional production. However, these settlements were not supported by any land policies or legal framework (Rodrígues, 2008).

Nevertheless the Constitution of 1991would bring new legal framework with the aim of defending Afro-Colombian rights. Regarding constitutional spheres; article 55 commands legal recognition of collective property rights to black communities occupying land in watersheds of the Pacific region. In 1993 law 70 is issued aimed to establish mechanisms of protection of the communities' cultural identity as well as promoting socioeconomic development in order ensure real conditions for social equality (Rodrígues, 2008).

Additionally there are many other rights granted and legal stipulations aiming to benefit afro-Colombian communities, accordingly it is one of the countries with most legal support directed to traditional communities, yet their rights have been constantly violated and ignored. The different interests placed on these territories encourage disputes over land control. An example of these violations is the forced displacements experienced by thousands in the department of Chocó. Apart

from armed conflict issues, displacements are also caused by companies in the agricultural sector like African palm oil producers together with Livestock farmers; they dispose of Afro-Colombian collective territories ignoring completely the corresponding laws established.

It is ironic to think that being one of the richest regions in biodiversity and natural sources; it presents the highest indices of poverty and underdevelopment looking at standard socioeconomic indicators. For instance, at a national level Chocó, the department with largest population of Afro-Colombians, presents highest mortality rate (8 per 1000 residents), highest fertility rate, lowest live expectancy (men 63.1 years, women 69.7 years), and lowest Human Development Index (0.680) in terms of HDI Chocó would rank 113 out 175 countries of the listed by UNDP in 2008 whereas Colombia ranked 64. All these elements related to poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion together with economic inequality are closely linked to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all kind of practices related to intolerance that contribute to the persistence of attitudes and racist practices that generate more poverty. This kind of situations taking place in the pacific region can be represented by the situations experienced in urban areas in terms of marginalization. Though the dynamic is different considering that in rural areas people are being expelled while in urban areas people is not allowed in, in regards to social integration and labor insertion. As Escobar would argue; people were left out of the equation (Escobar, 1995, p. 44).

1.3.   Problem formulation

The Afro community from the Colombian Pacific Region has been suffering of different kinds of abuses and violence throughout their history, the reason they settled themselves in rainforest zones of the region was in fact the result of rebellion against the colonial power to seek freedom and autonomy. Once settled here they could experience peaceful lives under their own terms until the new wave of colonizers would place interest in this territories as a response to new global orders of power. From this the following question emerges

Problem question

How the theory and practice of conventional development destroys Afro communities and territories in the case of the North of Cauca, Colombia?

2. Theory

This project will incorporate theories and concepts of Development in contrast with Post-development school and Buen Vivir in order to analyze the collected data. In fists place a subsection on Development in the traditional or conventional European perspective to present what is understood by the term and accordingly have an idea of how its practice affects the Afro-Colombian community. Then Post-development and Buen Vivir come into the picture in the search for alternatives. Such theories and concepts are chosen given that they respond to critical views on the conventional understanding of development which coincides and supports the afro Colombian community fight in their ongoing ontological battle against the imposition of a neoliberalist model by the central government and capitalist elites; in first place post-development aims to explain the role of the global imposition the western model of development in the situation of poverty and social inequality taking place in Latin America, then secondly Buen Vivir is an actual counter proposal to traditional views on development from the hegemonic western societies.

The theoretical framework in this report will introduce the concept of Development referring to Australian scholars Damien Kingsbury, Joe Remenyi and Philip McMichael together with perspectives of Amartya Sen, followed by the counter theories presented by Latina American authors that have been key actors in the elaboration of critical theory as to incorporate ancestral native beliefs and knowledges to the academic field. At a start point Walter Mignolo from Argentina with the concept of Decolonization and decoloniality which provides tools to think differently, away from conventional modernity by examining the history of colonization. Moreover Arturo Escobar from Colombia with his outstanding work on deconstruction of development coupled with the concept of territoriality based on African Colombian communities of the pacific region and finally the Uruguayan Eduardo Gudynas who figured out the way to theorize an alternative model based on indigenous knowledge.

Development and Neoliberalism

As first instance the concept of "development" is to be defined as the argument to answer the problem statement is built upon pointing out how its theories, discourses and practices would

generate the greatest misfortunes of the Afro community in Colombian, all embodied in the case of the North of Cauca.

The emergence of development would take place during the colonial era, what by the 19th century European may see it as an essentially European phenomenon, would come to be viewed as a universal necessity. Philip McMichael sustains that by the time, development was understood philosophically as the improvement of humankind, European political elites would interpret it as social engineering of emerging national societies, translated in the formulation of government policy to manage the social transformations attending the rise of capitalism and industrial technologies. In short terms development was identified with industrialization and the regulation of its disruptive effects (McMichael, 2008).

After Second World War the concept of development has undergone a significant change, it has been generated in Western "developed countries" to be spread all over the world and become widely understood today as a people-centered historical process (Damien Kingsbury, Joe Remenyi, John McKay, Janet Hunt, 2004) According to Joe Remenyi:

"Development is a process directed at outcomes encapsulating improved standards of living and greater capacity for self-reliance in economies that are technically more complex and more dependent on global integration than before. (Damien Kingsbury, Joe Remenyi, John McKay, Janet Hunt, 2004)"

Remenyi argues that the current understanding of development as a people-centered process in intimately linked to governance issues, a process that responds to lessons learn from experience rather than the result of a victory of one line of thinking among the competing range of ideas about development. He focuses on the issue of "people in poverty" directing particular attention to the evolution of views on development that centralize the notion of people seeking a better life. For this he argues that in this perspective economic development has a service role in ensuring centrality of good governance and human rights issues coupled with ensuring that poverty alleviation is firmly placed on the center stage of development policy and development in practice (Damien Kingsbury, Joe Remenyi, John McKay, Janet Hunt, 2004).

The modern era of development would take place by the end of Second World War, one of the significant outcomes after the war would be the appearance of international governance structures, the so called Bretton Woods institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary and

the associated United Nations agencies, they would come to dominate the environment in charge of international Development and official development assistance (Damien Kingsbury, Joe Remenyi, John McKay, Janet Hunt, 2004). Through these institutions the developed economies would collaborate in undertaking the development project.

According to Philip McMichael the development project was a political and intellectual response to the condition of the world at a historic moment of decolonization given that by the second half of the 20th century the vast majority of former European Colonies gained their independence. Under these conditions, development assumed a specific meaning. It imposed an essentially economic understanding of social change. This would allow development to be universalized as a market culture common to all, and driven by the nation-state and economic growth (McMichael, 2008).

Economic growth was then one of the main ingredients of the development; the institutionalization of a universal quantifiable measure of national development became mandatory by UN System of National Accounts. In the year 1945 the UN Charter declared a rising standard of living as the global goal. The GDP per capita or the national average of per capita income is the material well-being indicator measured in the commercial output of goods and services within a country. This was set to be the key criterion to measure progress toward the "good society" even though it is not a sole measure of rising living standards. Economist and US presidential adviser Walt Rostow's idea of the five stages of economic growth placing "high mass consumption" at the top of development would give GDP readings, popularity and a principal role in the common understanding of development (McMichael, 2008).

Furthermore McMichael sustains that development as a project had a captivating aspect as it created this powerful perception for all including, planners, governmental elites and citizens, that development was a destiny. By the times of Cold War both blocks regardless of their respective paths, the West identified by free-enterprise capitalism and the Communist identified by abolition of private property and central planning, they would share the same modernist paradigm; national industrialization as the vehicle of development (McMichael, 2008).

Later on by the last decade of the 20th century the "globalization project" would emerge as the coordinates of development have changed. Development started out as a public project and got to be redefined as a private global project. The economic nationalism in the period of Import-Substitution Industrialization (ISI) during the Cold War would obstruct the mobility of goods, money and firms

serving the efficient allocation of global resources, therefore ISI would be seen as limitation to development. As a response the corporate-based World Economic Forum declared Nationalism to be economically vulnerable. The decline of economic nationalism would give way to powerful corporate players in the world market to seek out governing this new global project with international institutions representing them in this case the World Tarde Organization (McMichael, 2008).

At this point, powerful corporate players from the most advanced economies would lead the world economy and are simultaneously entitled to set the rules of the game, the future of development lies with the world markets, linked by the rules of neoclassical economic discourse (McMichael, 2008). These major economies are obliged to integrate all countries involved in the commodity chain systems that structure the global market place. It is therefore of especial interest the involvement of minor players providing raw materials to be manufactured or distributed by the more "developed" players, to serve both domestic and global demands, a dynamic that works just fine for the lead players therefore convenient to maintain and perpetuate. Globalization is officially considered a global development strategy or the successful participation of the world economy, in World Bank terms (McMichael, 2008). This new global politics of development opens its way through the deployment of Neoliberalist measures articulated by the Washington Consensus. This would be case for Latin American countries including Colombia.

In brief, the Washington Consensus is a set of policy prescriptions sustaining that Neoliberalism helps actors to frame concrete solutions. Its main guiding principles lie on, the benefits of reducing state intervention in economic affairs, the advantages of promoting free trade, desirability of low taxation and privatization of state-owned enterprises (Panizza, 2009). Such internationalist ideal by the means of economic opening, are originated from the viewpoint that trade brings prosperity and peace, however the sustainability and nature of trade relationships are questionable. Now after almost three decades of trade liberalization, as McMichael points out, the world order is marked by war, terror and several systems of feudalism, causing a range of social exclusion and conflict, a situation that frames the reality of the Afro community in diverse geographical areas of the Colombian territory. Social conflict, violence, and dispossession are generated by enterprises' ambitious expansionary plans of resource extraction, most likely supported by the government for the sake of serving neoliberal demands.

There is awareness of different approaches to defining Development, for instance Amartya Sen has a different view his framework on capabilities… however the focus in the report is on the concept of development that backs up Governmental dicourses to seek massive extraction of natural resources in order to compete in the dynamic of Globalization promising a unlikely welfare in the long run.

Post-colonialism and Post-Development

The post-development school claims that it is necessary to think about alternatives to development instead of finding alternative ways of reaching development in the third world. The argument relies on criticizing the misleading promises of western development and opposes to the endless pursuit for economic growth, industrialization and modernization suggesting to look beyond the era of development in the years following the Second World War. The argument is for the viability and existence of local alternatives to the traditional western solution in terms of politics, economics and science. (Ziai, 2007)

The idea of globalization sells the concept that we exist in a single universe understood by the rationality of science, therefore in the first place it is fundamental to understand why we think so then what the alternatives are. The concept of decolonization with Walter Mignolo is a good start point. In 1995 an intercontinental a pioneer event took place, this is the Conference of Bandung, in this occasion the not allied nations get together and present themselves as representatives of an alternative to the traditional hegemonic model Capitalism and Socialism/Communism the main goal was to share common thoughts on how the problem is not about left or right in the eternal debate on the optimal models from other dominant societies but to look into the local societies' claims and their own proposal of existence (Archivo Etnográfico Audiovisual FFYL, 2016).

According to Mignolo *"there is no modernity without coloniality* (Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute, 2016)*"* Europeans have built economic, social and political model based on their own epistemology, international law was created to support the idea of appropriation and expropriation of land and as a consequence racism emerged in the philosophy of the time trying to justify that Indians and Africans are lesser human and makes it available for such abuse. Western societies deployed their global lineal thinking to be the only valid epistemology, neglecting the local ones. The colonial matrix of power would therefore perpetuate inequalities in a fragmented society like the Colombian, generating conflicts of an indignant society against an abusive central Government and Socio-economic elites.

Latin American countries share the same history in regards to European colonization and such historical events and their contributions can explain current realities of these countries in terms of social structures together with political and socio-economic models. But in order to understand the correlations between historical events and current situations it is fundamental to clarify some key concepts related to the Colonial period and its influence on the colonized. There are four key concepts that are to be explained and distinguished from each other; In the one hand, colonialism and coloniality, and in the other hand decolonization and decoloniality, which despite their similarities the analysis of their respective meanings provide platforms for reflection on a shift in politics of knowledge from studying the other (Mignolo, 2001), meaning the oppressed communities, in the case of Colombia, indigenous and Afro-descendants.

The term colonialism refers to historical events taking place during the 16th century until the 19th century, where different European countries colonized other territories imposing a system of both physical and epistemic domination, land appropriation, slavery and exploitation of natural resources. Such events would result in the establishment of a society that aims to emulate European society but based on a colonial system of power. Then Coloniality is the common logic followed by these forms of Colonialism, this same logic has been applied since the arrival of the colonizers and continues to be so now in the 21st century. As Mignolo explains, it can be affirmed that colonialism is over; however the underlying logic connecting these former colonialisms is still present in the colonial patterns of power in the form of capitalism. Different forms of colonialism have been taking place before the European conquest in the global south, an example of this is the Roman Empire or even the Incan Empire, such forms of colonialisms implied systems of domination, slavery and appropriation of land, nevertheless without coloniality as their economies were not market growth oriented nor intended to supply an international demand, in brief, not capitalist (Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute, 2016).

Moreover the theory of the Coloniality of Power formulated by Anibal Quijano states that the pattern of global power that emerged following the European conquest of the Americas is constituted by two main axes, one of them is the idea of "Race" as the foundation of a whole new system of social domination, and as a second axe there is the articulation of all "modes of production" into a single structure of production of goods for the world market, also known as Capitalism. The combination of these axes would establish the pattern of colonial power, and originates as well the concept of Eurocentrism, which is defined as a system of production and

control of intersubjective relations, both of them dependent on the demands of capitalism as well as on the colonizers need to perpetuate and naturalize their system of domination. Apart from the physical aspects of the imposition of production systems structured on the base of social hierarchies, the control of intersubjective relationships would imply controlling the social imaginary, the historic memory and the generation of knowledge of the colonized (natives, slaves and creoles) meaning that Eurocentrism would impose a distorted definition of the dominated that forces them to see themselves from the dominators point view, and accomplishes the rejection of their own historical perspective and cultural autonomy (Quijano, 2000).

Now back to the definition of key concepts there is Decolonization and decoloniality as counter parts of the first two. According to Walter Mignolo decolonization refers to a transition of power, refers to actual events where the rebellions of the colonized seek self-control over their colonizers. The first wave of decolonization would take place between 1750 and 1850 with great revolutions such as the French and the USA, followed by the movements of independence in Latin America. More recent examples of this are the many revolutions taking place in in times of Cold War during the second part of the 20th century, where a cluster of countries would reject the western hegemonic patterns of domination, to seek an alternative model of existence. A good example would be the Indian independence movement of disobedience. Now considering that Coloniality isn't physical matter but a conceptual structure, then Decoloniality is about a process of detachment to the colonial pattern of power, where the idea is to detach from all what modernity offers, understood as consumerist behaviors, to abandon the concept of the ideal modern man with the belief that happiness consist of acquiring commodities. The epistemic detachment is the first step of decolonility (Archivo Etnográfico Audiovisual FFYL, 2016)

In the case of Colombia, as a former Spanish colony there are many examples of perpetuated coloniality and its patterns of power remain in many ways even after hundreds of years since the conquest. During Colonial times Colombia had a very marked social structure based on race, as explained by Quijano the idea of Race as main social category of modernity played an important role in terms of defining geocultural identities, not only in Latin America but at a global level too. Quoting Anibal Quintero:

"Race and racial identity were established as instruments of basic social classification of the population" (Quijano, 2000)

Consequently the European distinction of races would contribute to articulate other forms of classification based on the ideas of social class and gender. In terms of intersubjective relationships and practices of social power, Colonizers would consider non-Europeans to have a different and inferior biological structure, and then based on such considerations people from different cultures were considered to be neither a product of the history of human interrelations or to have relation to the universe. All these ideas have configured a profound and long lasting cultural complex as it established a whole matrix of ideas, images, values, attitudes and social practices that continues to be implicated in the relations between people, such complex is what is known as Racism. The inheritance of a Colonial past allows many situations of racism in Colombia, even today both indigenous and Afro-descendants continue to be excluded and discriminated, they have been constantly removed from their ancestral territories and forcedly displaced to urban areas where they are subsequently stripped of their cultural customs and obliged to follow the paradigm of modernity. (Quijano, 2000)

Regarding the second axe of coloniality, there is capitalism as the current pattern of power in the world, which is composed of a system of material social relations taking place by the time of the imposition of a universalized mode of production and its respective control of subjectivities. For this matter since the conquest, parallel to a social pattern of domination a new system of labor control begins to take shape articulated through all known forms of exploitation within a single structure of production of goods for the world market around the hegemony of capital. Now 500 years later the patterns of hegemonic power around capital continues to be reproduced in modern societies as the platform of Coloniality made it possible to perpetuate (Quijano, 2000).

The contribution of Arturo Escobar to post-developmet is fundamental to define articulation of perpetuation of the mentioned patterns of hegemonic power besides his valuable field work in the production of case studies based on the Afro communities in the Colombian Pacific Region. In his most representative publication "Encountering development, The Making and Unmaking of the Third World" he articulates his thesis from the argument that the discourse and strategy of development, produced its opposite, meaning massive underdevelopment and impoverishment, ineffable exploitation and oppression. According to Escobar the western discourses define development through three main axes: its forms of knowledge; the system of power that regulates its practice; and the forms of subjectivity that they foster. In the critique he describes development as following:

"Development was and continues to be for the most part a top-down, ethnocentric and technocratic approach" (Escobar, 1995)

He approaches the problematization of poverty by pointing out that by professionalizing the knowledge of development plus the institutionalization of its practices (Embodied by Organizations of World Governance) would deploy the conceptualization of linear development defining the underdeveloped world, accordingly the formation of capitalism in the post-war economic context would allow systematic perpetuation based on the concept that insufficient income is the problem, therefore the solution was economic growth, yet leaving people of the equation.

Colombia is a good example of the above, opening markets followed by the expansion of extractive industries would mainly benefit major players of the national economic and political elites leaving a very unequal society with one of the highest GINI coefficient in Latin America at 0.53 by 2014 (The World Bank, 2014), division of socio-economic classes are very pronounced and it's still connected to race in most cases. People in urban areas have very little knowledge about Indigenous and Afro-Colombian culture and the knowledge coming from these communities is not assumed to be valid, on top of that signs of racism are evident especially at urban areas where both the indigenous and Afro population is concentrated in the cities' worst slums as a result of forced displacement. Moreover such displacements are the result of the country's perpetuation of the Coloniality of power through the conflict over territories rich in natural resources. The central Government insists in applying the developmental discourse of economic growth, which in the case of Colombia means to intensify an extractivist economy based on the extraction of natural resources, mainly hydrocarbons and mining (Escobar, La Visión de Arturo Escobar, 2015). Such economic model follows and continues to reproduce the same structures of exploitation explained in the colonial matrix of power.

Eurocentrism dictated what kind of knowledge is valid and universal, and it has indeed been of European origin, based on European parameters, what refers to Geo-politics of knowledge, where the western hegemony has control over the generation of knowledge (Mignolo, 2001)However, returning to Mignolo's argument on the importance of the different movements and events of decolonization by the second half of the 20th century, he illustrates how such historical events coupled with unified efforts of countries identifying themselves as an alternative to the hegemonic western model starting at the Bandung conference and gradually spread all over non-european regions including Latin America, it is observed that there has been a fundamental shift in the way of

approaching what has been considered universal during 500 years of westernization. At this point an important shift in mentality is taking place, what corresponds to the beginning of any epistemic de-colonial de-linking with all its historical, political and ethical consequences (Mignolo W. D., 2009).Such an epistemic shift implies new ways of conceptualizing nature, territoriality and development in the Latin America, opening a path to take the lead in social sciences and eco-critical studies to some extent (Raftopoulos, 2016).

Outstanding exponents of post-development school such as Escobar, Peet and Watts argue that, if in a given society the dominating model of development is the product of existing power relations, then social movements can seek a new type of social relations and formulate alternative models of development, including an 'alternative to' development. The locally oriented and territorially conscious social movements are representatives of de-coloniality by providing distinct knowledges and practices, values and visions that can serve as an epistemological fundament to build a counter power challenging dominating paradigms (Raftopoulos, 2016)

In Latin America, countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia have taken a step forward in the transitional process of de-westernization as their governments have been listening and taking action regarding demands of the indigenous movements and their conceptualization of nature and social interactions based on the Aymara notions of Buen Vivir. In both cases the indigenous counterpart to conventional development moved from cosmology to policy as in 2006 the call for Constituent Assembly of these progressive governments would support different mobilized sectors of civil and political society on what concerns to the public debate the construction of national social order what resulted in the incorporation of Buen Vivir as the guiding principle of their respective new national constitution, taking place in 2008 for Ecuador and 2009 for Bolivia. (Florentin 2016)

Buen Vivir

Following the construction of theoretical framework on alternatives to development, it is observed how at a first stage there is the emerge and rise of critical thinking that questions what has been considered as universal truth due to imposition of a dominating culture that monopolized knowledge, explained by the concept of coloniality, it is then necessary to de-link of its logic at an epistemic level in order to open up for alternatives to it. Considering the above what has been traditional for indigenous communities appear to be new knowledge to modern societies, including the so called developing societies as Latin America. However, by the recent decades, scholars being born and raised in such societies have had the opportunity de-link their minds and consequently

produce valuable academic work that aims to communicate and eventually pragmatize different knowledge and cosmologies of precolonial ancestry into conventional societies. The ecologist Eduardo Gudynas is an exceptional example with his contribution on Buen Vivir as he embodies the conception of development from an indigenous perspective in a well elaborated model that proposes a pragmatic alternative to conventional development.

The term 'Buen Vivir' gathers a diverse set of both superficial and deeper questions and alternatives to conceptualizing and constructing bases for development (Gudynas, 2015, p. 201). According to Eduardo Gudynas there are three different uses for the label of Buen Vivir; a generic use, employed in generic criticisms of different forms of conventional development which has been used by progressive governments as a slogan to characterize alternative projects, then there is a restricted use which corresponds to a more complex criticism of contemporary capitalism calling for a post-capitalist type of development also linked to a socialist tradition that involves a debate on different kinds of desirable development, it conveys particular views on the role played by the state in the allocation of resources and the ownership of these, but it does not necessarily question the utilitarian use of nature or the goal of economic growth. Finally a substantive use of the label relates to a more radial criticism, which defends post-capitalist and post-socialist alternatives that represent indigenous knowledge and sensibilities together with a critical perspective to western mentality (Gudynas, 2015, p. 202).

It is important to consider that the substantive sense is a plural endeavor under construction meaning that there are different expressions of the concept depending on the cultural background where it is originated, there are however key elements which encompasses the essence of the indigenous beliefs and traditions that opposes directly to the main ideas of modernization theories concerning the realms of economy, society, and environment, as explained by Gudynas;

"Buen Vivir rejects the idea of a predetermined historical linearity in which 'development stages' must be followed by all nations (imitating industrialized nations), but rather defends the multiplicity of historical processes. It does not accept the concept of progress and its derivatives (particularly growth) or the idea that welfare depends only upon material consumption." (Gudynas, Buen Vivir 2015, 202)

The definition of the term sets a platform for unconventional knowledge generated by indigenous cultures and ratifies the epistemic ground of de-coloniality as it rejects the common logic of coloniality of power embodied by neoliberalist models based on modern capitalism. Moreover in terms of pragmatism Gudynas addresses social and environmental issues generated by economic activities of western development, a socio-economic model that sees nature as a commodity to be

exploited for the sake of economic growth to supply a highly demanding world of consumerism. The world markets demand the extraction of raw materials at a very large scale; within the semantic of Buen Vivir these activities are called "extractivismos", Gudynas states that extractivism is the foundation of market oriented economies where countries rich in natural resources, mainly minerals and hydrocarbons, in order to provide the modern industrialized world with such resources (Gudynas, 2015, p. 202), a reality for Latin American countries, in the case of Colombia at the expense of social injustices and generation of violence (Escobar).

Gudynas argues for an alternative to development that would most likely include the extraction of natural resources but also aims for a gradual decrease in the scale of extractivist activities, especially those concerning extraction of minerals, hydrocarbons and production of monocultures. It would be utopic to think of implementing such a reductionist model all of a sudden after many years of neoliberalist hegemony, therefore Gudynas proposes a range of gradual transitions stipulated by the scale of extractivism in terms of dependency on export-oriented economy in contrast with its socio-environmental impact. The following figure illustrates the above.

Figure 1.
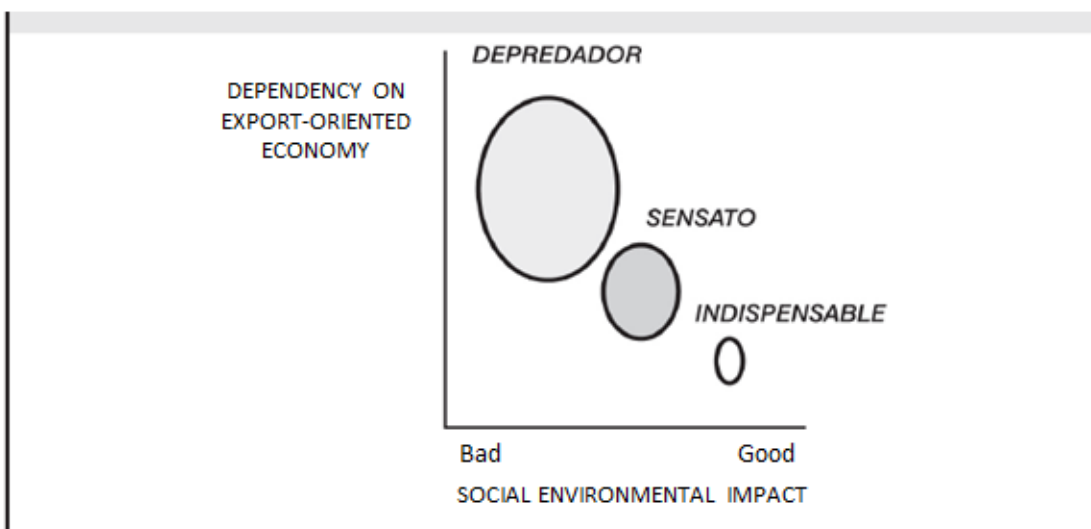
Source: (Gudynas, Caminos para las transiciones post extractivistas 2011, 199-200)

According to figure 1, there are three main stages in the transition from massive and destructive extractivism to a significantly more moderate stage that goes accordingly to the pillars of Buen Vivir, what Gudynas refers to as Post-extractivism. At a first stage "Predatory Extractivism" refers to the current economic models dictated by the idea of conventional development, massive

extraction of natural resources over vast geographical areas generating significant negative impact of the environment and civil society. At this stage the economic benefits for social development are very questionable. The following stage is "Reasonable Extractivism" where the scale of extraction is more moderate as it is regulated through legal mechanisms that aim to protect minorities and the environment, the use of better technologies in the extraction is demanded as to reduce its negative impact. Jointly the state must intervene in order to procure a fairer allocation of economic returns.

Then at a genuinely pro-environmental stage "Indispensable Extraction" takes place where the idea is not to eliminate all forms of extraction of natural resources but make essential use of such resources, respecting all social and environmental demands, sincerely conscious over consumption networks that are strictly directed to a real contribution to improvement of living standards of local society. At this last stage it is required to establish a scenario where extraction of natural resource is re-conceptualized within an alternative to conventional western development. Both civil servants and civil society are to assume the necessity to reach de-colonial de-link in order to assimilate an alternative meaning of well-being in community as Buen Vivir dictates.

In Latin America, the progressive approach of governments such as Ecuador and Bolivia would to some extent embody characteristics of reasonable extractivism as they integrate legal mechanisms to defend both social claims and the environment through constituents that allowed the incorporation of Buen Vivir into the their respective constitutions. Laws regarding previous consultation to local communities and establishing vast protected natural reserves would represent an important first step towards post-extractivism, however the extraction and dependency on export oriented economy continues to predominate and even to increase. In the other hand there is Colombia with a hegemonic neoliberal model that continues to reproduce "predatory extractivism", for instance in the current administration under President Juan Manuel Santos the mining and energy sectors were expanded as the key driving force for future economic growth in the country, what is also known as the mining-energy locomotive (McNeish, 2017).

Indigenous and afro-colombian communities are though entitled to special legislation that seeks protection of their ancestral patrimony in terms of territory and culture as mentioned in the introductory chapter (Law 21 and Law 70) more over this ethnic groups also protected by The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention by the ILO which entitles them to Prior consultation rights. This is however violated by the interest of the central government and multinational entities that prioritize

there plans on extractive mining-energy locomotive. Nonetheless social movements coming from different sectors of civil society are encountering this situation and growing the awareness to seek change, involve the civil society and revive a sense of belonging to the territory. A recent example is Tolima's (Department of Colombia) local people's use of popular consultation as a legal and democratic mechanism to derail state and corporate plans for natural resource extraction. It took place in July 2013 when a referendum was organized by municipal authorities, to judge public opinion on the establishment of a colossal gold mine by international mining conglomerate (McNeish, 2017).

The constitutional changes of 1991 created conditions for an intense period of political and cultural activism lead by local indigenous and afro-Colombian groups. To such extent that the groups of blacks got involved in the political debate as black communities were officially categorized as central political and cultural fact of relevance. Consequently groups of ethno-territorial networks such as "Proceso de Comunidades Negras" PCN would adopt the category and the government would decree development plans for black communities. Such category gained local strength, at least at the level of movements, NGOs, the Catholic Church, and even at the promoters of development (Escobar, 2010). The PCN has been making valuable contributions to embody the notions of cultural and ethnic identity which is naturally connected to the sense of territoriality, what can be cataloged as an expression of "Buen Vivir", these groups are leading a relevant ontological battle to defend their identity and autonomy from the devastating forces of a hegemonic extractivist model within a given ancestral territory. According to Escobar (1995), those social movements engaged in the defense of their territories and natural resources are most promising, because territory is the indispensable spatial-political dimension of any social project that implicates power. Moreover, territory as politicized space of human everyday existence and interaction with nature is directly connected to the question of ways of living that notify understanding of development. Here, the notions of locality and politics of place are crucial (Malayna Raftopoulos, Radosław Powęska, 2017).

Moreover from a vast and long period of investigation and cooperation with activists and social leaders of the PCN and its networks, Escobar has come to theorize on Afro-Colombian contribution to Buen Vivir, from another perpective additional to Aymara but coinciding on the pillars of alternative to conventional development. To such contribution it is important to highlight the concept of "Pluriverso". It refers to a political project to be weaved in collaboration with different

sectors of civil society, and it all starts at the ontological level. It is a Political ontology of the territorial fights, different cosmologies in the world, the different conceptions of reality, meaning that there are many different worlds and not only one to be followed by all societies/communities as its been imposed by western civilizations. We live in a world containing many different worlds as the Zapatist philosophy explains (Soc.Col. Etnobiología & Escobar, 2015). The neoliberal world threatens the other different worlds not only at an epistemic level imposing life styles and paradigms of economic growth and mass consumption but it also threatens nature with irreversible consequences and deterritorializes authentic settlers. In contrast ethno-territorial movements as ontological challenge, it isn't just a fight for inclusion, economic rights or human rights, but about the model of knowledge and the worlds model, where defending life and territory is the spine of the movement (Soc.Col. Etnobiología & Escobar, 2015).

3. Methodology

The purpose of this section is to explain how the investigation of the problem question is done, this includes subsections of philosophy of science, data collection, choice of research design, delimitations, as well the explanation of how the collected data is analyzed.

Theory of Science

The essence of this report is of philosophical fundaments as it deals with argumentation based on ontological and epistemic perspectives that are alternative to what has been considered universal valid knowledge due to the dominating nature of a certain culture as explained previously in the theory section, therefore it is fundamental to categorize and situate the case and the investigation within aspects on philosophy of science.

The definition of paradigm by Guba and Lincoln (1994) states that a set of beliefs or world view is known as paradigm, a way of thinking about the world basic belief system based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, and there is no way to prove that one paradigm is superior than the others (Guba and Lincoln 1994 p. 107). Based on this, the paradigm to be adopted

defines the tone and approach of the whole report to justify the validity of assumptions that are most likely not accepted by realists' positivists or modernists. That being settled, this report brings together typical characteristics of Critical Theory, it assumes that a given reality is created and shaped by social, political, ethnic and gender-based forces that have been reified over time into social structures that are considered to be natural or real. Then from the ontological perspective of critical theorists this denominated reality is apprehendable, therefore it is inappropriate to assume that for all practical purposes such social structures are real. (http://www.qualres.org/HomeCrit-3518.html), shortly defined by Alvesson and Willmott (1998) Critical Theory is founded upon a social theory toward critiquing and changing society. The focus is upon an inherent connection between politics, values and knowledge, to originate a deeper consideration, constituting in this way legitimate scientific knowledge. According to Derek Layder (1994) the aim is to diagnose problems of the modern society and identify the nature of the social changes that are necessary to produce a more just and democratic society (Lee Yow Fui, 2011).

Accordingly, the above applies to the case of eurocentrism building theoretical and practical framework to deploy the concept of development and underdevelopment on the base of a history of domination as explained in the previous section. Talking alternatives to a conventional tradition of knowledge implies thinking critically, accepting and adopting different perspectives to understand phenomena within social sciences. It means basically to reject what has been assumed to be a natural truth based on integrating the major social sciences, including geography, economics, sociology, history, political science, anthropology and psychology. This is evidenced as the exponents of the theories chosen for this report have different educational backgrounds within the social sciences and from these; they analyze problems in modern society and suggest possible solutions too.

Epistemology in critical theory is based on interactions of the researcher and the researched, where findings are transactional and subjective as the values of the researcher are considered to have an influence on the findings. One of the main philosophers in contemporary critical theory, Jürgen Habermas would argue that socio-cultural factors influence people's sensory experience, as human cognition shapes reality through its imposition of previous cognitive principles. Hence the positivist approach of correspondence theory of truth along with the possibility of a theory of neutral observational language is impossible (Lee Yow Fui, 2011). In this particular report findings are produced from my understanding of the theoretic framework and logical assumptions of these in

relation to the given situation in the studied case. Escobar as one of the main theorists inspiring this investigation, refers to thinkers from both first and second generation of the Frankfurt School, founders and contributors to critical theory, to sustain that through their work they contribute to support the idea of a relatively unique process of globalization emanated by a few dominant centers, continues to be hegemonic. And in the origins of progressively more intoxicating globalization there is the view of modernity as an essentially European phenomenon. The opinions of Habermas and Giddens have been particularly influential (Escobar, 2010).

The ideas of Michel Foucault have also inspire much of Escobar's work, he explains how by the time he was producing his Doctorate thesis he found in Foucault's thoughts a fundamental way to show how discourse works as domination instrument and beyond, what would allow Escobar to show clearly the existence of a very dynamic and self-organized mechanism of production of the reality. Based on this appears the question that opens his thesis: Asia and Latin America were invented and constructed through discourse as underdeveloped and consequently treated as so since. (Arturo Escobar, Maximo Badaró, Marita Carozzi, Claudia Fonseca, Alejandro Grimson, Pablo Semán, Guillermo Wilde, 2011). Quoting Foucault, discourse refers to the:

"delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories (Foucault 1972: 199)" (Naz, 2006)

Foucault's concept on discourse and its relation to power and knowledge in general turns out to be insightful for scholars of the post-colonial and post-development school especially when applied to discourses on development in the so called Third World. Then following the construction of the critique post-development questions all basic premises of development and modernity shaping its discourse, to generate alternative knowledge (Soc.Col. Etnobiología & Escobar, 2015).

The above are example of how critical thinkers have made fundamental contributions to generate theoretical framework that sets basis for post-development, therefore as researcher I considered critical epistemology the most appropriate way of generating findings and knowledge on the selected topic, and consequently conduct a proper methodology that suits it. Now, knowing that methodology deals with the way how knowledge is discovered in a practical context I as researcher find relevance in discovering knowledge through dialog and logical arguments (NurseKillam,

2013). In the following subsection I explain the method to undergo taking into consideration the spheres dictated by the paradigm governing the research.

Method

As previously mentioned setting the paradigm defines the articulation for picking a method that accommodates to the researchers way of understanding reality and discovering knowledge, then in this subsection I define how data is collected and analyzed.

Data Collection

Considering the relativist nature of the report given that argumentation is based on well-funded theory of scholars in relation to historical and more recent events, coupled with my own perception and analysis on such events, the data to be collected is to be of a qualitative character rather than quantitative what would correspond to a realist, positivist approach instead.

As Denzin and Ryan define it, qualitative research stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Ryan 2007, 582-583). Accordingly collected data is not to be rigorously measured in standard units of any kind. Instead the report deals with meanings that are mediated mainly through language and action (Ian Dey,1993). Therefore data is presented in forms of theory books, reports and studies on historical events and social processes related to or having influence on the current situation of a focus group, Afro-Colombian communities. The inquiry includes historical reviews of the ethnic group in Colombia, reports on the country's economic model and its effects on the focus group, government discourses, testimonies and interviews of the focus group.

The analysis of data is made through deductive approach as the respective documents, report, speeches, interview, testimonies are utilized to deduce explanations of how the execution of extractive activities promoted by capitalism in the name of development.

Case Study

The research method chosen is the single case study on the Afro-Colombian resistance in the department of Cauca north. The case frames a typical situation that generalizes a reality of different Afro-Colombian communities in the pacific region. Cases are conceptual categories delineated as meaningful to explore in detail due to their specific qualities or potential to illuminate a given

phenomenon (Ryan 2007, 102). They may also display interesting features useful to examine in depth and offer insights into a broader issue, connecting specific events to larger patterns (Bailey 2010, 104).

Looking into the definitions of this method, it is possible to spot characteristics of the inquiry that point out the suitability of case study as research method, according to Robert K. Yin:

"A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon on depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin 2009, 17)."

Yin sustains that the most important condition for differentiating among the various research methods is to classify the type of research question being formulated, "How" and "Why" questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories and experiments as the most appropriate research methods. Furthermore, the case study is favored to examine contemporary events, when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated (Yin 2009, 9-11). In the case of the Afro-Colombian community the aim is to answer an explanatory question related to the negative effects of developmetalist endeavors, a contemporary phenomenon that cannot be understood out of its specific context.

There is a set of criteria to judge the quality of a case study research design (Yin 2009, 41- 44):

- *Construct validity*: it means that a case study has a sufficiently operational set of measures and "objective" methods.
- *Internal validity*: the inferences made by the case study are correct all rival explanations and possibilities have been considered.
- *External validity*: regards the problem of knowing whether a case study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study. Critics typically state that single cases offer a poor basis for generalizing. However, case study is different from survey research, which relies on statistical generalization, whereas case study relies on analytic generalizations. In the latter, the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory.
- *Reliability*: the case study must make operational steps and be as documented as possible in order to minimize errors and biases. The replicability of the study must be ensured.

Thus, a major step in designing and conducting a single case is defining the case itself. A case study has to be significant, meaning that it has to be unusual and of general public interest, its underlying issues have to be nationally important in theoretical and practical terms (Yin 2009, 50).

Delimitations

Limits to describe the situation lived by some specific cases of the Pacific region where there are afro-Colombian communities and territories.

The boundaries of the case in terms of geography respond to the Northern part of the department of Cauca, with focus on Alto Cauca and La Toma municipality of Suarez, however cases of other Afro- Colombians communities in different geographic locations are cited too, as to provide more evidence that contribute to the argument. In regard to time boundaries the case makes reference to a contemporary issue however the argument of the thesis in built upon historical events affecting the ethnic group as a whole, so in order to establish a boundary of time the most appropriate to the case is to point out that many fundamental causes of the issue take place within a long spectrum of time starting from the 16th century by the time Africans were enslaved by European colonizers until present times, nevertheless the case as such focuses on the last three decades dating back to a crucial event taking place in La Toma, the construction of the Dam la Savajina and the followed social mobilization by representatives of the Afro-Colombian community to claim, collective rights and resist to the destructive neoliberal means of development.

The questions refers to destruction of black communities, meaning that the neoliberal apparatus limits their autonomy to exercise their cultures and customs within ancestral territories, it doesn't eliminate them as they are still present but forced to leave their territories and move in most cases to main urban areas where they relocate themselves in sectors of the cities where there are mainly blacks but living in conditions that won't allow them to preserve cultural traditions of existence or be autonomous in any way.

As researcher I am not performing interviews of my own or interacting directly with the participants of the case study as I am conducting the investigation from the distance. I am located in Denmark by the time I elaborate this report.

I mention how the critical theory paradigm integrates major social sciences however this report does not study or go in depth with it but there is awareness of the fact that authors quoted or referenced are to some extent throughout their work covering the different academic fields listed previously. This report lays special attention on historical events supported by my personal trust on the different theorists' work on the different fields of social sciences.

For instance, even though psychology is one of the social sciences to be integrated within the paradigm of critical thinking the report does not make any reference to the subject, it is however assumed by the researcher to be another fundamental issue playing an important role in the deployment of the conception of the conventional and at the same time in the process of any epistemic delink.

4. Analysis

The aim of this section is to present preselected data that show evidence of the argumentation based on theories of post-development, and real examples of alternatives. First there is a brief history of arrival of Neoliberalism in Colombia to argue how its policies promote extractivist measures with its destructive consequences. Then a closer look into the Case of Northern Cauca, descriptions of the situation, and testimonies of the community and analysis of the devastating effects of developmentalist endeavors in these territories.

Neoliberal Model in Colombia

In the time context previous to the arrival of neoliberalism, it is observed that since the year 1930 Colombian economy experienced fundamental changes that originated a structural transformation, later facing times of crisis due to falls in prices specially coffee originating constant fluctuation at the time. Conversely, the political conflicts would begin in the 40's slowing development in agriculture. Fights over the holding of land, problems related to colonial inheritance plus the emergence of the different conflict actors such as guerrillas, paramilitary self-defenses and drug traffic, added to absence of the State in the conflict areas have contributed to vast impoverishment that suffers the country at the moment. (Castaño, 2002)

The economic opening reaches its full extent in Colombia in the 1990s. It was during Virgilio Barco's administration (1986-1990) that all the preparations were made to initiate it, in such a way as to almost confirming a plan of government, ready to develop in only four years; With this premise it was thought that with the fall of the Socialist scheme in the Soviet Union and the so-called triumph of capitalism worldwide, The time for great harmony among all the countries of the world had come. Hegemony of the market economy was a fact and with it the resurgence of liberal thinking and Social Darwinism as an alternative of order in where competitiveness, efficiency and productivity reign. Adam Smith's postulates resurface with the argument that equity and social justice will, in the long term, be the result of the dynamization of the process of accumulation. (Castaño, 2002).

The episodes reported above sound optimistic and promising in terms of opportunities of economic growth, however the story for a struggling working class wouldn't be the same. As explain in the theory section, such measures would benefit major players (National elites and foreign developed economies) while a large percentage of the population continues to suffer impoverishment dealing with high inflation rates in a fluctuating economy where many people are to survive through alternative unofficial jobs (Castaño, 2002).

By the term of President Gaviria (1990-1994) the policies of national development plan "The peaceful revolution", seemed to be bold, considering that it was the beginning of a whole economic and social revolution, but thought from above. Colombian rulers limited themselves to complying with the orders given by the great economic groups at the international level, mainly those of B.M. and F.M.I. as recommended the Washington Consensus. Thus, the real situation of the rest of the Colombians, of whom a large part were in poverty, (17 million poor according to the 1993 census) was not taken into account (Castaño, 2002).

These reviews on the events and consequences on the arrival of Neoliberalism by historian Ricardo Castaño, coincide to a wide extent with Escobar's assessments on the flaws of development represented here by Neoliberal policy. Furthermore Castaño quotes Jorge Child;

"Neoliberalism has made a rereading of classical liberalism without taking into account the monopoly and international structure of capitalism of our time" (Castaño, 2002).

To explain that neoliberalism is no more than the implementation of old economic strategies to the new conditions of development without taking into account their advances in industrialization and

presented in this model as "alternative", where equity and social justice interact according to the worker, but to be more productive, more effective, with the lowest possible capital investment (Castaño, 2002). As Escobar would put it, attempting to solve problems arising from the categories of modernity, with modern solutions, is a mistake; therefore there is a need for real alternative paths away from those creating the problem in the first place.

Castaño approached also the social issues explaining that in the Neoliberal context, democratization of the economy has meant opportunity for those who handle large capital and poverty for those who lack the economic resources to survive or have no stable jobs. What leads to Escobar's argument that the managers of the capitalist system have perpetuated hegemony based on the concept that insufficient income is the problem, therefore the solution is economic growth, however leaving people of the equation.

But how are all this events connected to extractivism? And how would it end up affecting vulnerable groups of the population such as indigenous and Afros? The answer to this lies on the connection between the high demands of global markets for raw materials and the business opportunities that it brings to private and foreign enterprises with the capability of developing the extractive interventions required at low costs enjoying the liberties brought by Neoliberalist policies, the following paragraphs will explore into a determining sector of the Colombian economy playing a leading role in the social problematic; the energy-mining locomotive. Insights from the Authors of the book "La Energia que Apaga Colombia" provide a very clear picture.

Colombia's entry into globalization opened a path for the engine of foreign investment in the energy sector, one of the strategic strands that are decisive for articulating the global economy. At a time when the planet is facing an energy crisis as a result of the depletion of oil reserves and climate change, States and multinationals consider it more necessary than ever to ensure the energy sources that allow the survival of a system of massive production, consumption based on the exploitation of fossil fuels Colombia is a clear example of this trend (Alejandro Pulido, Erika González, Pedro Ramiro, 2007).

Following, Spanish multinationals spotted the promising opportunity in Latin America in the 1990s. Taking advantage of the historical juncture of the moment, when neoliberal policies were in full swing, they decided to begin their internationalization. Both state-owned companies (Repsol, Gas

Natural, Telefónica and Endesa) and private companies that were able to gain size following a wave of mergers, takeovers and restructurings (Unión Fenosa, Santander, BBVA and Iberdrola) This was all possible thanks to the structural reforms of the economy regarding privatizations, deregulations and liberalizations, Spanish transnational corporations became, in just one and a half decade, leaders of the banking, hydrocarbons, telecommunications and electricity sectors in Latin America and Colombia was no exception to this rule. The arrival of Spanish companies in the country followed the same parameters as in the rest of the region. Consequently, the consequences were very similar: repatriation of corporate profits, generation of serious environmental impacts, scarce use of local resources, violations of the rights of indigenous and afros, orientation towards the internal market for the services business, dismissal of workers, reduction of labor rights, the need for the State to introduce changes in regulatory frameworks and, in some cases, to apply policies to rescue bankruptcy with public funds. As mention before the Colombian case has an additional peculiarity in regards to the situation of human rights. Since the country continued to suffer the most ancient armed conflict on the continent, transnational corporations have developed their operations in a context of violence. And, far from providing solutions to find helping the crisis, in fact many cases have benefited from this conflictive situation to generate profits (Alejandro Pulido, Erika González, Pedro Ramiro, 2007).

At the end of the 1990s, privatization and the liberalization of the electric service served for the country to record the highest levels of FDI inflows. Later, another wave of investments developed, in which oil resources and, to a lesser extent, coal and gas became an object of attraction for foreign multinationals. However, in order to analyze the investments that have been made in the energy market, it is necessary to go beyond macroeconomic figures: the social, environmental and cultural consequences must be taken into account. (Alejandro Pulido, Erika González, Pedro Ramiro, 2007)

The current picture regarding economic model and strategies of development has not experienced any fundamental switch, now in the Santos administration mining and energy sector represents a key driver for development and economic growth the extractive economy is seen as a vital source of the needed state income to cover the costs of an eventual peace and continued economic development, as the government claims. And even more disturbing, the expansion of the extraction of hydrocarbon over the last decade indicates, that the mining-energy strategy for development fueled the transformation of the armed conflict resulting in a series of humanitarian crises

throughout the country including the single largest internally displaced population in the world (McNeish, 2016)

This review confirms in many ways the theoretical framework articulated to support the critique on conventional development's deployment of theory and practice. In first place there is clear evidence of how the perpetuation of a colonial matrix power is reproduced when the hegemonic capital powers articulate control over its subalterns through the powerful sociopolitical discourse and mechanisms of Neoliberlism. On the other hand it is also observed Escobar and Gudynas argumentation on the need for new alternatives to development is right, given that all these promising benefits of liberalization and need for economic growth at any cost as the path to modern development is rather utopian as it leaves the people aside, in a context of social exclusion where genuine well-being is out the picture.

Extractivist activities in North Cauca

The previous subsection had the purpose of setting the historical context to explain how the political and economic structures in the country open a path for increasing extractivism to obtain a determinant role in the endless set of abuses against the Afro-Colombian community in different locations in the North of Cauca

Alto Cauca

Alto Cauca is located in the Cauca River basin, in the north of the department of Cauca and in the southern part of the Cauca Valley (Valle del Cauca). The intense violence in this region is explained both by the diversity of actors and interests and by the complexity of the relationships involved in the dispute over access and ownership of land and environmental assets of the territory. The military (legal and illegal) control of the area on the routes of drug trafficking and money laundering is also a dimension linked to the mechanisms of territorial dispossession (Irene Vélez Torres, Daniel Varela Corredor, Sandra Rátiva Gaona, Andrés Salcedo Fidalgo, 2013).

Extractivism and Agroindustry have been responsible of profound changes in the traditional economic practices in the Alto Cauca, contributing to the damage of the socio-economic livelihood systems of the local Afro-descendent farmer population. In this area intense armed conflict and forced migration have convoyed the establishment of models of accumulation by dispossession.

There is an ongoing dispute over access to and ownership of the land and environmental assets of the territory. Simultaneously Afro-descendent communities and social organizations fight to defend their cultural patrimony since the colonial period and continue to the present day, defending their peoples and territories through resistance (Irene Vélez Torres, Daniel Varela Corredor, Sandra Rátiva Gaona, Andrés Salcedo Fidalgo, 2013).

During the last six decades, sugarcane agroindustry and mining extraction have generated a profound change in traditional economic practices to the detriment of Afro-peasant systems based on the traditional farming, fishing, and the artisanal extraction of Gold and sand. In addition, the forms in which local societies live have been affected by the armed conflict and forced migration that have accompanied the establishment of these models of accumulation by racist dispossession (Irene Vélez Torres, Daniel Varela Corredor, Sandra Rátiva Gaona, Andrés Salcedo Fidalgo, 2013). Among the explicit violence of armed conflict and other forms of violence of an implicit nature characteristic of the state bureaucracy, communities and social organizations have responded to impoverishment by strengthening their mobilization and building alliances, not only as a measure of opposition, but also as a strategy to construct an alternative of their own.

Developmentailst Initiatives in La Toma

Sugarcane cultivation began in the center of the Cauca river valley and led to the construction of the first sugar mills in the region. The business prospered quickly and took a big boost after the United States stopped buying sugar from Cuba after the triumph of the revolution in 1959. By losing one of its main sources of sugar supply, US demand moved to the mills in the geographical valley of the Cauca River (Lisifrey Ararat, 2013).

As demand grew, the mills began to expand through the purchase of land throughout the valley. The purchase of land allowed them to expand the area of cultivation and increase the availability of labor in the region. However, the purchase of land was not enough to guarantee production, as the Cauca River frequently flooded crops. This was the reason for seeking to regulate the flow of the river and from there was born the project to create a reservoir to contain its waters in times of increasing (Lisifrey Ararat, 2013).

The reservoir of La Salvajina is a reservoir built on the river Cauca in the decade of the eighty, at the height of the settlement of La Toma. Today it is common that this dam is related to the production of energy, which is one of its main functions; however, as already mentioned, its

construction originates in a very different problem to that of the supply of electric energy. Different to what most citizens in urban areas may believe the construction of the dam is mainly related to the cultivation of sugar cane and the production of sugar, which began to spread at the beginning of the 20th century in the Cauca river valley. Although in the mountainous part of the north of the Cauca no cane is cultivated for the production of sugar, the La Salvajina dam established a forced link between the plantations and the activity of sugar mills located in the flat part of the region. This relationship originated when the floods generated by the river overflowing in winter, began to be a problem for cane farms and mill owners. The elites of Valle de Cauca, following the model of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) of the United States, conceived the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valle del Cauca (CVC). The Corporation was in charge of regulating the waters of the river by building a dam about 150 meters high at the site known as the rocks of Salvajina, in the current municipality of Suárez (Lisifrey Ararat, 2013)

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Devastating Consequences of Development in North Cauca

At this stage in the history of La Toma is marked by the construction of the dam, which came into operation in 1985, and by the profound changes generated by the flooding of the river banks, with their farms, mines, fishing grounds and Recreation, and the end of the navigation of the rafts of cargo destined to diverse regional markets. From the year of 1979 when the works to develop the hydroelectric project began, a new history began in Suárez, the project allows the vision for the future of tourism and business activities, but begins with desolation and the displacement of people to other cities of the country, one of these cities is Cali that begins to house more than 5,500 people who from then to today Have left Suarez for various causes, the most notable being the problem caused by the construction of the Salvajina dam, today they are part of the approximately 23,000 families that are displaced in the Republic of Colombia according to National Planning data (Juanillo 2008: 28).

From the 1980s, the influence of Cali and the agro-industrial development model will be decisive for the life of the populations of the northern Cauca and will lead the region to a new inclusion within a global project of wealth production; in this occasion, based on bitter sugar production and electric power generation.

The construction of the dam was made under pressure to the inhabitants of La Toma, harassing them to sell their lands and accept the 'generous' offers of money that were made to them. This

pressure was made in the name of the highest interests or the 'common good'; That is to say, that the private interest of the entrepreneurs of the cane was hidden to present it as if it were the interest of all the inhabitants of the region. On the other hand, the project was possible thanks to the existence of an institutionality that was made available to them; In particular through the creation of the CVC and the extensive collaboration of state and private institutions with local presence (Irene Vélez Torres, Daniel Varela Corredor, Sandra Rátiva Gaona, Andrés Salcedo Fidalgo, 2013).

Now new players are added to the conflict. The arrival of armed actors, paramilitary groups and the so-called criminal gangs, show how development is not only promoted from the edges of legality. Legal and illegal armed actors agree on the defense of this type of projects. It is a model of development that is based on the dispossession of some for the production of wealth for others. For this wealth to occur it has been necessary to redefine who makes the decisions, who 'controls' the impacts and, above all, who receives the benefits. In the case of the La Salvajina project, once control over resources and decisions was taken, the relationship with the Cauca River was transformed; went from being a production space, a means of communication and a place of recreation, to be a regulated natural resource and a means for the production of energy and wealth.

The community of La Toma is a clear example of the devastating effects that the Government's development plans and the interests of private enterprises collaborate for one purpose, generation of incomes, based on a model of economic growth to serve large scale markets both domestic and international, originating massive environmental damage, and distressing episodes of social injustice. A model that doesn't work, and gradually displaces genuine ambassadors of real alternatives to development that are the result of centuries of harmonic coexistence with nature, what makes these communities a privileged group at an ontological and epistemic level.

Testimonies and Resistance

The following testimonies are from members of the Afro-descendent community of la Toma. The have been recorded for a documentary produced in collectivity with members of the community and the community council. It was made within the frame of an investigative project called "Mineria, procesos de organizativos y defensa del Territorio".

- Jorge González community member

"Here in the community of la Toma we are all an agro-mining community. We used to look for mining by the riversides and in this way by 2:00 pm we would have 2-3 grams of gold, sometimes even more, we shared also." (Surfilms, Incubadora Audiovisual, 2015)

The above testimony represents what would be classified as indispensable extraction within Gudynas scale of transitions to post-extactivism. These ancestral traditions of mining don't have negative impacts on the environment and serves only local markets, seeking no growth of any kind only sustainable productivity to meet family and communitarian demands.

- Erley Vargas Rodallega community member lives in Yolombo, La toma:

"Here we are by the riverside in a place known as "el vasito" looking back into the history of our communities we know that this fight is not new, it dates back to our ancestors, and it is also true that we have lost lives, freedom and many other things, but our ancestors did it with the only purpose to leave us a territory for us to enjoy it, and this is our responsibility, it's a big responsibility for our territory, therefore I want to invite all our youngsters to learn to follow the same path to become future defenders of the territory." (Surfilms, Incubadora Audiovisual, 2015)

This incarnates the real essence of an alterntive to what is conventional, it starts from feeling the earth, having a real sentiment of belonging, the first step reproducing real autonomy of thought and existence. A true expression of Buen Vivir, It is about being one with the territory the nature, from such perspective the idea of harming the environment for the sake of accumulation of wealth and material commodities is not a possibility.

Francia Marquez Mira, Vice president Community Council La Toma, Suárez, Cauca

"There have been many inconsistencies and irregularities, we know clearly how a process of Prior consultation is to be undertaken, there are three key points or steps to it; information, fair play, and the consultation with the communities and they have been violating all of them, they don't inform well the community, and cheat at the time of signing agreement as they change there representatives"

"We are aware of the fact that we are figting against giant, but we won't give up, we fight for our territory, there is no life without territory" (Ocularcentrismo, 2011)

These declarations exemplify how the social movemnts in the Afro community are very advanced I the path towards alternatives to development as Escobar explain. They know how to go beyond the civilizations crises they stay firm in their resistance movement as they have very clear that the

answer to modern problems have no modern solutions, it's a matter of reflecting on African philosophy of Ubuntu; "a person is a person through other people" (Soc.Col. Etnobiología & Escobar, 2015), in terms of the true sense of community, and the notions of buen vivir; "we cannot dispose of nature, we are nature" (Gudynas, Buen Vivir, 2015)

5. Conclusion

The present we live today is an outcome of the past, therefore history can teach many important lessons that the most advanced or modern science cannot, as the defenders of critical theories would sustain. In order to understand the order of contemporary societies we are to have a closer look into the events that shaped our perception of what is real, right or valid.

The deployment of European domination all over the world during the 16th century had a determinant role defining and perpetuating what Post-colonial scholars call the colonial matrix of power. Through this means knowledge was monopolized and anything opposing to it was not counted as truth. Apart from violence as a mean of domination the invention of discourse was a very powerful instrument in the process to indoctrinate people's minds. Modernization and development was born in Europe then spread all over through the colonies including Latin America. In more recent times even long after the end of colonization The Global North continues to be hegemonic and has developed Political and economic mechanisms to maintain their leading position.

Neoliberalism arrived to Colombia and contributed to maintain the leading position of the developed economies, due to global market demands the country has been increasing extrativist economic activities that require massive destruction of the environment and violation of human rights to the people who belong to these territories. The Afro communities are one of the main victims of such disgrace, many have been killed or displaced and continue to be threaten.

In the case of the Northern part of the department of Cauca the Afro communities living there are very dedicated to defend their territory their culture and their autonomy, they practice alternative ways of living and have a very clear understanding of the sense of community in harmony with the environment, they reproduce authentic expression of "Buen Vivir" they are however living a constant threat from the ambitions developmental endeavors of powerful economic groups in cooperation with the national Government.

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