Indigenous Peoples, Environmental Groups, Networks and the Political Economy of Rainforest Destruction in Brazil

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Abstract

The political economy of ecological conflict in the Brazilian Amazon is analyzed to explore potential networks with indigenous peoples to stop deforestation. Asymmetric relations (Jeong, 2001) exist between polluters and indigenous peoples. Changing views toward land and indigenous peoples may help expand networks against asymmetrical power relations that cause deforestation. These networks include environmental groups and possibly landless peoples' movements. Ecological conflict resolution promotes sustainability by developing networks with groups that are interested in stopping deforestation and bring new groups into sustainable practices. Nonetheless there is a complexity of identifying groups that should be involved in conflict resolution (Carpenter and Kennedy, 2001) especially with changing positions in environmental conflict and global support for imperialism (Hardt and Negri, 2005) and neo-liberalism (Klein, 2008; Harvey, 2007).

Introduction

Indigenous peoples and the struggle to save the Brazilian Amazon rainforest sometimes seem worlds away from Western life, located in what is regarded as an exotic location. This distance from the familiar is used to argue that capitalist practices have improved humanity from a state of nature in Naile Ferguson's *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* (2009). In this book, a Brazilian indigenous people, the Yanomamo, are briefly mentioned as an example of how brutish life supposedly would be without money (which he argues is more extreme than totalitarian communism); Ferguson mentions how anthropologists show that male deaths from violence among the Yanomamo was 40% (2009, p. 19). Other accounts, however, show that extreme violence arises during common, contemporary financial transactions in the Brazilian Amazon that support (often Northern hemisphere) consumption: illegal logging, illegal mining, and illegal deforestation for cattle ranching. In the opening decade of the Twenty-First century, land and logging disputes resulted in the murders of over 1,150 activists in the Amazon region (Associated Press, 2012). People who speak out against environmental destruction are often murdered or forced to flee (Phillips, 2012).

The above mentioned conflict between capital and indigenous peoples on the one hand, and capital and environmentalists opens up the question of who exactly are supporters of indigenous peoples. This article will explore this question which appears to be fairly straightforward, but is not. At first it may appear that indigenous peoples' rights groups and environmentalist groups are supporters, which is usually true. On the other hand, it would seem that landless migrants to the Amazon are by their very definition competitors for scarce land resources on par with multinational corporations

and the Brazilian nation-state. Yet, these categories are shifting leading to different possibilities of alliances and agency for indigenous peoples in the Amazon. These alliances and agency exist within a constrained context of what Jeong (2001, p. 6) refers to as "asymmetric conflict" where the nation-state and global capitalism dominate indigenous peoples and environmental activists. To overcome this, I argue that there needs to be international networks based on emerging alliances and increased indigenous peoples' agency that can lead to conflict resolution based on ecological conflict resolution that prioritizes sustainable use of the Amazon.

While there are many positive changes in contemporary Brazil, many patterns of conflict and interaction between indigenous peoples and the Brazilian nation-state, that promote rainforest destruction and do not promote long-term, equitable economic development, persist. Yet, there are also many patterns by non-state actors that are changing, including the landless peoples' movement (Hammond, 2004) and the rise of indigenous parties that also represent non-indigenous peoples in elections (Madrid, 2008). These may partially alter the average Brazilian citizen's relationship to indigenous peoples in positive ways, if Brazil is able to free itself from the clutches of neo-liberal development.

There are some promising developments at the social-movement level, but at the national level, there is little room to think that the Brazilian nation-state will solve the problem of deforestation on its own accord. While the Amazon rainforests constitute two-thirds of Brazil, Brazilian policy and economic processes in the Amazon has, for at least the past seventy years, been aimed at colonizing the Amazon rainforest, with resulting environmental and cultural decimation. While there have been diverse shifts in political orientations and resulting policies over this period of time, the outcomes for the Amazon, in terms of rainforest destruction and destruction of indigenous peoples' cultural practices follow a less diverse pattern. There have been many policies that looked promising after the advent of democracy in 1985, with the subsequent 1988 constitution that legally guaranteed indigenous peoples' rights and environmental rights. Despite these promising policies, the destruction of the Amazon, which is home to many indigenous peoples, persists into the present.

Conceptual Framework

An important conceptual framework for understanding ecological conflict is to look at humanity's relationship with nature through the prism of how it affects policy and subsequent political and economic structures. The current wave of globalization, rather than placing our relationship with the environment at the forefront, has led to an easier exploitation of impoverished countries resources by wealthy countries (Kütting, 2004, p. 32-33). This globalization of resource extraction does not necessarily mean a fundamentally changed balance of power where the powerless are better able to compete in a global political economy. In fact, ecological conflicts are often characterized by asymmetric relationships between people polluting environments and people defending the environment (Jeong, 2001, p. 6). Hence, small indigenous groups in Brazil are up against not only the Brazilian nation-state—which possess an overwhelming power, population and economic advantage—but also until recently

international financial organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank who represent a second wave of economic colonization of the Amazon and are not accountable to the Brazilian government. There is also the threat of neo-liberalism which promotes the global spread of economic policies that do not protect people with the persistent, implicit threat of military implementation if not voluntarily done (Harvey, 2007).

The conceptual framework used here is influenced by the theories of structural violence and cultural violence which argue that economics can be used violently even in the absence of direct physical violence (Galtung, 1990). This conceptualization of violence helps clarify that economic transactions, often thought of as apolitical and fair competition by many, have been applied violently to indigenous peoples. Rather than leave it at that, this article will make some suggestions for how indigenous peoples can develop networks with other people affected by environmentally destructive economic violence. Soja's (1996) concept of "thirdspace" suggests that rather than focusing efforts and attention on one identity group alone, coalitions of oppressed groups can be built across divisions of identity. Methods of deliberative planning may help groups achieve rights and deal with power imbalances that do not end without these groups' involvement (Forester, 1999, p. 6). This however is a complicated process since it involves incorporating as many different world views as possible and acknowledging issues of power (Forester, 1999, pp. 8-9). Power imbalances and differing goals are also present within networks that work to stop rainforest destruction as will be seen throughout this article. Agreeing on shared goals within networks may require less adversarial methods. Therefore, conflict resolution concepts can help establish coalitions and networks based on thirdspace, though with a few caveats.

One caveat is that ecological conflict resolution is unlikely to provide a win-win solution for everybody involved in ecological conflict in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest. The power of the Brazilian nation-state and multi-national corporations will likely have to be diminished while empowering indigenous peoples and their allies. As others have argued (Maser and Pollio, 2012), the objective of environmental conflict resolution has to always be environmental sustainability. This complicates the image of conflict resolution as always occurring through mediation by a disinterested third party. While it is desirable for all parties to come to their own shared agreement, this will have to be one that prioritizes preserving indigenous peoples' land and halting deforestation in the Amazon.

Another caveat is that determining who is involved in ecological conflict resolution in the Amazon requires a comprehensive redefinition of political obligations across borders and generations. Since environmental destruction of the Amazon is carried out by both multinational corporations and Brazilians it is a global and a local problem. This means that, contrary to many social science approaches, the nation-state does not always provide the most useful categories of analysis (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003). Therefore, limiting conflict participants and subsequent desirable networks to populations with Brazilian citizenship is hardly sufficient. Globally the international political economy extracts resources for multinational corporations to sell abroad: timber and beef for example. This means that a successful opposition needs to stop consumption of these resources abroad, as well as in Brazil.

Concerned groups, *Greenpeace* for example, are not Brazilian, but are very useful participants in networks to prevent deforestation. This also may involve foreign governments disallowing trade in natural resources from the Amazon. This means that indigenous peoples often may find global networks to be a useful supplement or even in some cases a replacement for local and national networks.

The mobility of activism, issues, and resource exploitation across borders presents a serious challenge for conflict resolution. The interested parties and networks for ecological conflict in the Amazon will not always be obvious. This also means that the issues and concerns will not always be predictable. There are often involved parties to a conflict that are not apparent at the start of conflict resolution but will need to be incorporated for a successful resolution of conflict (Carpenter and Kennedy, 2001). Resolving conflict about the environment is often complex because bringing different parties means that there are different types of conflict behaviors, "unequal power and resources," more "issues," and more "uncertainty" (Blackburn and Bruce, 1995, paraphrased in Emerson, Nabatchi, O'Leary, and Stephens, 2003, p. 6).

A further complexity needs to be realized. The difficulties in providing a full list of interested parties to ecological conflict in the Brazilian Amazon is not simply a spatial/national issue related to citizens or current inhabitants of a nation-states' territory. There are also involved parties that cannot be involved. Future generations are important too (Maser and Polio, 2012). We owe future generations a sustainable environment. The problem with this is that, people from the future cannot speak in the present. All the same, we have to extend our view not just across geographic boundaries, but also to the yet to be born who cannot participate. To some extent, conflict resolution theories have accounted for this problem. The concept of a "nested paradigm" (originally mentioned by conflict studies scholar Maire Dugan) suggests envisioning how we will implement a conflict settlement in future decades, rather than the short term only (Pendergast, 1999, p. 170). This conceptual practice can be applied to ecological conflict resolution to help conflict parties abandon short term principles and see the consequences of both continued reckless resource extraction and not properly implementing sustainability in the future.

Another caveat is that abstract principles have to be brought into the political and economic realities of structural violence in Brazil. Concepts from conflict resolution and peace studies can help provide a sober account of the likely persistence of and complicated solutions to ecological conflict in the Amazon. Framing the nation-state as providing solutions leads to problems that call for solutions from global networks and indigenous peoples. The solutions that are helpful for the Brazilian nation-state, such as increasing Brazilian global financial power, do not yet promise remedies to environmental destruction of Amazonian indigenous peoples' lands. Economic, institutional, and community issues that are present in the Amazon make conflict and non-traditional politics of protest likely. In general places with lower than average wealth have a higher rate of conflict (Buhaug, Gleditsch, Holtermann, Østby, and Forø Tollefsen, 2011). Therefore, a solution created by the Brazilian government alone is unlikely to be effective in this context. Many of the conflicts in the Amazon are either about a lack of resources for recent landless migrants, working class-people, or are based on resource extraction by multinational corporations from resource-poor

indigenous peoples. People are usually more likely to engage in conflict, by way of protest, when institutions are not powerful or useful to them (Machado, Scartascini, and Tommasi, 2011). Subsequently, the absence of useful, adequate institutions seems to make conflict more likely in Brazil. There are some further problems in this institutional context. In Brazil, elites expect "special treatment" from the government whereas less economically advantaged people expect "victimization" (Hochstetler and Keck, 2007, p. 25). Leaders are less likely to listen to their constituents when there are not stable governance structures with a corresponding lack of legitimacy for the government (Anderson and Souva, 2010). Places with a higher degree of polarization—including groups of people that do not communicate regularly with each other—are likely to see differentiated groups that engage frequently in conflict (Esteban and Schneider, 2008). This can be applied to the Brazilian Amazon where indigenous peoples may not interact with working class migrants, ranchers, or owners of multinational corporations. Violence is frequent in this situation as opposed to negotiations based on shared interests.

The above concepts of problems that create conflict may lead to ideas that consensus needs to be built between opposing parties before ecological conflict can be resolved. A consideration of the above mentioned conditions makes it hard not to conclude that reaching consensus is a difficult task at best. The extreme power held by elites in Brazil and their supporters suggests a further difficulty in moving toward the environmentally sustainable consensus. While building a consensus among as many groups as possible is desirable, a prerequisite for ecological conflict resolution is to establish an agreement that the rainforest and indigenous peoples' lands need to be saved in the first place. This contradicts many ideas of voluntary agreement to conflict resolution because it is a non-negotiable part of the conflict resolution process. In fact conflict resolution often gives itself high evaluations based on individual-level "satisfaction" of people involved rather than the quality of agreements and subsequent policies for the general public (Coglianese, 2003, p. 70). Accordingly, if parties do not share an ecologically sustainable vision, it is easy for conflict resolution to be misused by multinational corporations that wish to make dishonest agreements. This may limit two things. First it will limit the people involved. This would involve setting up networks of actors of indigenous peoples and their allies: indigenous peoples, environmental groups in Brazil and abroad, and landless migrants that have learned how reckless resource extraction in the Amazon is not helping their survival. Corporations that sincerely wish to pursue sustainable, equitable business activities may be involved, but this might be less likely. Second, these conditions limit the type of conflict resolution strategy that is used. This may not be a win-win situation for everyone and will remain politicized and involve some use of contention: i.e. protest and economic sanctions against local and national governments. In this regards, it may keep this from being the type of conflict resolution that creates voluntary solutions for everyone.

In this win-lose scenario there may be potential to change consciousness. It may provide a way for governmental and corporate actors in the Amazon to understand that their current practices are unsustainable and will not help them in the long run. This potentially will pressure multinational corporations and the Brazilian government to choose sustainable practices. They may at this point have incentive to

enter into the conflict resolution process to creatively envision this new future. But these coalitions with indigenous peoples need to be in place first to level the playing field so that indigenous peoples' groups and environmental groups exist in a less asymmetrical position where they can effectively negotiate without feeling completely coerced.

A less-asymmetrical position may be available outside of the borders of Brazil through transnational networks and coalitions. In light of the ambiguous legal protections for Brazilian indigenous peoples' lands, indigenous peoples have looked toward "alliances with regional, national, and international actors" (Schwartzman & Zimmerman, 2005, p. 722). Alliances in this context need not mean giving up interests. Alliance building may be complicated by a few things. First of all, aligning interests between indigenous peoples' groups may be complicated by differing goals. For example, many conservation groups have created projects that do not take into account that working class people may favor conservation of their lands that helps their "basic human needs" (Kaimowitz and Sheil, 2007, p. 568). To some extent there have been successful alliances between Brazilian environmental groups and Northern hemisphere environmental groups that bridge this (Keck, 1995). This involves not just building alliances based on consensus, but also learning to negotiate within groups. This does not mean a lack of unity within indigenous peoples' alliances and environmental groups. It may in fact be an opportunity to build strong alliances. Indigenous peoples' alliances can be based on discursive contestations as in the case of indigenous peoples' forest conservation alliances in Colombia (Berman Arévalo, and Ros-Tonen, 2009).

Alliances between indigenous peoples and their allies exist to overturn asymmetrical power balances that negatively affect indigenous peoples. There are different ways to help indigenous peoples to increase their skills and capacities to negotiate in asymmetric power imbalances. The first is for less powerful groups to manipulate the interests of more powerful groups. Asymmetric power balances can be dealt with by less advantaged forces learning to use the more powerful group's interests in negotiations (Dauody, 2008). To do this may require learning the dominant groups' ways of negotiating and creating alliances. Therefore, less powerful groups who may often have less resources can become more powerful by learning both negotiation skills and ways to identify people that can build coalitions (Shmueli, Warfield, and Kaufman, 2009). The practice of ecological conflict may encourage this acquisition of skills that are currently practiced in dominant societies. In Ecuador "indigenous legal subjectivity" was created when indigenous peoples sued large oil companies that were polluting the Amazon rainforest (Davidov, 2010, p. 148).

While alliances can be built through indigenous peoples empowering themselves, they do not exist outside of the broader structure of political economy. There are numerous problems that can arise from working with alliances. The content can be corrupted when altered by corporations. While not all corporations share a unified anti-environmental position (Falkner, 2009) they do not always act in the best interest of indigenous peoples. The presence of stable politics, rather than the implementation of capitalism, leads to less conflict at the international level (Anderson and Souva, 2010). This may apply at the domestic level to indigenous peoples as well. In the case of AmazonCoop which created a partnership between

indigenous peoples and The Body Shop, a multinational corporation, many problems and discrimination remained including dependence and a lack of recognition of problems of Brazil's relationship with indigenous peoples (Burke, 2010).

Indigenous Peoples, the Brazilian Nation-State and the Environment

Exploitation of Amazonian indigenous peoples is based on the causes and processes of rainforest destruction. This exploitation is largely constituted by the destruction of the rainforest, where indigenous peoples live. One reason it is easy to destroy the rainforest is that indigenous peoples, an exploited population in Brazil, live there. The dehumanization of indigenous peoples by the Brazilian nation-state has rendered indigenous peoples' legitimate claims to ownership of rainforest lands largely inaudible to many Brazilians. The existence of indigenous peoples and of indigenous peoples' culture has been instrumental in this process as a political justification for settlement of the Amazon (Santilli, 1989, p. 42; Garfield, 2001, p. 26). This transferred into physical violence that accompanies deforestation. Blatant disregard for the health of indigenous peoples, the land that provides their cultural survival and their general existence has characterized the Westward March and Colonization. 13.2% of Brazilian land is reserved for indigenous peoples (Instituto Socioambiental, 2012c). 20.67% of this land is in the Amazon region (Instituto Socioambiental, 2012c). Many indigenous peoples' lands are raided for corporate profit—through resource extraction—or for farming by landless peoples (Instituto Socioambiental, 2012d).

Since the dehumanization of indigenous peoples has rendered it easy to destroy the Brazilian Amazon rainforest, promoting indigenous peoples' rights may, therefore, be a key to stopping deforestation in the Amazon because of the large concentration of indigenous peoples' lands in the Amazon rainforest. Within this context, successful ecological conflict resolution will require stopping the dehumanization of indigenous peoples. Part of this process is empowerment. For the time being this will require networks of other affected parties since Brazilian indigenous peoples are not as unified by linguistic, cultural or political association as the term "indigenous peoples" may imply in other global contexts. There are 238 different indigenous peoples' cultures in Brazil, many with members also living in bordering nation-states, and most with total populations of less than 5,000 people (Instituto Socioambiental, 2012e).

The term "indigenous peoples" is simultaneously challenging and empowering for building alliances with other groups. On the one hand, it can be isolating for indigenous peoples' groups and make it appear that they cannot successfully negotiate dominant groups' institutions and practices. On the other hand, it provides a clear definition and respect for indigenous peoples' culture and practices that differ from Brazilian national practices. Dove (2006) mentions how the term "indigenous," though successfully deployed by locally oppressed communities to internationalize their struggles can actually severely limit who indigenous peoples can form coalitions with and raises expectations too high for their ethical behavior. Moreover, coalitions between environmental groups and indigenous peoples based on ecological sustainability run the risk of mobilizing problematic concepts of "ecoprimitivism" that

over-utilize indigenous peoples' identity and see them as existing in a pure, pre-historical relation with the environment while ignoring their potential to successfully and skillfully participate in dominant social institutions (Davidov 2001). The fact that indigenous peoples' identity is often defined in relation to societies and governments that existed prior to dominant nation-states may intensify this process in Brazil where many indigenous peoples either keep traditional, pre-Brazilian identities, or in fact have not been contacted since the arrival of European settlers. At the same time, the pre-national definition clearly recognizes the legitimacy to ways of life that the Brazilian nation-state does not fully protect. Instituto Socioambiental (2012b) has said that defining indigenous peoples' identities in Brazil starts with a recognition that indigenous peoples existed prior to colonization of Brazilian land by Portugal and the creation of the Brazilian nation-state (Instituto Socioambiental, 2012b) and that indigenous peoples' identity is rooted in "historical-cultural ties" with pre-Columbian ancestry and the ability to decide its own identity and matters of local community (Viveiros de Castro, 2005). These considerations show how there are other modes of cultural legitimacy and authority than what the nation-state grants and monopolizes. Yet, there are also some challenges because identifying the nation-state and then saying there are (indigenous) peoples that exist alongside it does not take into account how the nation-state may not provide security for some of its own citizens.

This lack of protection and perhaps the potential for coalitions that it entails is spotlighted by two issues: 1) environmental degradation, and 2) the fluidity of identity in Latin America. Many Latin American indigenous peoples' political parties are increasingly providing political representation for people that are not indigenous (Madrid, 2008, p. 477). Nonetheless, the existence of "preexisting networks" of Latin American indigenous peoples has been what enabled the rise of indigenous peoples' political parties in recent times in Latin America (Yashar, 1998, p. 24). There also are preexisting networks that indigenous peoples participated in with other peoples that may provide ways to form broader coalitions. Indigenous peoples previously joined groups that were not about their identity to fight against abuses suffered by them and other identity groups. Indigenous peoples previously organized through groups that did not appear to be about indigenous peoples' identities but rather around "class, partisan, religious and/or revolutionary identities" (Yashar, 1998, p. 23).

Networks formed by indigenous peoples and their allies may be more suited to represent the ecological well-being of all people that reside in the Amazon because of a shared interest in protecting the environment and a pragmatic mode of dealing with the land. This runs counter to older critiques of environmentalism as foreign control and management of Brazil's land ((Nugent, 1993) mentioned later in this article). Indigenous peoples have often chosen to defend the Amazon rainforest as have other populations in the Amazon. A network of indigenous peoples and their allies would include the inhabitants of the Amazon who were there prior to the Westward March and Colonization that wish to practice ecologically sustainable living. These inhabitants include cultures in the Amazon that have had a close relationship with nature subsequently including Brazilian descendent rubber tappers, such as Chico Mendes, who have ties with environmentalism, though these communities are not indigenous by identity, ancestry, or language.

The focus on indigenous peoples has been driven in large part by a mixture of environmental concern and increased awareness of violent political economies. This is one point where indigenous peoples and environmentalist networks can be expanded to include landless populations in Brazil. An ecological focus on indigenous peoples emerged in part with the growth of an environmentalism that shifted its blame away from local, impoverished people. As Dove (2006, p. 196) puts it:

"Much of the interest in indigenous knowledge has focused on natural resources and the environment, which was reflected in the emergence of the concept of indigenous environmental knowledge. The emergence of this concept represented a reaction to the historical proliferation of discourses that largely and uncritically blamed local populations for environmental degradation."

In sum, the study of indigenous peoples has shifted away from blaming marginalized people, to looking at how indigenous knowledge can help environmentalism and perhaps working class people as well. As Dove (2006) says, many local peasants and poor peoples' groups actually became globally successful when reframed as indigenous peoples' struggles (quoting Keck, 1995). Likewise Anzaldúa (1987) promoted indigenous/pre-Columbian knowledge as a conceptual survival tactic and antidote to the dangers of modern society.

The above description nonetheless remains limited by a potential idealization of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are not always environmentalists. Some may be exploited into abandoning their cultural norms because of their economic, social and political vulnerability. Indigenous peoples do not always defend the Amazonian ecosystem, as is the case with the Kayapo, Surui, and Cinta-Larga indigenous peoples logging on land federally demarcated to them by the Brazilian government. This, however, is a small minority of indigenous peoples who was forced by and manipulated by resource extraction companies using constant illegal pressures and who have become less favored partners in these businesses arrangements (Instituto Socioambiental, 2012a).

It has been argued that indigenous peoples' political movements have generally grafted themselves onto the environmental movement to increase their power rather than because of an innate commitment to environmentalism (Conklin and Graham, 1995, p. 704). The inverse has been argued for environmentalists and formerly termed "peasant" populations (Dove, 1996). While this may explain some aspects of indigenous peoples' interactions with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous peoples' viewpoints on the environment are not that different from environmentalists' viewpoints. If indigenous peoples often have a resolute relationship with the ecosystems they inhabit, they are environmentalists whether or not they had the same reasons for a commitment to saving the Amazonas as do environmentalists from industrialized countries. In general many indigenous peoples view the environment as what provides for their survival. This may in fact be a more realistic, viable way to interact with the environment than Western romanticist ideas about the beauty of nature. As the indigenous scholar Linda Tuhuwai Smith says "I believe that our survival as peoples has come from our knowledge of our contexts, our environment, not from some active beneficence of our Earth Mother. We had to know

how to survive. We had to work out ways of knowing" (Smith, 1999, pp. 12-13). In this context, interacting in a positive, sustainable way with the natural environment is pragmatic and survival based rather than based on what people want (what people want can easily change to include non-sustainable tactics). An individual disregard for natural ecosystems is not typical among indigenous peoples in Brazil. Indigenous peoples in Brazil do not all share the same viewpoints on ecology; however it is common to view the natural world as something that humans interact with in their daily lives, as opposed to Western cultural viewpoints where nature is a separate entity from humanity and should remain "untouched" (Instituto Socioambiental, 2012a). In short, struggling for cultural survival and struggling to save the environment are not viewed as completely different categories, as they often have in the United States. At the same time it is important to note that saying indigenous peoples are somehow instinctively defending the ecosystem is to say that they are "extensions of nature" and not fully human (Instituto Socioambiental, 2012a). In short, saying that indigenous peoples' causes are always misappropriated by environmentalists, makes it difficult to see that indigenous peoples are often willing participants in ecologically friendly practices as rational, logical, and deliberate people since indigenous peoples often choose cultural practices that do not distinguish between our human lives and the environment.

Relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Non-Indigenous Populations in Latin America

The definition of the term "indigenous" may make it appear that indigenous peoples exist outside of other groups and thus are perhaps not likely to network with them in any meaningful political context. While there is a long history of exploitation of indigenous peoples by other groups in Brazil, current developments in Latin America suggest that these asymmetrical relations are becoming less durable. In Latin America, indigenous peoples' identity is being used to build political coalitions with other ethnicities.

"…ethnopopulist parties have succeeded in Latin America (and traditional ethnic parties have failed) in large part because of the nature of ethnicity and ethnic relations in the region. Specifically, the low levels of ethnic polarization and the ambiguity and fluidity of ethnic identification in the region have meant that indigenous-based parties can win votes not only from self-identified indigenous people but also from people from other ethnic categories who share some identification with indigenous cultures or who support the parties based on their positions on other issues. To win the support of people from other ethnic categories, ethnopopulist parties have avoided exclusionary rhetoric, reached out to members of different ethnic groups, and employed traditional populist appeals." (Madrid, 2008, p. 477)

Madrid's argument about ethnopopulism suggests that indigenous peoples' identity is not simply being transferred into political power that helps indigenous peoples alone. The benefits of this political power are being used to help other identity groups in

Latin America. The significance of Madrid's discussion of indigenous peoples' ethnopopulist parties for this article's argument is that increasing indigenous peoples' political power is occurring in combination with the creation of networks with other ethnic and political groups in Latin America. The idea of non-indigenous peoples wanting to be represented by indigenous peoples is fairly new and potentially may reverse the split between indigenous peoples on the one hand and an alliance between non-indigenous peoples and the Brazilian nation state on the other that has been part and parcel of the reckless destruction of the Amazon rainforest.

The relationship between Brazil, its inhabitants, and polluting multinational corporations may not be durable in the long run. This suggests future potential for ecological conflict resolution between indigenous peoples and their allies and the Brazilian nation-state, though this is not a solid possibility at present.

Ecological conflict represents a compromised position for people whose land is polluted. This occurs in a variety of national and international settings. As Jeong (2001, p. 6) explains, it "has been globalized as well as regionalized, and its nature reflects an asymmetric relationship between victims and polluters." This is relevant to the colonization of the Brazilian Amazon, where there is often a lack of control of the situation for those whose land is polluted. Initially, the Brazilian nation-state pitted powerless groups against powerless groups: landless people from the cities migrated to take over indigenous peoples' lands in the Amazon rain-forest. As Brazil moved to Democracy, however, like many Latin American countries its politics remained controlled by asymmetrical global financial relationships (Klein, 2008). Thus, it is hardly surprising that capitalist development trumped the needs of landless and indigenous peoples in Brazil.

The relationship between the Brazilian nation-state, elites, and landless peoples that it sends to occupy indigenous peoples' lands in the Amazon is not currently on solid ground. In Brazil, landless people used to move to indigenous peoples' areas in the Amazon. A development that may be a positive change to this has been movements for landless people to occupy lands. The Brazilian Landless Farmworkers' Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurias Sem Terra* (M.S.T.)) is the most famous organization undertaking this. They occupy farm-land that is not being used productively and that they have determined to be legally eligible to belong to landless people under Brazilian law (Hammond, 2004, pp. 69-70). Both the Brazilian military government and the Brazilian democratic government legally permitted occupation of unproductive land by landless people, but did not create mechanisms to transfer land (Gilbert, 2006, p. 75). The M.S.T. in this situation challenged the power of the land owning oligarchy by forcing a prioritization of people who work—landless people— over property owners (Gilbert, 2006, p. 74). This is significant since landowners have been able to pollute because they feel entitled to special protection from the Brazilian government (Hochstetler and Keck, 2007). Therefore, by diminishing this elite power, the M.S.T. presents two distinct possibilities for combating destruction of indigenous peoples' land in the Amazon: 1) they are looking for potentially legal land, e.g. non-protected land that does not belong to indigenous peoples, and 2) they are not looking to continue the dominance of corporations and landowners (which have both fueled intense deforestation).

While there is a continuing process of deforestation, its history, when situated

within a political context, shows that it is not inevitable. Democratization may slightly diminish the power of environmental destruction in the Amazon. The military government pursued a policy of centralization of the Brazilian government (Burns, 1980, p. 516). This process of centralization resulted in the expansion of the Brazilian government's presence outside of the major cities. In contrast to *Estado Novo* era Brazil, the military had a large fiscal and technological capability, was more pressured by private capital and was not as constrained by political and judicial arms of the Brazilian government; in this context the Brazilian government strengthened its presence in the Amazon (Garfield, 2001, p. 140). (This contrasts to earlier periods of expansion which were less controlled and where Brazilians and indigenous peoples often intermingled.) In the 1960s, perceptions of the Amazon changed to the belief that the Amazon was important both in terms of economic potential and, more importantly, in terms of security concerns: revenue accumulation was valued more than indigenous peoples (Garfield, 2001, pp. 141-142).

Policies of settlement in the Amazon have never really provided solutions to economic and political insecurity in Brazil. To the contrary, the military government's policy resulted in violent reprisals from various sectors of Brazilian society. The period of military rule from 1964-1985, included many human rights abuses (Hunter, 1995, pp. 425-426). Toward the end of the 1960s, the military policy in the Amazon slowly unraveled. From 1966-1967, a series of legislation entitled Peration Amazonia was created by the military government which provided fiscal incentives, including tax breaks, to promote economic development of the Amazon (Garfield, 2001, p. 141). In 1967, both the Left and the Right pressured the government over a series of issues occurring outside of the Amazon sometimes with violent tactics (Burns, 1980, p. 518).

Since the Brazilian government is not likely to effectively stop deforestation soon enough, we also might learn about potential global allies by looking outside of Brazil's borders to other Latin American countries. The reach of land-based conflict, however, is not limited to Brazil or to recent times. Land conflict has occurred in other parts of Latin America and at other times. The legal and economic appropriation of indigenous peoples and peasants' lands forms a structural violence that is conflict, even if at some times there is an absence of physical violence. It has been both part of the nation-building project in Guatemala as well as based on a desire to use communal lands to grow lucrative crops—such as coffee—and to control Mayan (indigenous) laborers by taking away their land (Stepputat, 2008, pp.341-342). Political economic breakdowns that favored large-scale rural agriculture led to rural poverty and an increase in migration away from rural areas in Mexico or to richer countries like the United States (Roberts, 1997). (Nonetheless, this should not be used to draw a comparison to the environmental degradation in the Amazon and to xenophobic perceptions of destruction caused by immigrants in the United States.) What can be gained from this comparison of land conflicts is that these conflicts may: 1) result in equitable re-distribution of land, or 2) result in out migration to urban areas or other nation-states that are better able to accept landless people than are indigenous peoples' lands in the Amazon. There are options other than taking indigenous peoples' land.

There are also other possibilities. One is that the globalization of the Amazon brought by multinational corporations may bring another round of transnationalism favorable to environmental networks. This transnational activism could include

boycotting these corporations. At the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s, Brazil faced a contradiction between large scale economic growth and a growing presence of multinational corporations. The National Highway Department (DNER), received $400 million between 1968 and 1972 from the InterAmerican and World Bank to fund the construction of roads in the Amazon: by 1972 Brazil was the largest debtor to the Export-Import Bank in the world owing $12.5 billion in 1973 (Davis, 1977; Moreira Alves quoted in Garielfd, 2001, p. 150). In 1973 Brazil ranked ninth in auto production, but had to hire Argentine trucks to transport soybeans grown within Brazil (Burns, 1980, p. 528). In addition to the unhelpfulness of the global economy for Brazil's industrial competiveness, in 1971 in five major economic sectors, transnational corporations were making 70% of the profits (Burns, 1980, p. 530). This shows that during the 1970s, Brazil became economically globalized. On the other hand, a similar, though more equitable, globalization simultaneously occurred with environmentalism.

This globalization of Brazil intensified with the presence of foreign, transnational environmentalist and indigenous peoples' NGOs operating in the Amazon. In the early 1980s, increased international scrutiny of the Amazon resulted in increased transnational action on behalf of various environmental groups. In the late 1980s, Chico Mendes transformed a rubber trappers' labor movement into a coalition with global environmentalists and the global attention paid to his assassination by cattle ranchers shocked Brazilians who took for granted large numbers of peasants being murdered over land (Keck, 1995, p. 410). (Murders of environmental activists in the Amazon persist into the present.)

In 1985, the military government ended and was replaced by a democratic civilian government. The constitution for Brazil was written in 1988 which granted significant rights to indigenous peoples and concessions to promote environmental preservation in the Amazon and the rest of Brazil. The 1988 Constitution in fact recognized that indigenous peoples' right to the land of Brazil and that "in consequence, constitutionally the right of the Indians over a given land does not depend of formal recognition" [*sic*] (Instituto Socioambiental, 2012d). However, as will be mentioned later this did not lead to unanimous respect for indigenous peoples' lands and rights. In 1992, the United Nations Earth Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Nor did it lead to a comprehensive, well defined break with past policies. The democratization of Brazil sought to demilitarize the political culture of Brazil, with politicians walking a tightrope between remnants of the military regime and the democratization process (Hunter, 1995, p. 425).

While there are some openings brought about through globalization, it is a double edge sword. Economic globalization also encourages the Brazilian government to destroy the Amazon rainforests. In the 1990s, significant debt and economic crisis seriously harmed the Brazilian economy. In 2001, President Lula de Silva, was elected president of Brazil after promising socialist economics and expressing concern for the environment. Lula de Silva followed a path of pragmatic socialism which kept economic allies, such as the IMF who offered a $30 billion loan to help Brazil emerge from economic crisis, with the condition that the Brazilian government implemented IMF fiscal policies (Olinda, 2003). Using poverty reduction as a justification, Lula de Silva expanded the agricultural frontier, which environmentalists claimed was only of

real benefit to agribusiness (Rohter, 2003). Along the South and Eastern borders of the Amazon, dubbed the "Arch of Destruction," cattle ranching and soy-bean production caused wide-scale deforestation and environmental decimation (Downie, 2004). From 2007 until 2008 3 million acres of the Brazilian Amazon was lost; much of the land is used to grow beef sold internationally to the Middle East, Russia, and Europe (Adam, 2009). As of 2011, the current Brazilian president, Dilma Roussef, elected in large part because of promises to protect the environment, has been under pressure from politicians that want to overturn forest protection laws (Carrington, 2011). Agribusiness has also lobbied for overturning these laws (Adario, 2011).

There are potential openings for a governmental environmentalism, though in the context of ecological conflict resolution, the Brazilian nation-state is at best an inconsistent, unreliable ally that will likely avoid full agreement to sustainability that is a prerequisite for ecological conflict resolution. One example for this inconsistency is that the Brazilian government continues to fund highway construction in the Amazon (see Reuters, 2008) and also simultaneously attempts to stop deforestation. Currently, the Brazilian government and police look for illegal logging, farming, and resource extraction in the Amazon, but the funding is often scarce and other branches of the Brazilian government promote the construction of dams and the judicial branch sometimes gives temporary permission for agricultural settlement in Amazonian parks (Wartmann, 2012). Despite improved constitutional and legal protections after democracy the situation of indigenous peoples' lands is as follows:

"A good many Indigenous Lands in Brazil are subjected to invasions by mining enterprises, fishermen, hunters, timber companies and 'posseiros' (illegal homesteaders). Other are crossed by highways, railroads and transmission lines, or have been partially flooded by lakes formed by hydroelectric plants. Frequently the Indians end up paying the perverse consequences of things that happen outside their lands, in neighboring areas: pollution of rivers by pesticides, deforestation and so on."

(Instituto Socioambiental, 2012 d)

In sum economic exploitation of indigenous peoples' lands in the Amazon continues both legally and illegally. Policies of environmental destruction in the Amazon to fuel economic interests remain a policy directive despite democratization in Brazil.

The above history of Brazil does not intend to suggest an inevitable persistence of exploitation in Brazil. There are in fact less violent modes of interaction between Brazilian society and indigenous peoples—including intermarriage and living together—amidst persistent exploitation of indigenous peoples and their land. Also, many negative players from the violent history of relations between the Brazilian government and indigenous peoples may become less powerful. This perhaps presents a serious challenge to agribusiness. Indigenous peoples in Brazil, and globally, are becoming more powerful and adept at working with institutions and networks. Brazil and other Latin American countries may disengage with American dominance in the area, as well as the IMF and the World Bank, leading to less of the economic dominance that has enabled exploitation. Nevertheless, this is an ongoing process whose success remains to be seen in the future which is, of course, uncertain.

Environmentalists and Relationships between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres

Concerns about the political and economic power that wealthy nations in the Northern hemisphere have over impoverished nations in the Southern hemisphere arise when Northern hemisphere environmental groups operate in Brazil. Political actions by people from wealthy Northern hemisphere countries in impoverished Southern hemisphere countries, like Brazil, sometimes encourage criticisms of imperialism. Stephen Nugent (1993, p. 236), in *Amazonian Caboclo Society*, argues that environmental sustainability in the Amazon can be viewed as a declaration that the same people in the global North whose development plans have destroyed the Amazon are being given the opportunity to again manage the environmental planning of the Amazon. At its worst, this supports assumptions that environmentalists are the same political economic actors as large business and multinational financial entities, like the World Bank, by virtue of their nationality. At its best, this acknowledges that there could be a top-down management system being put into place (Nugent, 1993, p. 74) by people in the global North that is not based on local knowledge in the Amazon, such as peasant and indigenous peoples' practices. This is occurring, but being implemented by different people. Northern hemisphere consumption of beef, in Europe and Russia, and the Middle East influences cattle ranching that rapidly destroy the rainforest (Adam, 2009). Global oil and mining industries, supplying high consumption by wealthy countries, have led to large scale destruction of land in the Amazon and globally (Vidal, 2012). Access to American and European NGOs, in contrast, for indigenous peoples and rubber tappers—who are similar to the people that Nugent discusses—has meant access to power structures in Brazil that were previously not accessible by way of access to Northern hemisphere countries (see Keck, 1995). While Northern hemisphere NGOs may insert the interest of their own constituencies, these NGOs are often informed by practices of indigenous peoples in an idealized form (see Conklin and Graham, 1995, pp. 696-697). Therefore, to argue that the movement for environmental sustainability arises only in the context of Northern hemisphere dominance over Southern hemisphere nation-states is to ignore the fact that environmental groups from the Northern hemisphere have often been strongly influenced by ideas from the Southern hemisphere.

Assuming that environmentalism is imperialism runs into other problems. An important problem is that colonization and imperialism were directly responsible for environmental problems that harmed the health and well being of indigenous peoples. As Linda Tuhawai Smith explains, "it is important to remember, however, that colonialism was not just about collection. It was also about re-arrangement, re-presentation, re-distribution…Among the other significant consequences of ecological imperialism…were the viral and bacterial diseases which devastated indigenous communities" (Smith, 1999, p. 63). Thus, imperialism and colonialism were environmental disasters and hence the term imperialism may in many instances be too blunt for discussion of environmental groups who try to prevent these disasters.

Many impoverished people in the Third World are directly affected by environmental conflict and degradation in ways that many upper class urban

populations in the Southern hemisphere who decry environmental sustainability may not be. Many populations in Brazil, who often express disdain for sustainability, are negatively affected by environmental destruction. Outside the Amazon, in Ambepe, Brazil, whether or not they were aware or supportive of environmentalist views, the local residents were eating fish from caught in ecosystems polluted by the nearby Tibris factory, thereby leading to serious health side effects (Kottak, 1999, p. 234). Moreover, as mentioned in the book, *In Amazonia*, many of the non-indigenous settlers were directly suffering physical consequences of an environmentally degraded town because the resulting erosion caused their houses to sink into the ground (Raffles, 2002, p. 71). Indigenous peoples are often killed by people believed to be ranchers (Carroll, 2009) and Amazonian environmentalists are often assassinated (Phillips, 2012) which shows how environmental resource extraction can harm indigenous peoples, Brazilian non-indigenous peoples, and Northern hemisphere environmentalist activists alike. In light of the above, the question arises of whose interests are being represented when people assume that concern for the environment is simply an imposition of Northern hemisphere countries' cultural values? Are the people affected not sufficiently Brazilian to receive protection from environmental degradation? Are they too working class or ethnically different? Perhaps many that decry Northern hemisphere environmentalists will answer "yes." But the affirmative answer is not an anti-imperialist answer. Rather it ignores the realities of impoverished populations of Brazil and other countries. Interests of some of the more impoverished and dispossessed Brazilians are represented by the environmental movement, regardless of which hemisphere environmental groups happen to come from.

It also may be inaccurate to say that the only people who can participate in debate and activism about ecological destruction are people living in areas presumed to be directly affected. The consequences of environmental degradation may move far beyond areas where they are readily apparent. Environmental problems that happen in local ecosystems may move past national boundaries and become global (Jeong, 2001, p. 5). In Brazil both people outside of the Amazon, as well as in the global North are affected by deforestation that creates global warming. This global environmental interconnectedness calls into question the idea that only people in the Amazon have a right to discuss deforestation there, even though indigenous peoples often have better ideas about how to manage the Amazonian ecosystem than do governments in the global North.

A more trans-disciplinary view that focuses less on the nation-state may encourage a different view of the actions of Northern-hemisphere environmental groups in Brazil. One view of the relationships between the Northern hemisphere and the Southern hemisphere is that these relations are mostly influenced by the nation-states and, therefore within the praxis economic imperialism (Magdoff, 1978) and colonialism (Stoler, 1989). A trans-disciplinary view of these relationships, using sociology, anthropology, and/or conflict resolution for example, adds to the above view by illuminating different actors and influences aside from the nation-states and politicians. In conflict resolution, one might ask, "What causes people and activist organizations in the Northern hemisphere to be so interested in environmental destruction of the rainforests?" One might also ask, "Besides the position of

environmentalism, what interests lay at the heart of the conflict?" Asking this question might lead someone beyond the position of environmentalism as a middle-class, do-good mentality, and other assumptions to see that there are some serious interests that come into play with rainforest destruction. One might also question, at what level would arguments saying that environmental NGOs are imperialists come from? While there are serious issues with leaving environmental decision making to NGOs, who are the environmental NGOs imperialistic to? The answer may be to politicians, who would be analyzed at the level of mainstream political science and international relations. However, at the level of anthropology, which is generally the only field to seriously explore the life and politics of indigenous peoples, one will find that NGO involvement has also often benefited indigenous peoples (Lutz, 2004), albeit in an occasionally imperfect manner (Brosius, 1999).

Some anthropological studies have argued that the environmental movement appropriates images of indigenous peoples to pursue environmental instead of indigenous peoples' policy (Brosius, 1999, pp. 280-281). Anthropologists have debated how environmentalism has represented indigenous peoples and Third World countries in terms of cultural lenses form the Northern hemisphere, as opposed to ideas that originated in the Southern hemisphere (Escobar, 1995; Sturgeon, 1997). This has been expressed outside of anthropology with the argument that there has been a stunted growth of state-society relations in Brazil, leaving NGOs who are not accountable to indigenous peoples to decide the agendas of indigenous peoples (Garfield, 2001, pp. 217-218). While these arguments point to some very real concerns about the rights and dignity of indigenous peoples in the Amazon, they fail to ask what would work better. Since democratization in Brazil, 80% of indigenous peoples' land has suffered from destruction and "…the Constitution of 1988 did not concretize indigenous realities but rather set new terms for indigenous struggle" (Garfield, 2001, p. 215). However, the process of democratization has been slow and accompanied by major obstacles in Latin America and the Third World. It has only been recently that Latin American democracies began to reject neo-liberal development, rather than promote it (Klein, 2008). Neo-liberal development has helped Northern hemisphere business, rather than Northern hemisphere NGOs, destroy the Amazon. Even in times when the Brazilian government had more control, such as between 1930 and the military coup in 1964, the nation-state still did not create policy in the interest of indigenous peoples in the Amazon. Thus, the coming era where Brazil may be less constrained by U.S. policy may not promise more equity for indigenous peoples.

Until Brazilian policy fully represents the interests of indigenous peoples, the terms of debate will not be between a Southern hemisphere that is better able to represent indigenous peoples and other oppressed peoples better than activists from Northern hemisphere countries. This only works by idealizing the Brazilian nation-state which so far appears to be problematic for indigenous peoples and powerless people in Brazil. In light of this problem, international activists will probably remain viable assets for indigenous peoples to negotiate better terms with the Brazilian government, at least in the near future.

Conclusion

Exploring who exactly can be supporters of indigenous peoples in networks that aim to halt the reckless destruction of the Amazon rainforest is a complicated task. It is first complicated by the global economic exploitation that characterizes the wholesale plunder of the Amazon rainforest, an ecosystem that is essential for the survival of all people in the world. This economic exploitation encourages both the Brazilian government and multinational corporations to create asymmetric conflict with indigenous peoples. Within this asymmetric conflict, it often appears that there are not identifiable allies with indigenous peoples. Every group appears to fare better from ecological conflict, including environmentalists. Yet another complexity comes from the process of globalization. As Carpenter and Kennedy (2001) explain, it is sometimes difficult to determine who needs to be involved in conflict resolution. With the global nature of resource exploitation and consequences as well as the global nature of indigenous peoples' networks, there are both dangers of further involvement of resource extractors and opportunities for inviting new allies for indigenous peoples into ecological conflict in the Amazon.

There also are some differences in the way that participants in ecological conflict have interacted with land and the environment that show new opportunities and dangers. For example, environmental movements are increasingly interested in allying with and using indigenous peoples' knowledge for campaigns in the Amazon. This suggests allies outside of the definitional term "indigenous" which sometimes may "narrowcast" perceptions about who indigenous peoples can interact with (Dove, 2006). The fact that environmentalists are subject to murders and disappearances in retribution for their activism may mean that their ties to indigenous peoples are not simply strategic, short-term ties as they too suffer from asymmetric violence. The same too may be said about landless peoples' movements, though their objectives do not fit perfectly with stopping the settlement of the Amazon. Despite being better described right now as potential allies, indigenous peoples may increasingly see landless people as their allies and form networks accordingly. The M.S.T. has presented some challenges to the Brazilian landowners who have typically plundered Amazonian rainforest and only wish to occupy land legally. This shows that a different form of behavior is possible from landless migrants that illegally occupy and destroy indigenous peoples' lands in the Amazon. The Brazilian nation-state and corporations (multi-national or otherwise) may eventually be brought into more sustainable practices in the Amazon though this is far less likely in the short-term as it would take immense changes in their approaches. Unfortunately, the irreplaceability of indigenous peoples and rainforest ecosystems coupled with rapid deforestation means that solutions have to happen in the short-term, thus making it impossible to wait 20 or 50 years for a paradigm change in global resource extraction. It is nonetheless desirable to have national and corporate support for ecological sustainability, rather than their continued reckless practices.

Ecological conflict resolution in the Amazon, while hoping to achieve the fullest possible voluntary support is unlikely to proceed in the short term by establishing a win-win situation that people often expect from conflict resolution. For the Brazilian government, corporations, and landless migrants that are destroying Amazonian

rainforests rather than joining the M.S.T., it will probably entail financial loss.

This win-lose situation appears more pronounced for landless migrants who should be, in this context of hardship, educated about more sustainable options and incorporated as soon as possible into networks that promote sustainability. Environmental groups may be able to help indigenous peoples effectively communicate alternatives to illegal land settlement in the Amazon as well as to reckless agricultural resource extraction (for example slash and burn farming). One reason it may be possible to engage in these activities is that there has been a shift in environmentalism to favor the sustainable use of land, rather than not letting humans use land in Brazil (Keck, 1995) and a rise in working class environmentalism in urban Brazil (Jacobs 2002). A network of environmental activists may have the resources and contacts to help implement sustainable sustenance extraction throughout the Amazon—i.e. gathering food without using mainstream agriculture that requires clearing forests or finding other economic alternatives to settling in environmentally sensitive parts of the Amazon. This would involve working with anti-poverty activists in Brazilian cities and landless groups. It would also be expected that the Brazilian government take an initiative to provide a better present and future to landless migrants than migrating to a place with an ecological system that cannot support the agricultural living that they expect.

This win-lose situation will occur through an acceptance of the ground rules of environmental sustainability. This contradicts the interests of reckless resource extraction currently practiced in the Amazon by the Brazilian government and multinational corporations. It leads to a short-term loss in power and profitability for them. It, however, has to occur to alleviate the asymmetric exploitation of indigenous peoples who currently are usually in the losing position of the win-lose pattern. Corporations can enter other modes of production relatively easily whereas indigenous peoples are losing their land, heritage, and lives which are not replaceable. To this extent it is important to create global and local networks that empower indigenous peoples both in terms of political power as well as helping them learn effective negotiation strategies and learning how to establish global boycotts of any raw material, agricultural, or industrial product composed of resources extracted through the process of rainforest destruction.

While the above discussion provides a relatively clear roadmap, there are some complexities that arise not just in Brazil or with multinational corporations, the latter being all too easy to criticize on ethical grounds. The geographical location of some of this new network's partners will likely invite criticisms using an anti-imperialism rhetoric that does little to address imperialistic practices and more to shore up the Brazilian government's power to help multinational corporations from the global North exploit indigenous peoples. A successful resolution of ecological conflict relies on taking into consideration this possibility and responding appropriately.

There are complexities of the relationships that have led to ecological conflict in the Brazilian Amazon between the Brazilian government, multinational corporations, and indigenous peoples. There appears to be considerable confusion when subjects of imperialism and colonialism come up turning these concepts from progressive ideas to sources of legitimacy to the Brazilian nation-state and non-indigenous peoples that destroy the Amazon, by framing them as oppressed, colonized peoples. The reality is

that they often are committing asymmetric oppression of indigenous peoples. While there is considerable negative influence on average Brazilians from neo-liberalism, when imperialism is discussed it is important to understand Brazilian indigenous peoples are colonized like the rest of Brazil, but as Smith's (1999) analysis can help us see indigenous peoples are also colonized by the Brazilian nation-state. Understanding this difference may help to integrate serious concerns of Brazilians under neo-liberalism and indigenous people's oppression by Brazilians by using debates on imperialism to establish common ground that disfavors multinational corporations' resource extraction in the Amazon region.

It also is problematic to assume an easy category between imperialistic Northern hemisphere and oppressed Southern hemisphere. To do so may be a useful starting point to understand power-inequities that exist even amongst progressive environmental groups. Yet, it needs to be used as an abstraction, rather than a description of reality. Some people in the Northern hemisphere are helping the environment through activism. Other people in the Northern hemisphere are harming it through neo-liberal investment in soybean cultivation and timber extraction in the Amazon. Likewise, some Brazilians help the environment through activism. Other Brazilians are unconcerned with the fate of indigenous peoples and the environment. Some Brazilians are concerned with their economic and political freedom, others are quite happy with the continuation of neo-liberalism. As Klein (2008) mentions, there were many South American neo-liberals and the establishment of neo-liberalism in South America was not done by the United States alone, even if the U.S. military, government, and academics supported it. This fits in with Hardt and Negri's observation that some nation-states choose to actively participate in global capitalism despite their low position on the hierarchy (Hardt and Negri, 2005, p. xxi).

Another important consideration for ecological conflict resolution is that the patterns of reckless resource extraction in the Amazon, though having very negative consequences, are not historically inevitable. The history of Brazil's relationship with indigenous peoples shows a persistence of exploitation, but also examples where Brazilian people and indigenous peoples have lived together that contrast with the general history of exploitation of indigenous peoples and lands. Therefore, it is possible for Brazilian people to live in a less conflicting, perhaps ecologically sustainable way with indigenous peoples.

Amidst asymmetric ecological conflict, indigenous peoples are creating positive alternatives to destructive structures of reckless resource extraction. As is seen with the M.S.T. in Brazil (The Brazilian Landless Farmworkers' Movement *(Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurias Sem Terra)*) (Gilbert, 2006; Hammond, 2004) and the rise of indigenous peoples' political parties that often choose to represent non-indigenous peoples in Latin America (Madrid 2008; Singh 2005), indigenous peoples and their allies are building local and global networks to political and economic systems that do not provide for them, using more constructive, positive methods.

Acknowledgments

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