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Neo-Extractivism, Populism, and the Agrarian Question in Bolivia and Ecuador

Mark Tilzey

Abstract

The confluence of globalizing neoliberalism and national developmentalism, particularly in the case of China, has facilitated the appearance of monopolistic firms in the sub-imperium. These companies, usually state-owned in the case of China, are competing against the imperium for access to natural resources, land, and food supplies. The new economic flows ushered in across the South by this development have permitted some to circumvent the imperial debt trap, notably the 'pink tide' states of Latin America. These states, exploiting this window of opportunity, have sought to revisit developmentalism by means of 'neo-extractivism'. The populist regimes in Bolivia and Ecuador are exemplars of this trend and have swept to power on the back of anti-neoliberal sentiment that, this paper argues, comprises two principal class constituencies: a 'counter-hegemonic' constituency comprising the semi-proletarian peasantry, proletarians, and indigenous groups; and a 'sub-hegemonic' constituency comprising small commercial farms, the 'upper peasantry', and the nationally-oriented bourgeoisie. The latter take their reformist cue, in part, from previous developmentalist episodes, such as the MNR in the case of Bolivia, and have an imaginary of food sovereignty as 'farmer road' productivism. This paper suggests that the populist regimes of Morales in Bolivia and Correa in Ecuador articulate this sub-hegemonic discourse of national developmentalism, whilst forging alliances with counter-hegemonic groups, united by a rhetoric of anti-imperialism, indigenous revival, and livelihood principles such as buen vivir. But this rhetorical 'master frame' hides the class divisions and real motivations underlying populism: that of favouring neo-extractivism, via sub-imperial capital, to fund the 'compensatory state', supporting small scale commercial farmers and national capitalists through reformism while, at the same time, largely neglecting the counter-hegemonic aims, and reproductive crisis, of the middle/lower peasantry, and lowland indigenous groups, and their calls for food sovereignty as radical social relational change (via egalitarian land redistribution) and territorial autonomy. This reformist obfuscation of class and class fractional division and interest, the paper argues, has been facilitated by the 'master frame' of food sovereignty discourse itself, as exemplified by populists such as McMichael (2013) and van der Ploeg (2008), in its fatal elision of 'progressive' (Polanyian) and 'radical' (Marxian) positionalities (Tilzey 2016b). Thus, in Ecuador, for example, affiliates of LVC, all advocates of food sovereignty, display markedly different class positionalities, with small commercial farmers and the upper peasantry, members of the petty bourgeoisie, favouring market-based definitions of this concept. The populist, neo-extractivist regimes of Correa (Ecuador) and Morales (Bolivia) have exploited these ambiguities within food sovereignty to the full. The agrarian question of the subaltern classes and the environment refuses to go away, however, and it seems only a matter of time before the Faustian bargain of neo-extractivism is called to account, 'politically' and 'ecologically'.

1 Introduction: The Agrarian Question, Sub-Imperialism, Peasants, and Populism

The brief interlude of 'benign' imperialism and relative in-dependence for the periphery in relation to the core nations of the global North lasted only from the 1940s until the late 1970s. At this point, the neoliberal project was launched by the imperial North, a strategy to recuperate monopolistic profits and stave off an emergent South. In so doing, the project abandoned whatever incipient policy commitment to 'articulated' development had previously existed. Neoliberalism heralded not the 'end' of the agrarian question, but rather the re-launching of the agrarian question of monopoly-finance capital. Through the instrument of debt leverage, the bulk of the global South was gradually re-opened and placed at the disposal of trans-nationalizing capital. 'Disarticulated' development re-asserted itself, with conservative forces, the agro-exporting oligarchies that had been reluctant adherents to ISI and land reform during the 'in-dependence' interlude, now benefitting from the new dependency. Thus, the highly indebted peripheral and semi-peripheral states in which these class forces predominated (counterposed to a burgeoning class of semi-proletarian 'peasantry') were 'forced' (or, from the oligarchies' perspective, were happy) to lift state controls on currencies, prices, capital and trade, roll back industrial policies, privatize public enterprises and retreat to the export of cash crops and minerals as a means of servicing debt (and making profits for the oligarchies). This trend received further reinforcement with the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the late 1980s, and the 1990s became a decade of almost unbridled neoliberalism.

The result of this resurgence of neoliberal and monopoly-finance capital was to shift once again the coordinates of the agrarian question. The rural exodus and semi-proletarianization of the peasantry continued unabated, but without absorption of the (part)-expelled workforce into industrial employment as was supposed to happen in a 'classic' agrarian transition to capitalism. Agro-export capital continued to marginalize the peasantry, while national industries collapsed. This new 'precarious' workforce has remained to this day insecurely employed, under-employed, or unemployed (manifested most obviously in the 'informal' economy), in constant flux between town and country, and across international borders, manifested in the growth of the remittance economy. Instead of the classical dichotomy between 'peasants' (or more precisely farmers) and 'workers' seen in 'articulated' development, and in transitions from the former to the latter, the phenomenon that has prevailed is that of permanent semi-proletarianization. Here the expelled, the partially expelled, and super-exploited workforce competes with those in relatively secure employment to drive down wages across the board, delivering super-profits to trans-national capital.

This phenomenon has been interpreted, by both orthodox 'development' theorists and 'progressive' Marxists alike, as the 'disappearance' of the peasantry – for the latter, it is now simply an 'agrarian question of labour' in which the 'peasantry' merely constitute a slightly different form of the proletariat (Bernstein 2010). Nonetheless, members of the semi-proletariat themselves have never abandoned the agrarian question or the land question (de Janvry 1981). The demand for land has expanded in rural areas, and it continues to be seen as fundamental to the reproduction of the household. Indeed, the most politically significant trend over the last two or three decades has been the upsurge in land occupations in the countryside of the South. This politically reflexive response by the semi-proletariat as agent has placed the agrarian question on the agenda as an agrarian question of land access and of rights for the 'peasantry'. So, access to land for the expelled or partially expelled is now also a question of regaining access to basic citizenship and social rights, or perhaps to claiming the 'real citizenship', beyond bourgeois superficialities, that has never yet been theirs (see Mooers 2014, Tilzey 2016b).

We are currently in the throes of an immanent, epochal, crisis of neoliberalism, if not yet of capitalism in general. Imperial monopoly-finance capital has escalated its accumulation of land and natural resources in the peripheries, yet it faces three political challenges here ('political', or 'first' contradictions) (to say nothing of longer term biophysical constraints ('ecological', or 'second' contradiction) to which these are, in varying degrees, conjoined, Tilzey 2017). The first two represent sub-hegemonic challenges to the hegemony of neoliberalism: firstly, the national sovereignty regime

established in the 20th century, although attenuated, is nonetheless still exercised even by the small states; secondly, the emerging semi-peripheries (the sub-imperium), the unintended consequence of globalization, which, although not radical in themselves, have created new spaces and opportunities for manoeuvre by peripheral states. This sub-hegemonic trend is itself not without its own internal contradictions, these being intrinsic to capitalism and its necessarily state-based form (Tilzey 2016a). Monopolistic firms are springing up in the sub-imperium, notably the BRICS states (China, India, Brazil, South Africa) and scrambling themselves for natural resources, land, and food supplies. Their home states may not be militarizing imperialism in the manner of the global North, and they do often maintain a higher commitment to the sovereignty regime and to national development, as is the case with China particularly. Moreover, the economic flows ushered in across the South have permitted some to circumvent the Western debt trap, as with the ‘pink tide’ states of Latin America. But all are, nonetheless, subject to the socially and ecologically contradictory dynamics of capitalism.

The agrarian question now certainly remains a question of national sovereignty under conditions of imperialism and sub-imperialism, therefore (Moyo and Yeros 2011). But there is also now a tension between national sovereignty as the ‘old’, reformist vision of articulated capitalist development (even as a means to socialism), on the one hand, and national sovereignty as a ‘new’, revolutionary, vision of pro-peasant, pro-environmental, and possibly post-developmental *anti-capitalism*, on the other. It is the latter that represents the third, or counter-hegemonic, challenge to neoliberalism. Questions of gender equity, indigenism, and ecological sustainability are, in addition to class, now central to this latter vision. The political question now appears to be: what type of political organization can attend to the semi-proletariat, not to transform it into a proletariat or a class of commercial farmers in a full transition to capitalism, but rather to re-valorize its identity as a peasantry through access to land and the fulfilment of its vocation as small-scale and ecologically-based providers of secure food supplies for themselves, the local community, and the nation – in short, food sovereignty.

In response to deepened neoliberal imperialism and a resurgent landed oligarchy, the ‘peasantry’ has, against all expectations and predictions of its demise, risen up (Edelman and Borrás 2016). From the 1990s, rural protest movements have proliferated in Latin America (Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia), Africa (most notably Zimbabwe), and Asia (particularly Nepal, but also India, Philippines) to pursue none other than the recuperation of land by means of mass occupations, among other tactics. The environmental cause has become one of their priorities, particularly in Latin America, given that the destruction wrought by ‘new’ extractive capital occurs most immediately at the expense of marginalized communities. This explains, at least in part, why these rural mobilizations have often incorporated indigenous rights, feminist, and environmental movements.

It is only in a handful of cases, however, that these ‘peasant’ protest movements have succeeded in gaining some political power at the level of the state (Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Nepal) and have been able, *inter alia*, to secure commitments in their respective national constitutions to the principle of food sovereignty. In most cases, even here, however, such access to the state has been possible only through fragile alliances with an emergent, sub-hegemonic, national and anti-imperialist bourgeoisie, the latter founded centrally on a *populist* discursive ‘master frame’ as the basis for its legitimacy. This means that such alliances have, from the outset, tended to compromise and subvert the original ambitions of the protest movement. While these national bourgeoisies, together crucially with a petty bourgeoisie of upper peasantry, still nurture visions of ‘articulated’ capitalist development, (with the peasantry transformed into capitalist farmers and/or a fully proletarianized workforce), the (middle and lower) peasantry itself seems to have other ideas. They appear to be proposing an alternative society which takes seriously ‘re-peasantization’ or re-agrarianization as a modern project (although calling strongly on traditions drawn from the past), along with cooperative and collective forms of production and labour absorption. What appears perhaps most distinctive about this new vision, at least in its Latin American variant, is the de-legitimation of capitalism, for political, cultural, and ecological reasons, both as an end in itself and as a putative transitional pathway to socialism.

In the cases of Bolivia and Ecuador, exemplars of populist regimes fiscally predicated on neo-extractivism, anti-neoliberal agrarian protests were undertaken largely by the semi-proletarian peasantry, located mainly in the Andes, and by tribal/communitarian, indigenous groups in the eastern lowlands (*Oriente*). The latter, in particular, have been adversely affected by the mineral/oil extractive and agri-food industries on which the new extractivism is based. The peasantry's protests hark back to the incomplete land reforms and unresolved agrarian question of previous developmentalist episodes. Their primary demand is for adequate land for self-subsistence as a matter of priority, and relief from the precarity of semi-proletarian existence. Some may aspire to become members of the commercial upper peasantry, but these are a minority. These protests, making them distinct from previous anti-neoliberal mobilizations of the 1980s, also have an overlay of 'post-developmental' discourse, comprising concern for issues of indigeneity, gender, and ecology. In some respects, therefore, these protests have become 'post-classist', but the class problematic nonetheless remains strong, while exhibiting a strong indigenous inflection. These groups, in essence, are looking beyond capitalism and the capitalist state, in other words, beyond reformism (passive revolution). Their advocacy, then, appears to be directed, via profound social relational change away from capitalism, towards what might be termed livelihood sovereignty (Tilzey 2017) – the ability to lead fulfilling lives in socially and ecological sustainable ways, free of exploitation and the compulsion to sell labour power to others.

But these 'radical', counter-hegemonic groups have run up against reformist, sub-hegemonic, nationally defined, discourses of sovereignty, including food sovereignty as productivist, national agriculture. This discourse is articulated also by the small class of commercial family farmers (that is, the former 'upper peasantry', not the capitalist estates of the oligarchy), for example, the *cocaleros* of Bolivia. These sub-hegemonic constituencies take their reformist cue, in part, from former developmentalist episodes, such as the MNR (*Movimiento Nacional Revolutionario*) in the case of Bolivia, a populist movement that sought to build national 'articulated' development. The populist regimes of Morales in Bolivia and (formerly) Correa in Ecuador articulate these sub-hegemonic discourses, and have utilized widespread anti-neoliberal sentiment to forge alliances with counter-hegemonic groups, united by a rhetoric of anti-colonialism/imperialism and of indigenous revival and livelihood principles such as *buen vivir* or *vivir bien*. But this rhetorical 'master frame' hides the class divisions and real motivations that underlie the populist projects – those of favouring small scale and national capitalists through reformism, whilst largely neglecting the counter-hegemonic aims, and current reproductive crisis, of the peasantry and lowland indigenous groups. This reformist obfuscation of class and class fractional division and interest has been facilitated by the 'master frame' of food sovereignty discourse itself, as articulated by populists such as McMichael (2013) and van der Ploeg (2008), in its fatal elision of 'progressive' (Polanyian) and 'radical' (Marxian) positionalities (Tilzey 2016b, 2017). The 'post-modern' tendency to emphasize identity and indigeneity at the expense of class, together with the essentialization of the 'peasantry', has predisposed even ostensibly 'radical' mobilizations to co-optation by reformist and populist trends. As we shall see in the case studies that follow, where 'post-developmentalism' is not complemented by class analysis, fateful consequences can ensue. Thus, in Ecuador, for example, affiliates of *La Via Campesina* (LVC), all advocates of food sovereignty, display markedly different class positionalities, with small commercial farmers and the upper peasantry, members of the petty bourgeoisie, favouring market-based definitions of this concept (Clark 2017). As Brass (2015,196) notes, '...what the[se] farmers' movements object to is not capitalism per se, but rather the market advantage currently enjoyed by large agribusiness enterprises...its members seek merely to establish for themselves a better competitive position within the existing capitalist system'. The populist, neo-extractivist regimes of Correa (Ecuador) and Morales (Bolivia) have exploited these ambiguities within food sovereignty to the full.

2 Neo-Extractivism, Neo-Developmentalism, and Reformism

While by no means coterminous, neo-extractivism and neo-developmentalism have often emerged in conjunction, especially in the case of Latin America (Veltmeyer and Petras 2014). This is so because in Latin America there has been widespread resistance to the socially polarizing consequences of neoliberalism and to the progressive loss of national sovereignty (including sovereignty over food) that has accompanied the deepening of ‘extroverted’ dependent development. Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Venezuela all represent examples where popular forces, comprising peasants, semi-proletarians, proletarians and landless, indigenous groups (in Bolivia and Ecuador particularly), and more endogenously oriented class fractions of the bourgeoisies, have succeeded, with varying degrees of success, in resisting and displacing the dominance of the ‘disarticulated alliance’ of the national landed oligarchy and trans-nationalized capital. What these countries have in common is a new commitment to greater state guidance and interventionism in the economy, a greater formal or substantive commitment to national food sovereignty, and the introduction of social programmes to alleviate the severe income disparities characteristic of the neoliberal era. Funds for the latter, however, are predicated on the proceeds of the ‘new’ extractivism, both of mineral and fossil-fuel resources, but also of agri-fuels, offered by the emergence of sub-imperial states, notably China in the case of Ecuador, and Brazil in the case of Bolivia.

Neo-developmentalism, and certainly neo-extractivism, are not, therefore, without their political and ecological contradictions. Indeed, they are inherently contradictory because the former, in particular, comprises a populist *reformism* that attempts to address selected symptoms of capitalist contradiction whilst failing to address its structural causes. States such as Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Venezuela, have engaged in processes of ‘passive revolution’ (reform from above, led by nationally-oriented fractions of capital, but in alliance with proletarians, peasants and indigenous people) that have also been characterized as neo-extractivism (Veltmeyer and Petras 2014, Spronk and Webber 2015). All these states pursue policies of both energy and mineral extraction (often in ‘protected areas’ and/or on lands of indigenous peoples), and of productivist, export agriculture, in order to fund social programmes and infrastructure development. In Bolivia, Ecuador and Brazil, largely due to continuing opposition from an entrenched landed oligarchy and their governments’ apparent willingness to overlook this in the search for export earnings, relatively little progress has been made with respect to land redistribution in favour of the semi-proletariat and landless (Giunta 2014, Spronk and Webber 2015). A percentage of revenues from primary resource extraction has been diverted to social programmes to placate the semi-proletariat and urban proletariat, leading to an uneasy compromise, embodied in these populist regimes as ‘compensatory states’ (Gudynas 2012), between subaltern classes, the nationally-focused bourgeoisie, and the continuing power of the landed oligarchy.

As a result, increasing tensions have become apparent between these neo-developmental and extractivist regimes and their erstwhile constituencies of support among the indigenous groups and semi-proletarian and landless peasantry, often members of LVC. For these constituencies, tensions focus around access to land and the means of production, and around the neo-developmental focus on economic growth as a means of bypassing the need to address the structural causes of land poverty and landlessness. In this way food (and land) sovereignty has become a highly contested discourse, deriving initially from re-assertions of national sovereignty as a counter-narrative to neoliberalism, but now often appropriated by neo-developmentalism. This discursive tension and ambiguity is expressed in the constitutionalization of food sovereignty in Ecuador and Bolivia, for example. As we shall see, the appropriation of food sovereignty discourse by the governments of those countries, in the service of neo-developmental ends, is increasingly contested by peasant and indigenous movements seeking a post-developmental model of cooperative social relations founded on the principle of *buen vivir* (good living) (Giunta 2014, Tilzey 2016b). The irony here is that the governments of Ecuador and Bolivia have both invoked the cooperative principle of *buen vivir* or *vivir bien* to legitimate further capital accumulation by means of a Polanyian process of ‘embedding’ extractivism through the ‘compensatory state’.

These ‘systemic’ and ‘sub-hegemonic’ resistances to neoliberalism derive in important respects from ‘internal’ dynamics of capitalism that can be understood only from a class analytical and state-capital nexus perspective. One key fracture line for neoliberalism, therefore, and one that cannot be understood from a perspective of a monolithic or fully trans-nationalised capitalism (see Tilzey 2016a), is the emergence of the BRICS and specifically China (and to a lesser extent Brazil and Russia) as sub-hegemonic or sub-imperial powers (Bond and Garcia 2015). China, in particular, has deployed neoliberal globalization as a strategic means of strengthening the industrial and military infrastructure of the state as a counterweight to the USA. While its growth trajectory is highly contradictory across both the ‘internal’ and ‘external’ dynamics of capitalism, and is heavily dependent on global Northern consumption, China’s emergence as a key site of capital accumulation has, nevertheless, opened up a space for other states in the global South to re-assert more nationally-based capitalist development or, at least, for national fractions of capital to selectively displace global Northern dominance. This, as noted above, has coincided with widespread disenchantment with neoliberalism in the global South, and in Latin America particularly. The boom in primary commodity prices stimulated by China’s growth has enabled sub-hegemonic fractions of national capital to ally with non-capitalist class forces to install a wave of centre-left regimes in Latin America particularly (known popularly as the ‘pink tide’) (Spronk and Webber 2015).

China itself faces the ineluctable contradictions of capitalism, however. With the rural semi-proletariat no longer subsidizing the cost of industrial labour due the process of progressive full proletarianization (see Tilzey 2017), wage demands have been increasing, and China faces the prospect of losing its ‘comparative advantage’ in low labour power costs. This would potentially entail the migration of industry overseas to still cheaper areas of production such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, the suppression of wage demands, or the increased replacement of labour through mechanization. China thus confronts the ‘political’, or first, contradiction, of attempting to sustain high rates of growth in the face of rising labour costs, due to increasing full proletarianization of its labour force, and in the face of stagnating global demand, due to over-production/under-consumption crisis (see Tilzey 2017). Meanwhile, it attempts to maintain downward pressure on costs of production through the increasing import of energy, minerals, and indeed food, as ‘cheaps’ (Moore 2015), from overseas, undertaken by means of extractivism and ‘land grabbing’. Through increasing political resistance in the zones of extractivism, through the inevitable secular depletion of resources, and through the unavoidable need to address unsustainable levels of pollution at home, rising costs will constitute an ecological, or second, contradiction for Chinese capital accumulation.

In respect of the latter, and specifically with regard to access to oil, it needs to be appreciated that this hydrocarbon is now a fundamental and vital input in Chinese manufacturing and construction. Whilst twenty-five years ago, China was the major oil exporter to all of East Asia (Ricaurte 2012), today it is a major oil importer, lying in second place globally behind the USA. The growing scarcity of this ‘cheap’ has already occasioned closures and paralysis of giant industrial complexes, in addition to the rise in the price of Chinese products that are consumed the world over (Bonilla 2015). Looming scarcity has stimulated China to seek access and control of petroleum resources on a global scale, bringing it, of course, into increasing competition with the other major centres of manufacturing and consumption, principally the states of the imperium (and this despite the fact that these same states are highly dependent on the Chinese for the production of imported, primarily lower-end, manufactures). In order to gain such strategic access to, and control over, petroleum supplies, China has created three huge multinationals: The China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), and the China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (SINOPEC) (Katz 2015). The latter two companies are now heavily involved in oil exploration and production in Ecuador and Peru, for example, underwriting the neo-extractivism that characterizes the economies of those states. Exploration and production are concentrated in the Amazonian lowlands, commonly on the lands of indigenous, tribal peoples, and in areas of extremely high biodiversity, supposedly afforded protection from exploitation for both these cultural and ecological reasons. Such notional protections have been overridden, of course, in the quest for oil, that vital and irreplaceable energetic ingredient of capital accumulation. Despite increasing levels of conflict with indigenous groups and

high levels of ecological despoliation, the quest is awarded relative immunity by those neo-extractivist states, their interests aligning symbiotically with those of Chinese capital accumulation.

The dynamics of populist, ‘pink tide’ states such as Bolivia and Ecuador are highly contradictory, therefore, both ‘politically’ and ‘ecologically’. As noted, they have been able to support social welfare programmes and infrastructure development only through resource extraction fed, to a significant degree, by the Chinese commodity boom. But they have been reluctant to put in place sustainable food production and livelihood systems based on land redistribution, precisely because the growth model is premised on the perpetuation of extractivism and agro-export productivism. So, while the regimes of Correa and Morales have relied heavily upon peasant and indigenous support to secure electoral success, and have included provisions for food sovereignty in their new constitutions, moves towards substantive implementation of these provisions, through key measures such as land redistribution, have fallen far short of expectation (Henderson 2017, Webber 2017). Consequently, these agrarian and indigenous constituencies of support are becoming increasingly alienated from centre-left regimes such as those in Bolivia and Ecuador. Moreover, the current decline in primary commodity prices will see a reduction in government budgets for social programmes and a renewed focus on austerity, with a resultant melting away of urban working-class support for these regimes.

The case studies of Bolivia, Ecuador, presented below, illustrate well the dynamics of reformism in general, and agrarian reformism in particular. Bolivia and Ecuador, as indicated, are exemplars of populist, neo-developmental regimes. In order to properly contextualize these case studies of contestation between sub-hegemonic and counter-hegemonic social interests, it is helpful here to say a little more about reformism and the state-capital nexus, with specific reference to the global periphery. It is vital to emphasize that reform dynamics can only be properly understood at the level of the state, not at the level of the capitalist world system, although it goes without saying that reforms are in an important sense responses to developments that take place within that wider context. But again, there are clear differences between states in the nature of those responses, for example between Ecuador and Colombia, or between Bolivia and Peru, that can only be accounted for by addressing the dynamics of social-property relations (class) within the individual state in question. It is for this reason that case studies are important. Thus, for example, the socially and environmentally negative impacts of neoliberalism have been widespread in Latin America (as elsewhere), but the response of the state to these contradictions has been differentiated. Stereotypically, it takes the form either of repression of resulting political resistance (as in Colombia) or of reform, as in Bolivia and Ecuador. Reform is thus a non-decentralized, non-repressive form of state intervention that aims to overcome the accumulation and legitimation crises, particularly the latter, to which neoliberalism has succumbed. It is the legitimation dimension of reformism that is inextricably associated with populism, in which *trasformismo* (Gramsci 1971) is a key dynamic (see Webber 2017).

Thus, reform may be defined as a state intervention that is stimulated by (developmental) crisis and is: first, evidently short of revolution (in which case the dominant mode of production, capitalism, would be overthrown, as would also be the case with the capitalist state, together with their attendant understandings of ‘sovereignty’); and, second, is not dependent on sheer repression. Reformism, in effect therefore, attempts to construct a ‘flanking’ mode of regulation to ‘embed’ a somewhat modified regime of accumulation but, crucially, without subverting capitalist social-property relations themselves. In this, then, reformism has much in common with Keynesian and Polanyian (in essence populist) ‘solutions’ to capitalist crises (see Tilzey 2016b for discussion).

There are three types of reforms that are of fundamental relevance to securing and reproducing capitalism in the face of its contradictions with respect to the peripheral state-capital nexus.

- Reforms associated with the transition to capitalism and the immediate post-transition period;
- Reforms associated with crises of accumulation. In the periphery, this is not a problem in itself for trans-nationalized capital since the under-consumption crisis is located primarily in the core countries. Similarly, under-production crisis in the conditions of production does not

appear imminent. Rather, the problem lies with the exclusion of other fractions of capital, notably national bourgeoisie and small commercial farmers, from the accumulation nexus of the 'disarticulated alliance';

- Reforms associated with crises of legitimacy. Here the elements that create legitimacy are: first, the existence of a petty bourgeoisie, this providing the material basis for the ideology of liberal capitalism, and of the meritocratic, enterprising, and 'sovereign' individual; the ability of certain fractions of the working class to enter into social democratic arrangements for the improvement of wages and working conditions under the ideology of state planning and the welfare state. Legitimacy reforms, in response principally to the poverty generating policies of neoliberalism, are arguably the most important motivation behind reformism in the Bolivian and Ecuadorian cases, and take the Polanyian form of 'embedding' capitalism and the creation of a petty bourgeoisie (the upper peasantry, for example) and the co-optation of some parts of the working class and semi-proletariat through populism.

In embarking on reform programmes, the state operates under three further constraints, all of which are relevant to dynamics of reformism in our case studies. These are:

- A constraint determined by the degree of legitimacy of the state. To implement its reformist policies, the state needs to secure, via populism, the support of different social classes and fractions of classes that comprise its constituency;
- A constraint imposed by the fiscal capacity of the state. The reformist capacity of the state is limited by its capacity to generate a public budget on the basis of tax revenues. As we shall see in the case of Bolivia and Ecuador, the legitimacy of the current regimes has been founded on redistributive policies involving social security, health, and welfare payments to those sectors of society most marginalized by neoliberalism. The monies employed to this end depend upon revenues originating in the sphere of production, most especially through extractivism. It is thus clear that political protests against resource extraction potentially have an impact of the state's fiscal capacity and upon those groups benefitting from it;
- A constraint that derives from the administrative capacity of the state. The state needs to have an adequate administrative capacity to understand the nature of the specific forms of crisis and to define and operationalize the corresponding reforms. This frequently runs up against the clientelistic nature of agencies and ministries, as we shall see in the case of Ecuador, for example, where the Ministry of Agriculture (MAGAP) has hitherto been largely at the service of the landed oligarchy.

Reformism in the current conjuncture also has referents in previous rounds of reform, in Bolivia from the 1950s until the neoliberal era, and in Ecuador during much shorter episodes of developmentalism, especially during the 1970s. In both countries, agrarian reformism was, firstly, an attempt to generate a more 'articulated' model of development, and secondly, with legitimacy concerns uppermost, a means of containing peasant political pressures both through direct control of peasant organizations, and through the legislation of mild land reform projects intended to eradicate semi-feudal estates from the agrarian structure and to redistribute some land, inadequately, to the peasantry (Conaghan 1988, Webber 2017). This effectively induced the transformation of semi-feudal estates into capitalist enterprises of the oligarchy, while limited redistribution of land created an incipient sector of capitalized family farms, thus bridging, through the establishment of a politically stable petty bourgeoisie, the historical gap between *minifundio* and *latifundio*. The remaining peasantry became, in the main, semi-proletarians, selling their labour on the new capitalist estates or on the urban market. The agrarian question thus remained unresolved from the perspective of the peasantry, and it was this unresolved question that underpinned the renewed agrarian protest that erupted from the 1990s in response to neoliberalism, this time reinforced by wider concerns relating to indigenous self-determination and environmental degradation.

3 Bolivia

The 2005 election witnessed a clear victory for Evo Morales, the leader of the coca growers' union. His party, MAS (*Movimiento al Socialismo*), was closely linked to the emergent indigenous, anti-colonial, and populist social movements that had coalesced in opposition to the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s and beyond. This broad coalition of peasant, indigenous, and worker organizations formed the *Pacto de Unidad* (Unity Pact) which was essential in Morales' rise to power and became integrated, to varying degrees, within the new regime (Fabricant 2012, Webber 2015, 2017, McKay *et al.* 2014).

An important source of rural anti-neoliberal protest derived from the parlous condition of the peasantry in Bolivia, particularly the middle and lower peasantry. Thus, rural class structure in Bolivia is characterized by a concentration of land in the hands of an agrarian oligarchy, juxtaposed to large numbers of landless and land-poor peasants. *Haciendas* thus occupy ninety per cent of Bolivia's productive land, leaving only ten per cent divided between mostly indigenous peasant communities and smallholding peasants. Four hundred individuals own seventy per cent of productive land, while there are two and a half million landless peasants in a country of nine million people (seventy-seven per cent of peasants are indigenous) (Enzina 2007, Webber 2015).

Of the 446,000 peasant production units remaining in the country today, 225,000 are located in the *altiplano*, 164,000 in the valley departments (*yungas*), and only 57,000 in the eastern lowlands. Capitalist relations of production now predominate in the eastern lowlands and are increasingly displacing small-scale peasant production in the valleys and *altiplano*, although the latter continues to be the most important form of production in the *altiplano* (Ormachea Saavedra 2007). (The *altiplano* accounts for only nineteen per cent of total cultivated land.) The rural population is diminishing throughout the country as processes of semi-proletarianization and proletarianization accelerate with the gradual expansion of capitalist relations of production to all parts of the country (Ormachea Saavedra 2007). From the early 1970s, migrant semi-proletarians provided the workforce for sugarcane and cotton harvests in the lowlands, while, for the rest of the year, they maintained small plots of land in the highland departments from which they primarily travelled (that is, Cochabamba, Potosi, and Chuquisaca). Between 1976 and 1996, rural population as a percentage of total population fell from fifty-nine to thirty-nine percent (Pacheco Balanza and Ormachea Saavedra 2000). This decline was caused by two main factors: declining production in the *altiplano* due to soil exhaustion and increasing division of land into *minifundios* over time due to population expansion; and increased capitalization of agriculture in the lowlands, leading to decreased employment opportunities (Pacheco Balanza and Ormachea Saavedra 2000). This squeeze has accentuated the differentiation of the peasantry into rich, medium, and poor strata. 1988 survey data suggest that seventy-six percent of peasantry were poor peasants (lacking means to reproduce their family labour-power on their own land and obliged to sell labour elsewhere on a temporary basis). Medium peasants constituted eleven percent of the peasantry (defined as family units able to reproduce labour without selling labour-power elsewhere). Rich peasants (making a profit after reproducing their family and means of production, and purchasing the labour of poorer peasants and using modern technology) comprised thirteen percent (Ormachea Saavedra 2007). This process of peasant differentiation has only accelerated since then (the middle being squeezed), with richer peasants becoming commercial farmers (Ormachea Saavedra 2007, Webber 2017).

To what extent has the Morales regime addressed these contradictions of the peasantry? Unfortunately, the process of middle and lower peasant attrition has continued under the government of Evo Morales, despite his pro-peasant and indigenous rhetoric. Capitalist social relations in agriculture have continued to expand under this regime, from seventy-nine percent of farm production to eighty-two percent. In 2005-6 small peasant production accounted for twenty-five percent of total agricultural production in the *altiplano*. By 2008-9, however, this figure had fallen to under twenty-two percent. State subsidies and support are directed to capitalist, agro-industrial production in the lowlands and to

the small commercial farm sector, while small-scale peasant producers in the highlands are effectively abandoned (Ormachea Saavedra 2011).

The populist, reformist, Polanyian position of Morales has its own policies and its own analytics, deriving from its essentially petty bourgeois class base ('progressive' on Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck's 2011 classification). According to this class positionality, the peasantry is a homogeneous group, defined by Chayanovian principles, by indigeneity, and by opposition to corporate, monopoly capital and to the landed oligarchy. By contrast, a 'radical', counter-hegemonic, or class relational positionality, would suggest that certain groups of the peasantry, that is, the upper peasant stratum, are actually benefitting from these processes of differentiation at the expense of other groups, that is, the great majority in the form of semi-proletarians and the rapidly diminishing cohort of middle peasants. The reality is that a significant, and growing, stratum of the peasantry is coming to be defined as 'rich' as per the tripartite classification above. It is accruing profits as a direct result of surplus appropriation through the work of salaried labourers, that is, of semi-proletarians from the growing stratum of poor peasants in most instances. They also have growing motivations for expanding accumulation through expropriation of further land, either from the middle or lower strata of peasantry, or from indigenous tribal groups in the lowlands through a process of primitive accumulation (Ormachea Saavedra 2011, Webber 2015).

The result is that it is very difficult to speak of a 'peasant way' in general as one encompassing the class interests of all three strata of peasantry. Rather, the upper peasantry is likely to espouse a type of Polanyian 'alterity' more akin to that of small capitalists and petty commodity producers of the global North (the 'progressives'), their primary opponents being the agro-industrial landed oligarchy with whom they are in competition for land and labour, and the transnational corporations. Absent threats from this quarter, the rich peasantry is relatively happy with the status quo under MAS, from whom the latter draws its core support (and the class from which Morales himself comes), and which is one of the main beneficiaries from the 'Agrarian Revolution' (see McKay *et al.* 2014). By contrast, it is the middle and semi-proletarian peasantry who, for the reasons identified above, are most likely to advocate 'radical' change away from the status quo and towards land and food sovereignty - a change involving, at its heart, fundamental land redistribution in favour of these lower peasant strata. This is a counter-hegemonic road to alterity through social relational change to 'real citizenship' through human emancipation by means of the re-unification of producers with their means of production. The land involved in such reform will need to be taken not only from the landed oligarchy but also from the upper stratum of peasantry. The objective of such land reform is likely to be the creation of a stable stratum of middle peasantry, able to support its own reproduction and to produce modest surpluses from which to supply the non-farming population.

A transformation in this direction will be important, indeed vital, for both social and ecological reasons. The current conjuncture is highly unstable and unsustainable for both reasons - for the social reasons identified above, and for the ecological reasons deriving from the nature-destroying and fossil-fuel based character of the agro-industrial, extractivist agriculture being practiced in the eastern lowlands. The classes benefitting from this process, the landed oligarchy, extractive industries, and the upper peasantry, are placing in jeopardy the livelihoods of the majority of Bolivians - the middle and lower peasantry (semi-proletarians), the urban proletariat, and lowland indigenous groups. To date, the urban proletariat has been placated by the 'compensatory state' (Gudynas 2012) through the proceeds of ecologically and socially destructive extractivism, but this cannot continue and is, indeed, faltering, as the commodity boom decelerates and austerity again begins to bite. The class interests of the middle and lower peasantries coincide in this conjuncture with those of proletarians - indeed, many 'proletarians' *are* semi-proletarians. If the sustainable utilization and stewardship of Bolivia's rich ecosystems, including agro- ecosystems, are to be assured through food and land sovereignty for the long-term benefit of all as 'real citizens', then an alliance of these subaltern social forces - the middle/lower peasantry, the urban proletariat, and lowland indigenous groups - would seem to be an imperative development.

In the present, but increasingly unstable, conjuncture, *buen vivir/vivir bien* has been deployed as the foundational ‘myth’ for the MAS populist programme, taken as a projection of the collective, cooperative Andean and indigenous way. The reality described above, one of extractive capital and the peripheral, compensatory state, is very different from this assumed cooperative ideal. Using this cooperative ideal to legitimate its standing amongst the subaltern classes, MAS has attempted, via the compensatory state and reformism, to embed capitalism in Polanyian fashion by mitigating, in some measure, the impacts of extractivism on the subaltern classes.

Are there any indications that the agrarian question in Bolivia may be resolved in favour of a ‘radical’, counter-hegemonic interpretation of food sovereignty? Under conditions of neo-extractivism and the ‘compensatory state’, the class struggle in Bolivia appears to have assumed two principle dimensions (Veltmeyer 2014). The first dimension relates to labour in the public sector and to the mass of proletarianized and semi-proletarianized rural and urban workers comprising, firstly, the huge urban proletariat of self-employed workers in the informal sector and, secondly, a rural proletariat of landless or near- landless workers. Labour in this sector makes up well over half the ‘economically active population’ and the mass of the urban poor. This dimension of struggle refers in the main to rural urban dynamics in the *altiplano* and *yungas* regions of Bolivia, largely outside the new extractive zones located primarily in the eastern lowlands of the country.

The second dimension of class struggle, located largely in the eastern lowlands, relates, firstly, to the conditions generated by the operations of extractive capital, conditions that have given rise to conflict between the mining companies, agri-food oligarchy, and the government, on the one hand, and the indigenous peoples and communities negatively affected by extractivism, on the other. It relates, secondly, to the mega-infrastructure projects proposed or undertaken by the MAS government and capital in support of extractivism. The class struggle here is one waged essentially by indigenous groups in defence of their territorial rights to the land, water and subsoil resources on which their social existence and well-being depend, and in protest against the destructive effects of mining operations and agri-food extractivism on the environment and their livelihoods. The movements formed to this end have been increasingly active in recent years, as the foreign mining companies and agri-food companies have intensified their operations with government support (Webber 2015).

There are indications that these two dimensions of the class struggle are beginning to coalesce, with the confrontation between the government and social movements becoming increasingly dynamic and fractious. The proposal (now approved) by the MAS government to construct, with Brazilian funding, a trans-continental highway through the *Territorio Indigena y Parque Isiboro Secure* (TIPNIS) in support of extractivism and against its own constitutional commitment to protect indigenous lands and nature has acted as a catalyst for the coalescence of these two dimensions of class struggle (Ormachea Saavedra 2011, Veltmeyer 2014).

The approach to development taken by the Morales government, the ‘compensatory state’ through ‘progressive’ extractivism, and the policy measures taken to redress the ‘inequality predicament’, raise serious questions about the likelihood, or even the possibility, of this regime consolidating and sustaining the few and limited gains made towards fulfilling its stated aim of creating a cooperative and communitarian society in which all Bolivians ‘live well’ in social solidarity and in harmony with mother nature. The government, like others in Latin America, has chosen to build the compensatory state on the proceeds of a particularly regressive and destructive form of capital accumulation, in which the heavy social and environmental costs are borne disproportionately by the communities most directly affected by the operations of extractive capital (Veltmeyer and Petras 2014).

This extractivist offensive has given rise to a destabilizing process of class struggle characterized by a veritable wave of protest and social resistance (Webber 2015). In the last few years, a large number of movements and struggles have been calling into question the extractivist-export model and its attendant violence and environmental devastation wrought primarily by transnational (imperial and

sub-imperial) capital via the medium of the Morales regime. By means of the compensatory state, the Morales government has constructed a structure of legitimacy, or in other words ‘flanking’ measures, to support renewed capital accumulation through extractivism (Orellana 2011). This represents an attempt to embed capitalism through income and infrastructure measures for low-income groups founded on a narrative of communalism and cooperation as *vivir bien*. In this way, the MAS government had, until recently, temporarily stabilized the contradiction between the accumulation and legitimation functions of the capitalist state. Morales restored legitimacy by placating counter-hegemonic groups during the period 2006-2009. He then proceeded (2010-date) to re-focus on capital accumulation to the benefit of the agri-food oligarchy, the upper peasantry, and transnational extractive capital to the neglect of the semi-proletarian and indigenous majority (Webber 2017). With progressive loss of support from these counter-hegemonic fractions, another legitimation crisis beckons. Indeed, because Morales’ development model, as reformism and populism, has failed to address the class and environmental contradictions of capitalism, it now appears to be unravelling, as elsewhere in Latin America. With the de-legitimation of extractivism, the proletariat, lower and middle peasants, and indigenous groups are increasingly advocating a model of the cooperative society beyond capitalism. The Morales reformist regime is thus encountering the constraint defined by a legitimacy deficit; meanwhile, the fiscal capacity of the state is predicated on a Faustian bargain with extractivism, a mode of accumulation that, while providing a short-term revenue windfall for populism, actively, and perhaps fatally, compromises the ecological basis for constructing longer-term livelihood sovereignty for Bolivians as ‘real citizens’.

4 Ecuador

Land ownership and distribution remains highly concentrated and unequal in Ecuador, with the majority of the peasantry having insufficient access to land to meet family subsistence needs throughout the year, let alone to generate a surplus for potential sale. Thus, the data on land concentration before and after the agrarian reforms of the 1960s and 1970s do indeed confirm that there has been only marginal change in the distribution of land in Ecuador (Clark 2017). For example, in 1954 prior to the agrarian reform processes, the Gini coefficient for land distribution was 0.86, and by 2001 it had changed only marginally to 0.80 (Martínez 2014, 44). Due to the uneven nature of the agrarian reform process in Ecuador, there is a wide spectrum of producers in Ecuador, ranging from land-and-resource-poor peasants in the highlands at one end, to middle/upper peasants and large-scale agri-export operations of the oligarchy at the other (Clark 2017). As a result, there is considerable diversity in the nature of what the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture in Ecuador (MAGAP) call *agricultura familiar campesina*, or peasant family farming, a definition that includes a broad range of producers who do not necessarily share, and indeed often contest, economic interests and class positionalities. MAGAP (the Ministry of Agriculture) uses the term *campesino* as an inclusive term to refer the number of farms, or *Unidades Productivas Agrícolas* (UPAs) that meet a number of criteria determined by the 2000 agricultural census. The MAGAP defines *agricultura familiar campesina* as any UPA with less than 5 hectares in the Sierra, less than 20 hectares in the Coastal region, and less than 50 hectares in the Amazonian region (SENPLADES 2014, 158). Based on the 2000 census data, it is estimated that there are 3,034,440 *campesinos* in Ecuador, with an average household size of 3.92 members in each household. According to the 2000 census, 84.4% of the UPAs are *campesino* UPAs even though *campesino* agriculture only represents 20% of the cultivated land in Ecuador. This means that the other 16.6% of UPAs that are classified as agro-industrial production use 80% of the arable land in the country (SENPLADES 2014, p. 159).

The rise of modern agribusiness in Ecuador is inextricably linked, therefore, to the demise of the pre-capitalist *hacienda* system and the simultaneous emergence of a larger, post-reform pool of land-poor peasants in the highlands, who became the workforce in these modernized agro-industrial operations (Martínez 2016). The elimination of the feudal *hacienda* system deepened the integration of

smallholders, typically semi-proletarians, into the rural labour market and capitalist social relations. In the coastal provinces, the processes of agrarian reform of the 1960s and 1970s have given way to the re-concentration of land into large agro-industrial properties (Cueva *et al.* 2008), a process particularly associated with the production of flex crops such as palm oil, soya, and corn and export commodities such as bananas (Martínez 2014, p. 50). This has given rise in these areas to considerable resentment against the agro-exporting oligarchy on the part of the sub-hegemonic fraction of small commercial farmers.

Such lack of access to land and a pattern of ‘disarticulated’ development characteristic of the ‘Junker’ road to capitalism fed widespread anti-neoliberal agrarian protest during the 1990s, protest which had, moreover, a strong indigenous inflection. This, in turn, created electoral space for the rise of Correa’s populism in the first decade of the new millennium, enabled, fiscally, by the new Chinese search for fossil fuels, minerals, and agro-exports, and that state’s willingness to shoulder the burden of Ecuador’s external debt. The most important force behind the 2005 coup against the then incumbent neoliberal regime was a group known as the *forajidos*, middle-class sectors of Quito (Clark 2017), and these subsequently became an important political force behind Correa’s 2006 presidential bid. Presciently, such nationally-focused bourgeoisies and petty bourgeois class fractions could relatively easily co-opt the ‘progressive’ (mainly upper peasant) tendency within the food sovereignty movement through support for small farm productivity enhancements, whilst emasculating the more ‘radical’ tendency through social welfare payments as subsistence supplement disbursed by what was to emerge as the ‘compensatory state’.

Thus, in the period leading up to Correa’s 2006 election, Ecuador’s social movements presented a powerful challenge to the prevailing neoliberal paradigm. Correa’s anti-neoliberal, and anti-imperialist campaign, much like that of Morales in Bolivia, drew centrally on this social unrest, and its eventual success depended on the support of the country’s social movements. Prior to 2006, the *Mesa Agraria* (a coalition of four peasant/indigenous organizations) had signed an agreement with Correa in which he gave a commitment, upon election, to initiate an ‘agrarian revolution’ based on the demand of the peasant movement for food sovereignty, a demand centred on the democratization of land and water access, and upon state resources for the revival and stimulation of the ‘peasant’ economy (Giunta 2014, Henderson 2017). Correa did indeed fulfil one of his central campaign promises in April 2007 with the convocation of a national constituent assembly. Correa’s political dependence on the food sovereignty movement in the form of the *Mesa Agraria*, enabled the latter to secure the institutionalization of many of its central demands, specifically, state support for the distribution of land to the peasant sector, and its complement by affordable credit and state-funded training. For reasons of legitimacy, the Correa regime was obliged to recognize these broad demands of food sovereignty and to integrate them, rhetorically, into its project. It has subsequently become evident, however, that Correa has been happy to implement some of the reformist (‘progressive’) demands of food sovereignty from the sub-hegemonic fraction, whilst failing to deliver on the ‘radical’, or counter-hegemonic, agenda of land redistribution. This possibility was feasible, however, precisely because of the discursive breadth of, and lack of clarity in, food sovereignty discourse, enabling Correa differentially to fulfil commitments that accorded with *national* food sovereignty, and the stimulation of productivity for expanded accumulation amongst the class fractions of the upper peasantry.

In February 2007, Ecuador’s new food sovereignty law came into effect, enshrining in the legal system articles 281 and 282 of the new constitution. Article 281 states that food sovereignty constitutes a ‘strategic objective of the state’ to guarantee Ecuador’s self-sufficiency in healthy and culturally appropriate foods. Article 282 guarantees that the state will regulate equitable access to land and that the *latifundio* and the concentration of land are prohibited. With the consolidation of Correa’s power, however, it has become evident that his rural policies contradict, or at best only partially enact, the peasant movement’s vision of food sovereignty, taken as a whole, as enshrined in the constitution. Henderson (2017) suggests that, from their apogee in 2006, peasant organizations have been forced

increasingly to use the discourse of food sovereignty as a defensive political tool in an attempt to prevent the Correa administration from totally abandoning the food sovereignty movement's core principles. Or perhaps it is truer to suggest that the Polanyian, national capitalist 'take' on food sovereignty was always the position of Correa, and coincides in important ways with the 'progressive', sub-hegemonic, discourse of upper peasant, petty bourgeois producers, rather than being a purely neoliberal positionality. Thus, the Correa administration's own, implicit, conception of food sovereignty, first, *is not* founded on the democratization of Ecuador's still highly unequal agrarian structure, and, second, *is* centred on increasing the productivity and 'efficiency' (largely through agro-chemically and fossil-fuel-based means of production) of small- and medium-sized farmers as, essentially, capitalist producers.

As in the case of Bolivia, small-scale capitalists and petty commodity producers are seen to co-exist quite happily alongside the large agro-exporters, on whom the government relies in no small part for foreign exchange earnings. Other than the goal of securing greater national food security in key wage foods (the key definition of food sovereignty for the Correa regime, and one which has been met in significant degree through productivity improvements among smaller producers), the Correa conception of food sovereignty does not accord with the key peasant movement demands of land redistribution, sustainability, and the promotion of agroecological production. As Henderson (2017) indicates, there is increasing anxiety amongst peasant leaders concerning the government's success in consolidating power and legitimacy amongst broad swathes of the population, including agrarian populations, despite a signal failure to address the highly unequal distribution of land. This success is due, of course, to Correa's emphasis on those elements of food sovereignty discourse – improvements to the wellbeing, productivity, and competitiveness of the upper/middle peasantry – that conform to his neo-developmental model. Meanwhile, the lower peasantry, through their wage dependency, benefit from enhanced welfare payments through the 'compensatory state', and paid for through the proceeds of neo-extractivism. In this, as in the Bolivian case, the Correa regime has encouraged not only agri-food extractivism but, perhaps even more importantly, mineral and fossil-fuel extractivism, located primarily in the *Oriente*, and undertaken increasingly by Chinese capital. Indeed, Chinese loans have underwritten the Correa 'compensatory state', and their repayment requires the current administration to maximize extractivism to obviate default (Bonilla 2015). Meanwhile, such extractivist activities are wreaking ecological and social havoc in the *Oriente* particularly (Arsel 2016), raising profound questions concerning the desirability, and certainly sustainability, of the neo-extractivist strategy. But the beneficiaries of neo-extractivist revenue, revenue directed to small farmers as credit and to semi-proletarians as welfare, are, in the main, spatially distanced, from its direct ecological and social impacts. The Correa regime has, through due attention to its legitimacy role through the 'compensatory state', thus cleverly muted opposition from these quarters. At the same time, opponents of extractivism are derided and denigrated as 'terrorists' and enemies of the 'citizens' revolution'.

In this way, food security can, according to Correa, be secured through improved productivity on existing holdings, without the need to expropriate and divide large properties (Henderson 2017). The production and reproduction strategies of middle and upper peasantry, such as those characteristic of coastal province smallholders, for example, are significantly more dependent on commodity markets than the semi-proletarian peasants who predominate in the Andes. The latter, typically, seek more land and institutional support for agroecology to bolster subsistence production, this acting primarily as a wage subsidy for their highly semi-proletarianized livelihood strategies. Correa's strategy of improving the productivity (ratio of labour input to product output) and 'efficiency' of small farmers on the basis of expanded petty commodity production, and of re-centring the state ('re-statization') as the driver of development, represents a response to the historically neglected demands of the middle/upper peasantry, a fraction particularly well represented in the coastal provinces. Unsurprisingly, Correa's policies receive widespread support amongst this constituency. By contrast to their Andean, semi-proletarian counterparts, therefore, who seek more land as a wage subsidy and

subsistence guarantee against adversity in the labour market, a labour market on which their reproductive strategies overwhelmingly depend, the small commercial farm sector is not concerned with land redistribution. Through the implementation of rural policy that improves their productivity and market competitiveness, Correa has gathered considerable support from the sub-hegemonic small farm commercial sector. As we have seen, this has helped to legitimize his regime and its *national* market-focused policy. By the same token, this policy has served to weaken those leaders of counter-hegemonic organizations, located principally in the Andes, who continue to demand structural land reform and the rejection of market-based ‘solutions’, whether nationally-focused or neoliberal in character.

Since their high point in 2006, when they were able to shape the national debate and constitution in ways that challenged the neoliberal model, peasant organizations have been obliged increasingly to adopt reactive responses to a government that has, in part, institutionalized their demands, incorporated some of their most influential leaders, appropriated their discourses and mass bases of organizational support, and progressively closed off spaces of participation and influence that these organizations had created and occupied. With demands historically based on anti-government and anti-neoliberal foundations (the former reflecting a characteristically ‘new social movement’ discourse that tends to reify the ‘state’), the rise of Correa and the neo-developmental state, with ‘re-statization’ a key feature of its governance and anti-neoliberalism key to its discourse and (in part) policy, has rendered these claims increasingly redundant. With much of their discourse, and key elements of their policy, at least with respect to the middle/upper peasantry, now appropriated by the Correa administration, many peasant/indigenous organizations have become emasculated.

Divisions have also opened up between organizational leaderships and the mass membership, a clever ‘divide and rule’ tactic of Correa’s populism. Thus, as Henderson (2017) details, FENOCIN’s Andean dominated leadership, an advocate of the democratization of land through expropriative agrarian reform, has become increasingly, and openly, critical of Correa’s administration since 2012 due to the government’s rejection, or stalling, of this policy (despite the incorporation of provisions for redistributive reform into the constitution, the government has sought to raise insuperable obstacles to implementation by passing these matters to MAGAP, an administrative bastion of the agro-exporting oligarchy). The national leadership had by this time, however, already lost the support of its mass base, the membership being increasingly supportive of Correa. While much of FENOCIN’s Andean membership supports the proposals for land reform, its heavily semi-proletarianized condition implies that it has frequently been a beneficiary of Correa’s social programmes and economic policies directed at the precarious labour force, and not specifically at the rural sector. In this way, Correa, since assuming power, has instituted free education and healthcare programmes, and the rate of unemployment has fallen from over ten per cent in 2006 to under five per cent in 2016, while average monthly wages have increased from USD 322 to USD 478 over the same period (Davalos and Albuja 2014, Clark 2017, Henderson 2017).

These policies and payments have progressively neutralized the counter-hegemonic tendencies in organizations such as FENOCIN. Thus, from 2013 onwards, FENOCIN’s discourses and political strategies have changed significantly as it has become once more a vocal supporter of Correa and his ‘Citizens’ Revolution’. Rather than calling for the radical transformation of Ecuador’s agrarian structure through mass expropriation and redistribution as the foundation of a ‘food sovereign’ nation (on its ‘counter-hegemonic’ definition), the organization’s current leadership uses food sovereignty, according to its reformist and Polanyian definition, as a political tool to negotiate projects and resources for its membership from within Correa’s ‘anti-neoliberal’, but national capitalist, project, including measures to ‘revitalize’ the productivity of ‘peasant’ agriculture – that is, making the petty bourgeois peasantry more competitive through unsustainable agro-chemical and fossil-fuel derived inputs. By re-centring the state, through a process of re-statization, as the driver of economic and social development, Correa’s project has responded to a number of key reformist (Polanyian) demands of the peasant organization’s memberships for protective mechanisms against more globalized

competition in the agri-food sector (together with ancillary welfare measures for semi-proletarianized peasants), and, in so doing, has weakened the food sovereignty movement's more counter-hegemonic demands for an alternative, anti-capitalist model as articulated by key peasant leaders.

It is questionable, however, whether, and for how long, this populist compact can endure. The fiscal capacity, and therefore the administrative capacity, through re-statization, of the reformist state is dependent upon the inherently unsustainable, and time-limited, revenue windfall that derives from neo-extractivism. Whether through progressive exhaustion of the resource base ('second', ecological, contradiction) or through a collapse in the commodity boom as a result of accumulation crisis in China ('first', political, contradiction), or a combination of both, Ecuador's model of neo-developmentalism, like Bolivia's, is built on shifting sands. When revenues from extractivism begin to dry up, the short-term consumer boom, the welfare payments, and the class alliances that go with them, will start to unravel. At this point, the populist regime and reformist state will encounter the limits of its legitimacy. And at this point, the counter-hegemonic movements will regain the force, and the membership unity, that lay behind their original vision of radical food sovereignty, but one which now combines 'post-developmentalism' with a Marxian analysis of class (see Tilzey 2016b). In the meantime, it can only be hoped that the basis for such an agroecological future is not irreparably impaired by the destructive legacy bequeathed by extractivism.

5 Conclusion

In summarizing the lines of causality presented in the analysis above, we can suggest that the regime of disarticulated accumulation leads to a developmental crisis for the neoliberal peripheral state-capital nexus. The oligarchy of the disarticulated alliance is temporarily displaced by sub-hegemonic, nationally-based capitalist class fractions, in alliance with counter-hegemonic forces, the latter impacted upon by contradictions of the extractive frontier of imperial and sub-imperial capital, supported by national oligarchies (lowland indigenous groups being particularly affected in this regard). The Andean peasantry are afflicted by an ongoing reproduction squeeze as their land base suffers from declining production, and off-farm employment becomes more precarious, often requiring temporary emigration to other states, for example, Argentina in the case of Bolivia. These comprise 'internal', political dynamics at the confluence disarticulated accumulation, compounded by 'external', ecological extractive and farm reproductive crises, generating further reflexive political action refracted back to the state (see Tilzey 2017). The crisis of neoliberalism leads to a developmental shift to another form of capitalism, as populist neo-developmentalism and neo-extractivism. This represents an attempt embed capitalism in a Polanyian way by re-legitimizing the state-capital nexus through social programmes for the marginalized, differential support for the family farm commercial sector, and the forging of alliances with extractive transnational corporations. The reproductive crisis of the peasantry is largely neglected in terms of land access and its sustainable use, while the whole system relies on the further mining, literally and metaphorically, of fossil fuel, mineral, and agro-fuel resources. This entails the degradation of lowland tropical ecosystems in particular, the loss of indigenous ways of life, and the continued marginalization of the peasantry, in order to provide revenues for neo-developmentalism from the imperium and sub-imperium, in turn helping to perpetuate the latter's unsustainable growth. The only viable form of sovereignty here appears to lie in moving beyond the reformist, capitalist state by means of the abrogation of its key institutional structures and social-property relations – the assertion of counter-hegemony as 'livelihood sovereignty'.

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