

## Authoritarian escalation in Peru

### Extractivism, racial discrimination and democracy

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## IN SHORT

EN

- The current political crisis in Peru manifests long-standing social discontent over historical ethnic, class and environmental inequalities that are largely created and supported by the extractivist model.
- Traditionally, extractivism has developed in the country in a localized authoritarian manner. Emergency decrees suspending fundamental rights and guarantees and opening spaces for the disproportionate use of public force happened only in particular zones of social conflict.
- Extractivism has imposed itself within racist imaginaries rooted in how society is territorially distributed. These imaginaries depoliticize specific rural communities by recognizing only as a valid political agenda their struggle against poverty and welfare and nothing else.
- The current crisis is not an authoritarian turn but the escalation of a regime that has already been authoritarian for racialized and excluded sectors of society.

DE

- Die derzeitige politische Krise in Peru ist Ausdruck bestehender Unzufriedenheit über soziale Ungleichheiten.
- Extraktivismus in Peru steht in engem Zusammenhang mit Autoritarismus. Notstandsdekrete, die Grundrechte und -garantien außer Kraft setzten und Raum für den unverhältnismäßigen Einsatz politischer Gewalt öffnen, ist auf spezifische Territorien begrenzt.
- Extraktivismus hat sich innerhalb rassistischer Vorstellungen durchgesetzt, die in der territorialen Verteilung der Bevölkerung wurzeln. Diese Vorstellungen entpolitisieren ländliche Gemeinschaften, indem sie nur ihren Kampf gegen Armut und Wohlfahrt als gültige politische Agenda anerkennen.
- Die gegenwärtige Krise ist keine autoritäre Wende, sondern die autoritäre Eskalation eines Regimes, das für rassifizierte und exkludierte Teile der Gesellschaft bereits autoritär war.

FR

- La crise politique au Pérou est la manifestation d'un ancien ressentiment social vis-à-vis des inégalités historiques ethniques, de classe et environnementales qui sont en grande partie créées et soutenues par le modèle extractiviste.
- L'extractivisme s'est traditionnellement manifesté dans le pays de manière autoritaire et localisée. Des décrets d'urgence suspendant les droits et garanties fondamentaux et permettant un usage disproportionné de la force publique ont seulement lieu dans des zones de conflit social.
- L'extractivisme s'est imposé dans le cadre d'imaginaires racistes enracinés dans le modèle de distribution territoriale de la société. Ces imaginaires dépolitisent des communautés rurales spécifiques. Il reconnaît comme seul agenda politique possible la lutte contre la pauvreté et l'assistanat, et rien d'autre.
- La crise actuelle n'est pas un tournant autoritaire mais l'escalade d'un régime qui a déjà été autoritaire pour les secteurs racialisés et exclus de la société.

ES

- La actual crisis política en el Perú es una manifestación del prolongado descontento social respecto a las desigualdades históricas de carácter étnico, de clase y ambiental, y que han sido en gran medida creadas y soportadas por el modelo extractivista.
- El extractivismo en el país se ha desarrollado como un autoritarismo localizado porque en las zonas de conflicto ha estado acompañado de decretos de emergencia que suspenden derechos y garantías básicas, abriendo espacios para el uso desproporcionado de la fuerza pública.
- El extractivismo también se ha impuesto con imaginarios racistas afincados en el territorio. Este imaginario busca despolitizar a las comunidades al solo reconocer como agenda válida la lucha contra la pobreza y el asistencialismo.
- La actual crisis no constituye un giro autoritario sino el escalamiento de un régimen que ya era autoritario para sectores racializados y excluidos.

# Introduction: a country marked by extractivism and social inequality

Peru was not long ago an example of economic development under the free market. The country achieved economic growth between 2000 and 2019 and reduced monetary poverty even though more than 70% of the population works in informality, large social segments have little access to potable water and essential services, and social conflict is persistent (INEI, 2020a; 2020b). While pro-free market analysts point out that the success of the "Peruvian miracle" was due to the economic model, critics point out that it was mainly due to the *boom in raw materials* and high demand from China.

Nevertheless, this image is quickly shattering in recent years. For example, Peru was one of the most affected countries by the COVID-19 pandemic due to poor public health (Horton, 2021). Moreover, it is experiencing an unprecedented political crisis today: in the last six years, it has had six presidents. The presidents have been subjected to several presidential vacancy processes; two resigned, and one legally dissolved the Congress. Currently, most of the population repudiates Dina Boluarte's transitional government, taking the streets in widespread protests that are answered with increasingly stronger authoritarian measures.

The central argument of this *Policy Brief* is that the current crisis manifests a long-standing social discontent over historical ethnic, class and environmental inequalities, which have, in their turn, been largely created and supported by the extractivist development model. Thus, what happens now is not a crisis of political parties, nor are the protests merely calling for better economic redistribution or more robust anti-corruption policies. Instead, they result from permanently excluding political agencies from those questioning a social progress myth based materially on natural resource extractivism. Thus, what needs to be discussed is the depth and determining character of the structure of extractivism and how it manifests itself not only in politics but also in the economy, society and culture.

Peru has historically been critical for the global extraction of natural resources. During colonization, gold and silver mining enriched the European powers. In the 18th century, guano exports contributed to agriculture in the Global North, and in the 19th century, the export of rubber from the Peruvian Amazon was vital for foreign industrial development. Most importantly, Peru remains a deeply extractive country. As of 2020, the country's major exports were copper (22.8%), gold (15.9%), vegetable products (about 10%), petroleum gas (3.48%) and zinc (2.5%) (MIT, 2022). Its main destinations were China, the United States and Europe. In addition, the country is also at the centre of the energy transition because it has the essential natural resources for the substitution of hydrocarbons. It is a world leader in copper exports (Seck et al., 2020), and recent discoveries suggest that, in the coming years, it will be a major exporter of lithium and rare earth minerals (Lèbre et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, extractive development has generated and deepened various inequalities in the country. During colonial times, mining involved the forced relocation of indigenous rural groups from agricultural areas, generating social and cultural fractures (Dell, 2010). Particularly during the rubber boom, exploiting this resource in the Amazon resulted in the employment of forced labour of native communities, who were kept subjected to slavery conditions until the first quarter of the last century (Barclay, 2010). Since independence in 1821, the descendants of Europeans – the Creole elite – took control of the country, promoting the unrestrained expansion of agricultural haciendas on indigenous territory. It was not until the 1960s that agrarian reforms sought to redistribute land favouring peasants and indigenous peoples. However, the most privileged economic sectors in the country still doubt this agrarian reform, accusing it of causing underdevelopment in rural areas and halting progress (Mayer, 2009). Important to stress that, unsurprisingly, these sectors have been the dominant ones in the political sphere. Only until the 1979 Constitution a large part of rural Peru was excluded from

the political system because illiterate people were not eligible to vote or run for office.

In the new millennium, under progressive governments, several countries in the region reformed their extractivist model towards what is called "neo-extractivism", favouring extractive rent to finance social programs while recognizing some cultural and environmental rights of political minorities (Gudynas, 2021; Burchard & Dietz, 2014). In Peru, instead, the classic extractivist model was deepened, consolidating the policies promoted by the authoritarian and neoliberal government of Alberto Fujimori (Bury, 2005). Fujimori carried out a self-coup d'état in 1992 and approved a new, pro-free market, Constitution in 1993. This way, he promoted public companies' privatization, relaxed foreign investment regulations and promoted mining, oil exploitation and agro-industry. At the same time, he deactivated terrorist groups such as the Sendero Luminoso. However, the counter-terrorist strategy had a high human rights cost, including unjust imprisonment of hundreds of people, abuse of military-police power and the use of paramilitary forces – practices that had already been common in the previous governments of Alan Garcia (1985 - 1990) and Fernando Belaunde (1980 - 1985). It is estimated that the internal armed conflict left 69,280 victims, being 79% indigenous people (Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, 2003).

With the fall of Fujimori in 2000, a new promise to remove social inequalities emerged. It required two simultaneous

moves: the transition to democracy and the consolidation of a post-conflict society that could overcome the legacies of the internal armed conflict. To this end, the transition led by Valentín Paniagua vindicated democracy and human rights, as well as the replacement of the 1993 Constitution. Nevertheless, this agenda did not materialize. Economic sectors that saw the Constitution as a lock for the free market opposed the constitutional change fiercely. Moreover, the very own idea of democracy was becoming increasingly delegitimized with the growing involvement of government actors in mega-corruption scandals in large infrastructure projects justified by the need to export raw materials. As a result, all democratically elected post-Fujimori presidents suffered preventive imprisonment, restrictive measures or judicial persecution. At the same time, right-wing groups that promoted the "iron fist" to confront social conflict constantly repudiated the reports from the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (2003). In this context, socio-environmental conflicts increased significantly in mining and oil areas due to a more substantial drive for resources promoted in the 2000s *commodities* boom.

Therefore, if anything has remained constant in Peruvian political, economic and social crisis history, it is the extractivism model. The following section explains two socio-political pillars that sustain this model and are vital to understanding the current crisis in the country: authoritarianism and racism.

## | Extractivism as low-intensity authoritarianism

The democratic question has always been present in the extractivism discussion. In addition to economic stagnation in other sectors (the so-called Dutch disease), high vulnerability to external shocks and clientelism, studies on the political resource curse and the rentier state found a correlation between dependence on the extractive industry and the consolidation of authoritarian regimes (Ross, 2001; Wiens, 2014). Some studies address the nexus between extractive dependence and autocratic regimes by focusing on the incentives it generates in electoral competition, either through non-institutional channels to win elections or other ways to stay in power

(Wantchekon, 2002). Others find that increased extractive dependence does not affect democratic rule: the political resource curse would be a story about autocratic persistence and not the origins of autocracy in itself (Wiens, 2014).

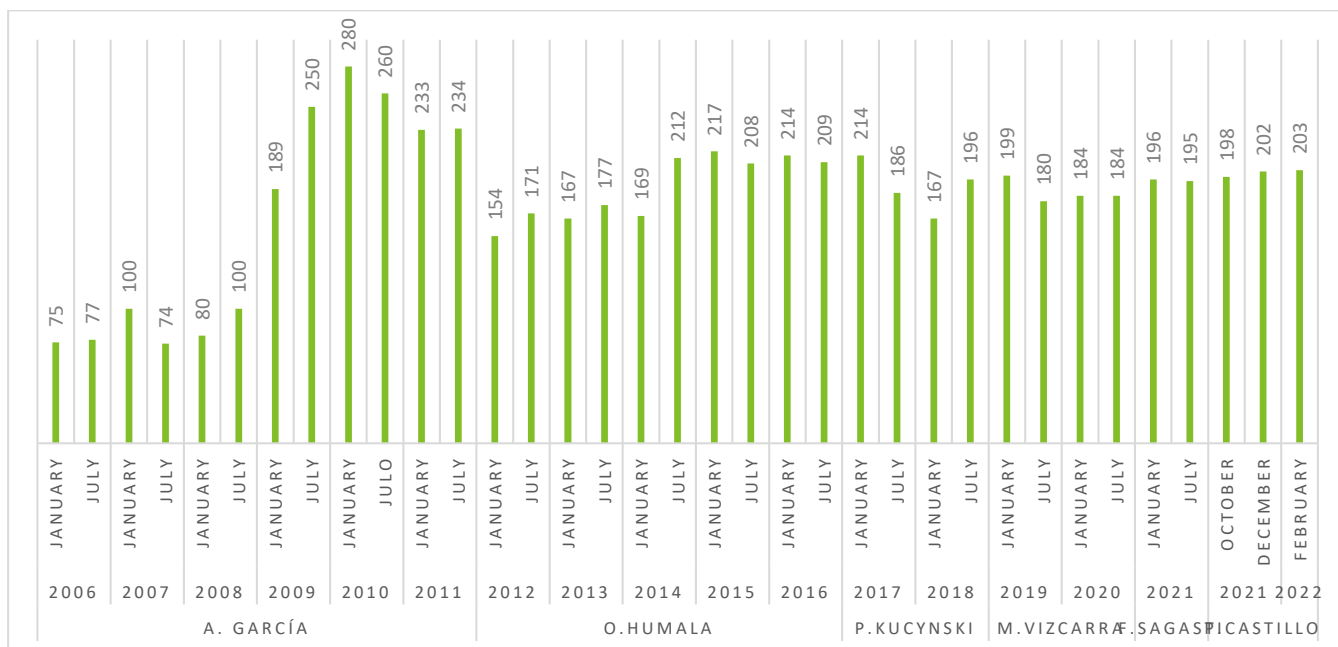
Therefore, the democratic question in this literature focuses on electoral competition, giving less emphasis on how democratically elected governments can use authoritarian measures to impose extractive projects within formal democracy. The political ecology literature (Svampa, 2015; Arsel et al., 2016) also addresses the issue,

but indirectly, by focusing on the profound environmental and social impacts of extractive projects and how they can generate a deficit in human rights and political participation. Nevertheless, the literature so far lacks a more general vision of how extractivism weakens the foundations of the democratic system in Latin America. We argue that the case of Peru is an emblematic example to analyze this process.

Peru illustrates a high and persistent number of social conflicts related to extractive industries. The

Ombudsman's Office has identified an average of 190 social conflicts monthly for at least the last 15 years.<sup>1</sup> In addition, 70% of these conflicts are socio-environmental in nature. According to the Ministry of Environment, a socio-environmental conflict is a situation that arises as a result of the different interests and motivations held by the different social actors involved in an environmental circumstance, which may be linked to the scarcity, deterioration or deprivation of natural resources (SINIA, 2019).

**Figure 1: Number of social conflicts in Peru (2006-2022)**



Source: Ombudsman's Office/ Cooperación.

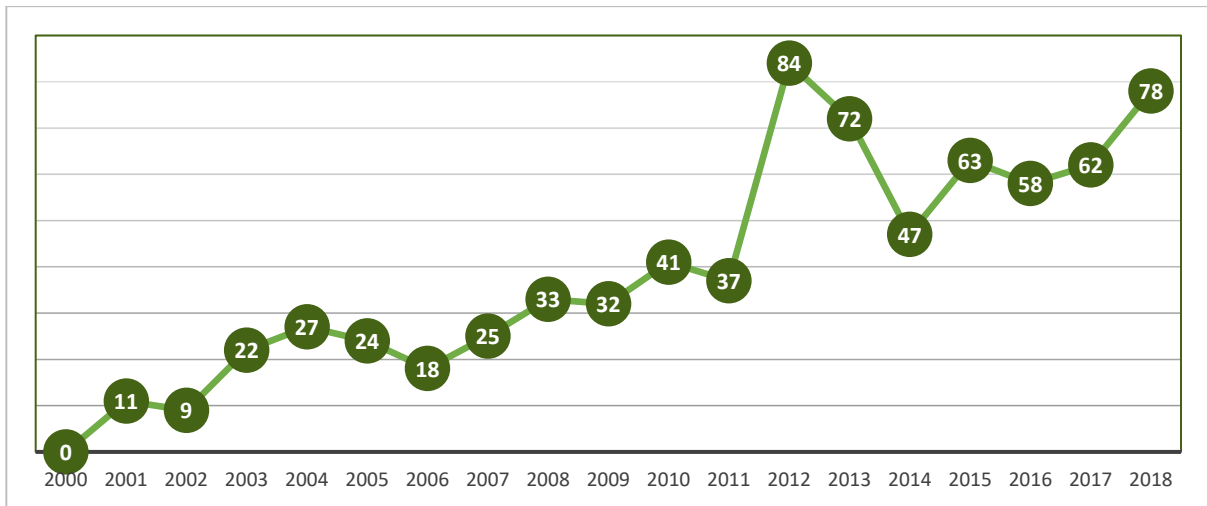
For extractive industries to operate, national governments have resorted to emergency decrees on internal order, suspending fundamental rights and guarantees in conflict zones. From 2000 to 2018, 272 decrees of this nature were issued (Tafur & Quesada, 2020). These decrees have been issued alongside what is known as protest criminalization. With this practice, leaders of social movements have been harassed and accused of various crimes, from extortion

and kidnapping to terrorism (Merino & Quispe, 2021). For example, the conflict known as El Baguazo in the Department of Amazonas, which ended in the tragic death of 34 people in June 2009, led to criminal proceedings against 53 indigenous leaders, accusing them of aggravated homicide. For years, the prosecution demanded life imprisonment against them, but the Supreme Court eventually acquitted them (Merino, 2020).

<sup>1</sup> The reports of the Ombudsman's Office are available on its institutional website:

[https://www.defensoria.gob.pe/categorias\\_de\\_documentos/reportes/](https://www.defensoria.gob.pe/categorias_de_documentos/reportes/).

**Figure 2: Evolution of emergency decrees in Peru from 2000 to 2018**



Source: Tafur & Quesada, 2020.

In these conflict zones, demonstrations have resulted in the disproportionate use of force against protesters, generating many deaths and injuries. For example, the National Human Rights Coordinator (CNDDHH, 2023), the country's most relevant human rights organization, identified 128 deaths linked to socio-environmental conflicts between 2009 and 2022, mostly in regions such as Amazonas, Arequipa, Cajamarca and Puno. Furthermore, human rights activists and lawyers have continuously stressed that the legal framework of emergency has facilitated a disproportionate exercise of force while condoning the responsibility of public agents, empowering the armed forces and permitting companies to sign deals with the police to act as private security agents (Saldaña & Portocarrero, 2017).

All this shows that social mobilization is a salient theme in Peruvian democracy. Indeed, a fragmented and criminalized mobilization but an active one nonetheless. In other words, we are talking about politics being done at the state margins. It is possible to assert that this discontent has not been able to be channelled through institutional channels because the political system excludes the very people doing such politics. Although 25% of the population considers themselves indigenous

(INEI, 2017), there are no specific seats or quotas for indigenous people in the National Congress. Instead, they are politically underrepresented. When provincial mayors or regional governors channel recognition of indigenous rights demands or question extractive policies, their ordinances are prosecuted by the national government and end up being excluded because they escape sub-national competencies. That is the case, for example, of the ordinances of the regional governments of Cajamarca and Loreto that sought to legally recognize the existence of indigenous nations<sup>2</sup> and to protect the headwaters of river basins from mining expansion.<sup>3</sup>

In sum, extractive activities in Peru, primarily located in rural areas, cannot be understood without their connection to social conflicts, repression and low political representation of the affected communities. Rather yet, it is possible to say that extractivism has developed thanks to the imposition of low-intensity authoritarianism in these extractivist regions: localized and minimized but lethal. They are localized because the authoritarian actions are focused on some territorial regions considered critical for developing extractive activities. They are minimized because these actions have been normalized under the idea of fighting general criminality and the need

<sup>2</sup> Regional Ordinance No. 010-2016-GR.CAJ-CR of the Regional Government of Cajamarca dated November 25, 2016 and Regional Ordinance No. 014-2017-GRL-CR of the Regional Government of Loreto dated December 14, 2017. Both ordinances were challenged through a claim of unconstitutionality before the Constitutional Court.

<sup>3</sup> Regional Ordinance No. 036-2011-GR-CAJ-CR, Regional Government of Cajamarca, dated December 5, 2011. On April 17, 2012, the Constitutional Court declared the unconstitutionality claim founded.

to establish public order. Ultimately, this affects democracy in its most crude sense, as large segments of

citizens can be considered public enemies without the right to voice in matters that directly affect them.

## | Extractivism as racism

Due to the profound colonial legacy of exclusion and contempt for the indigenous population and the stratification of society based on ethnicity, Peru has suffered from structural racism since its formation. With the 2011 Law of Prior Consultation, a database of Indigenous Peoples was created for the first time, with 51 Amazonian and 4 Andean peoples nominated (Ministry of Culture, 2022). These people are the most excluded and poorest in the country and are typically organized as peasant and native communities. According to the Ministry of Culture, 54% of the Amazonian indigenous population does not have access to water and sanitation, while this percentage reaches 11% for the Spanish-speaking population (Ministry of Culture, 2018). In addition, their territories are frequently affected by environmental damage associated with extractivism. For example, a study identified that between 2000 and 2019, 474 spills were recorded in oil lots in the Amazon and the Norperuvian Pipeline, affecting indigenous territories in most cases (León & Zúñiga, 2020).

The majority of socio-environmental conflicts and the deaths resulting from these conflicts have occurred in regions inhabited by indigenous peoples and peasant communities. According to reports from the Mining Conflict Observatory (2022; 2023), social conflict in the macro-south zone, which includes Cusco, Apurímac and Puno, has concentrated 31.7% of the conflicts registered by the Ombudsman's Office. On the other hand, in the northern macro zone, made up of regions such as Loreto, Ancash, Piura, Cajamarca, and Amazonas, has concentrated an average of 42.6% of conflicts. As we shall see, there is a correlation between extractivism, socio-environmental conflicts and racialized sectors. When racialization is rooted in a particular space or territory, in the words of Sherene Razack (2002), "*when place becomes race*", we have what political ecology calls "sacrifice zones" (Valdivia, 2015), spaces whose inhabitants may be

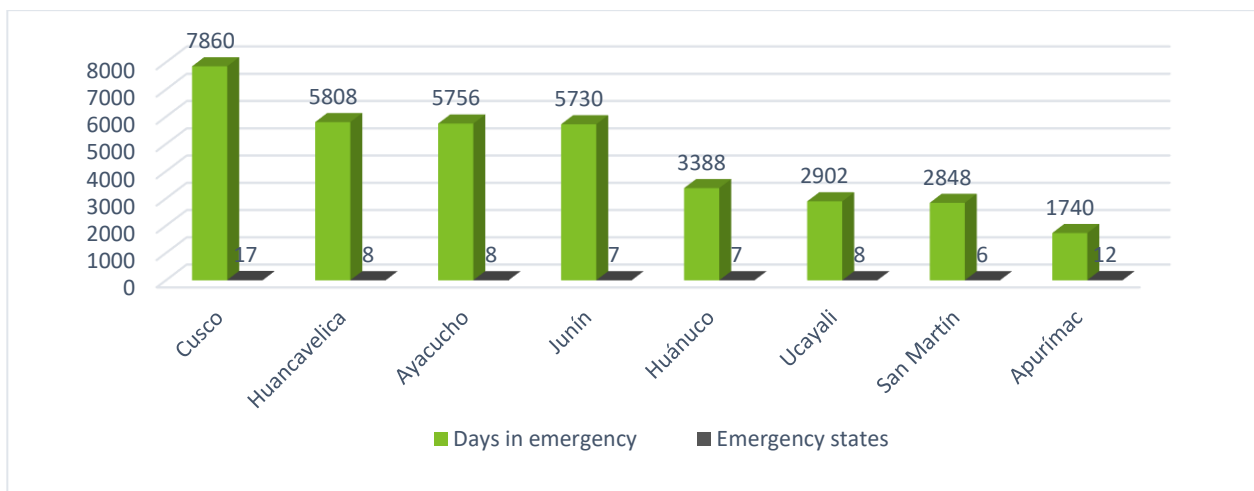
subject to displacement, environmental degradation and social corrosion for the sake of general economic growth.

For example, the states of emergency have been located, for the most part, in rural areas where there are primarily indigenous peoples. For example, in the case of Cusco, 17 states of emergency were declared in different rural areas between 2000 and 2018, with a total duration of 7.860 days of rights and guarantees suspension (Tafur & Quesada, 2020). Many of these states of emergency have been imposed in districts of the province of La Convención, where Quechua, Kichwa, and Matsigenka communities live and, in general, in Cusco, 76.1% of the population self-identifies as part of an indigenous population (Ministry of Culture, 2020).

Therefore, extractivism is imposed with authoritarian measures and racist imaginaries rooted in the territories. The national government, business associations and many media outlets in the capital city of Lima tend to conceive of communities as having a series of characteristics linked to their cultural status. Thus, under this view, these people would be ignorant, incapable of understanding the benefits of extractive activities as well as manipulable by environmental NGOs, or even intrinsically violent and capable of road obstruction and company infrastructure occupation (Gonzalez, 2018). These ideas, consequently, justify permanent public action targeting these groups. These actions range from establishing dialogue tables to convince them of the "goodness of extractive activities" to criminalizing demonstrations, even accusing them of carrying out terrorist actions for taking roads (Dunlap, 2019). In sum, Quechua-speaking, Aymara or Amazonian native peasants are imagined as impoverished subjects that lack political leadership or decision-making power. Their only recognizable and acceptable agenda is for better economic redistribution to escape poverty.



**Figure 3: State of emergency by territorial departments from 2000 to 2018**



Source: Tafur & Quesada (2020).

In this imaginary, the responsibility for the crises is placed on the regional and local governments, which are seen as incapable of effectively investing the tax or royalties received directly from the extractive industries, thus attending to the social demands of people with low incomes. That explains and justifies the limited presence of the national government in the sub-national territories and its renunciation of development planning. By limiting themselves only to distributing the national budget, officials in the capital keep comfortably waiting for local governments to compete and show who is the most efficient in spending public money. In addition, that can generate a stigma both at the government level – the technical and capable national government versus the incapable sub-national governments – and on the popular level, as people are led to believe that there are no other valid social demands than state assistance.

However, citizen demands in these conflicts are not only about income redistribution. Social and public service

deficiencies explain the widespread discontent but are not the trigger for the protests. The argument here is that the central demand is essentially political, anti-centralist and anti-racist. Communities seek to have a voice in public deliberation, be recognized as equals, and be valid interlocutors. These are not necessarily anti-extractivist agendas; they are agendas that seek to have a decision-making space in the governance of the socioeconomic development model at the local, regional and national levels.

Social stigmas can falsely project manifests as lacking real political agency (manipulated and ignorant) or possessing unacceptable political agency (terrorists). So, living near an extractive mega-project, being a peasant or indigenous, implies, in most cases, having a curtailed citizenship: being a poor person who must be content with the promise of a more effective government in providing public services or a poor rebel who must be crushed for being a terrorist danger.

## Extractivism as a potential autocracy

When Pedro Castillo, a *rondero*, peasant teacher from Cajamarca, was elected President in 2021, the most excluded sectors of the country saw themselves represented for the first time in the highest public office. Then, Peru was already immersed in successive government crises due to corruption, links between the political establishment and the transnational company

Odebrecht and constant tensions between Congress and the Executive (Merino, 2018). A democratic election was supposed to open the way out of political instability.

Castillo came to government with a traditional leftist party, which claimed classic slogans of natural resource sovereignty and nationalization. However, the promise of

more representation for the historically excluded social sectors (those exercising their political agency at the state margins) was already enough for the opposition sectors to see their political model in danger and to dislike him. Admittedly, Castillo was not a great danger to the status quo: he did not modify the major pillars of the economy, including the technocracy in the Ministry of Economy and the Central Reserve Bank, nor did he promote radical economic redistribution reforms or environmental and social regulation. However, a critical factor in understanding the anti-Castillo opposition was his coalition of largely anti-elitist actors, detached from the economic power groups and capable of representing interests that could challenge or retard the extractive logic.

Immediately after the election, Castillo was already unfoundedly accused of electoral fraud, and right-wing groups tried to invalidate the rural vote (Merino, 2021). While that failed, the opposition in Congress continued to question his choices of ministers, organized three impeachment processes and accused him of treason for suggesting giving Bolivia an outlet to the sea. Castillo indirectly contributed to these attacks by making alliances with questionable characters and appointing people involved in corruption scandals to public positions to pay political favours and secure votes in Congress. By December 2022, facing a new impeachment process, Castillo attempted an implausible coup d'état and gave Congress a lawful reason to vacate him. However, it is possible to say that, from the beginning of his short term (July 2021 - December 2022), his political opponents played on the democratic edge. Therefore, the rural population was convinced that their representative had not been treated correctly from the start and that it was their right to take their satisfaction to the streets (López, 2022).

Thus, when Castillo was deposed on December 7, 2022, these social sectors began to protest non-stop against his

former vice-president, Dina Boluarte, who took office in alliance with the right. We consider that, with this regime, low-intensity authoritarianism has become authoritarian – without other adjectives. The localized, marginal and underground violence of the past has become quickly generalized at the national level with new, broader emergency decrees, hundreds of irregular arrests, injuries and dozens of deaths in protests. In two months since the government took office, more than 60 people have died in protests, and more than 1200 have been injured (Amnesty International, 2023). In addition, massive illegal detentions have been denounced as well as the practice of criminalization for terrorism (known as "*terruqueo*") is being used against people criticizing the regime or showing solidarity with the protests (Gómez, 2023).

It is also possible to argue that racism, as mentioned earlier, is gaining a new scope. While any criticism of the government falls under the suspicion of "promoting terrorism" the usual racialized sectors are the most affected. The most incredible police-military brutality has occurred in the provinces. According to Amnesty International (2023), the departments with an indigenous population concentrate 80% of the total deaths registered since the beginning of the current crisis: "the evidence points to the fact that the authorities have acted with a marked racist bias, taking cruelty against those populations historically discriminated against". Furthermore, when the rural people protesting arrived in Lima, the classical stigmas automatically turned them into public enemies of the nation. Arbitrary detentions of leaders are denounced for being critical of the government (Red Muqui, 2023). Even people chipping in and collecting funds to support these protesters are criminally denounced as terrorism financiers. It is important to stress that while all dissidence can potentially be criminalized and repressed, the dead, wounded and detained are counted mainly in the rural and racialized sectors.

## | Extractivist democracy

The case of Peru suggests that measuring democracy in terms of the electoral process and macro indices of separation of powers is insufficient to understand the

profound democratic deficit concerning the historically racialized and excluded sectors. For these sectors, the extractivist development model has developed as low-

intensity authoritarianism because it has been imposed on citizen aspirations, generating social and environmental costs considered marginal in the overall evaluation of the country's democratic performance. Moreover, extractivism has also been linked to racism because it has been accompanied by the construction of imaginaries that restricted citizenship in certain territorial areas considered sacrificable for national economic welfare.

Thus, extractivism has given rise to a political regime in which democracy is subordinated to the intensive extraction of natural resources. This "extractivist democracy" has four essential elements, not anecdotal or marginal but persistent and central to how Peru has developed its political structure.

First, a **deficit of human rights**, expressed in an unequal division of fundamental guarantees in the territory, characterizes the regime. At the macro level, democracy can be considered, at best, deficient, but no one doubts its validity. However, at the micro level, emergency decrees constantly curtail rights in the sacrifice zones, and racist imaginaries substantially reduce people's citizenship status.

Second, a **deficit of sub-national political representation** distinguishes the regime. That is seen in the absence of specific seats for the indigenous and rural population in Congress and in the absence of mechanisms that allow local and regional governments to adequately represent their community's interests. The system is organized so that it establishes legal deadlocks to stop local and regional government initiatives considered potentially anti-extractive.

Third, a **deficit in democratic governance** permeates the regime. Sub-national governments are perceived as canon

receivers and are objectively evaluated by the level of execution of their budget. However, this has meant, in practice, that the national government becomes reluctant to establish relevant territorial planning mechanisms and dialogue channels to achieve common national and sub-national objectives.

Fourth, while these democratic deficits impact the sub-national level, they are also the foundations of a **potential autocracy**. While extractivist democracy in Peru does not prevent formal electoral competition, it deteriorates democratic coexistence by deepening social inequalities, normalizing racial stigmas and perpetuating the exclusion of political agencies that could question this development model.

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In conclusion, when the political agencies at the state's margins manage to arrive at the national level, even if incompletely and insubstantial, as happened with Castillo, formal democracy and its exclusionary practices enter into contradiction. The categorical reaction of the political and economic elites to remove Castillo from power triggered a popular motion to exercise their right to have political rights and expand the current political imagination towards a more popular constituent process. In this scenario, authoritarianism and racism escalate as it is no longer just a matter of repressing people at some localized pockets considered anti-development or anti-extractivist. This way, what we see today is not an "authoritarian turn" nor a "transition to authoritarianism". In truth, it upstreams a well-established territorialized authoritarianism from an underground, marginalized and localized level to an open, nationally generalized and institutionalized level. Here autocracy begins to appear in full, without extenuating circumstances.

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# EXTRACTIVISM

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## | The Project

The collaborative research project ***extractivism.de*** links the Universities of Kassel and Marburg. The project scrutinizes the extractivist development model and proposes new economic, political, and sociological conceptions of extractivism. It preliminarily focuses on Latin America and the Maghreb patterns. The project researches the conditions under which these patterns affect the persistence and transformative capacity of extractivism and its respective institutional settings. Finally, it explores how extractivism affects cultural processes and habitual routines and questions under what conditions and how far the development model extends into institution-building and social practice, i.e., everyday life.

The project aims to understand extractive societies not as deviants from the Western trajectory of development but in their own logic and their own particularities. The project, therefore, combines a strong empirical focus with theoretical work. It links both broad field research and data gathering of primary data and the qualitative and quantitative analysis of available secondary sources with a stringent transregional comparison. It develops methods in cross-area studies and investigates whether and why similar patterns of social change emerge in different areas and world regions despite significant cultural, social, or religious differences. Finally, the project intends to translate the findings for politics, society, and development cooperation.

Please visit [www.extractivism.de](http://www.extractivism.de) for further information.