



## Original article

## Patagonia, without Dams! Lessons of a David vs. Goliath campaign



Eduardo Silva

Political Science Department, 316 Norman Mayer Building, Tulane University, 6823 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118, USA

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## ABSTRACT

In an age of democratization and heightened awareness of citizen rights in Latin America, the expansion of extractive industries frequently involves conflict. In those conflicts marginalized, rural, poor, ethnic and racial subaltern social groups, and their allies often stand in the front lines of resistance. This paper asks: Under what conditions might challenges from below induce Latin American governments to adopt policies, programs, and processes conducive to broader based inclusiveness in the struggle over environment and development? It uses a successful campaign against a mega-hydroelectric power project in remote Chilean Patagonia to shed light on this question. The case underscores the utility of combining political ecology with social movement theory to disentangle factors conducive to positive outcomes from protest to aggressive extractive projects. It stresses the necessity of building the associational and collective power of resistance movements. It reveals the importance of forming rural-urban coalitions to overcome government divide and rule tactics. It finds that major policy impacts of resistance movements, including advancements of alternative policy agendas, are of necessity politically mediated.

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## 1. Introduction

As Arsel, Hogenboom, and Pellegrini note in the introductory article, scholarly attention to social and environmental conflicts driven by the expansion of the extractive imperative in Latin America grew rapidly with the commodity boom beginning in the early 2000s. Local conflicts over mining and oil and gas exploitation mushroomed and spilled over to water rights and hydroelectric megaprojects to service them. Communities felt threatened by dispossession of their land, livelihood, and culture; concerns over their environmental and health impacts abounded (Helwege, 2015; Gudynas, 2012).

Approaches to these conflicts generally focus on three sets of questions. Political economists and political ecologists ask, what economic and political factors drive the expansion in extractive activities; how do they affect local communities; what are their environmental consequences; and what alternatives might there be (Pellegrini et al., 2014; Helwege, 2015)? Another literature focuses on governance problems that may exacerbate distributional tensions or that might hinder or resolve conflicts (De Castro et al., 2015; Merino Acuña, 2015). Social movement scholars

research how communities resist (Hogenboom, 2015; Stahler-Sholk et al., 2008).

Many of these studies recognize the power asymmetries that exist between the forces pushing extractive industries and local communities that resist them. Powerful international and domestic corporations supported by national states generally – *but not always* – prevail against marginalized, rural, poor, ethnically and racial subaltern social groups, their communities and their allies (Martínez-Alier, 2003). This raises a less frequently asked, but nevertheless vital, question. Under what conditions might challenges from below induce Latin American governments to adopt policies, programs, and processes conducive to broader based inclusiveness in the struggle over environment and development (Silva, 1994, 1999)?

When it comes to the “new extractive imperative,” marginalized, rural, poor, ethnically and racial subaltern social groups, and their allies often stand in the front lines of resistance. Whether socioeconomic development is market-driven or whether it involves greater state direction seems to make little difference (De Castro et al., 2015; Gudynas, 2012). Yet we have little systematic understanding of the conditions under which they might obtain *favorable* outcomes.

The Patagonia without Dams campaign in Southern Chile sheds some light on this problem. It was an epic David vs. Goliath story that pitted powerful national and international conglomerates,

E-mail address: [gesilva@tulane.edu](mailto:gesilva@tulane.edu) (E. Silva).

with government support, against underdog environmentalists and “local peoples” who lived far from the centers of political power. The eight-year long saga of the Patagonia Without Dams campaign began in 2006 and ended in June 2014 with a government decision not to permit the construction of a series of mega-dams for hydropower in the austral region of Aysén in Chilean Patagonia. That power was largely intended to service mining industries of northern Chile.

What can we learn from this case? First, it showcases the utility of combining political ecology with social movement theory to disentangle factors conducive to positive – as well as negative – outcomes from protest to aggressive extractive projects. Second, it highlights the importance of focusing more tightly on the policy outcomes of social movement protest as a tool to assess advances and setbacks to broader-based inclusiveness in issues related to extractive industries (Amenta et al., 2010; Kolk, 2007). Third, as discussed in the next section, the Patagonia without Dams campaign shifts attention away from indigenous peoples and their unique claim to cultural, ethnic, and territorial rights towards novel subjects of resistance that broaden conceptions of the “marginal” and of what constitutes alternatives to development as usual. It calls attention to the multi-class nature of social groups involved. It stresses the necessity of linkages between local rural communities and national-level urban actors. This, as we shall see throughout the paper, is critical to understanding the Patagonia without Dams campaign and its outcomes. Fourth, the case suggests new research directions (Bebbington, 2015). What are the cumulative effects of local struggles for policy at the national and international levels?

The qualitative methodology utilized primarily involved process tracing regarding the phases of the campaign in relation to resource mobilization, framing, the impact of national and international political opportunity structures, and the actions of the supporters of the mega-dam project. Data were collected from three principal sources. One was an exhaustive media database involving print and television news stories and advertisement campaigns. Second, interviews with key Patagonia without Dams leaders and activists from 2009 to 2014 provided a broad outline of the campaign, deep background on key events, coalition-building strategy, and detailed context and insight into major negative and positive turning points for the campaign. Third, I relied on participant observation of major protests, especially in May to August 2011, for an understanding of the depth and breadth of opposition to the HidroAysén project.

The paper proceeds as follows. It begins with a summary characterization of the political ecology and political process approach to social movements. It then analyzes the Patagonia without Dams campaign through the lens of political ecology and social movement theorizing, stressing factors that help to explain the favorable outcome and their implications for other cases. I conclude with a discussion of lessons the case offers for the study of resistance to extractive enterprises.

## 2. Political ecology and social movement theory

Political ecology studies the impact of economic and political structures and dynamics on environmental degradation (Painter and Durham, 1995; Peet et al., 2011; Bebbington and Bury, 2013). In particular it is concerned with power relations and their distributional consequences for the environment, livelihoods, peoples, cultures, and alternative, more eco-friendly development-oriented, forms of interaction between humans and nature (Alimonada, 2011; Palacio, 2006). It explicitly addresses the effects of power asymmetries between social strata based on economic, political, and legal structures and institutions (Painter and Durham, 1995; Delgado, 2010). It recognizes the role of state

policy, coercion, and violence in access to resources by dominant national and international economic, social, and political forces (Romero and Sassa, 2014).

In other words, political ecology offers a good first cut into the politics of extractive industry-based development and its relationship to the environment and subaltern social groups. It draws our attention to the characteristics of specific industries, their importance for the economy, and the salience of policy issue areas. High salience issues generally receive significant political support and low salience issue areas do not.

Equally important political ecology provides a basis from which to map contending actors, their interests, power resources, and ideas about development and the environment (Silva 1999; Baviskar, 2001). This, however, is only a start. As we shall see, it is the interaction between state actors, social groups, economic actors, the party political, and domestic and international nongovernmental organizations that usually determine policy outcomes (Silva, 1999). Political ecology helps us to understand why subaltern social groups and the environment are exploited the way they are (Bebbington and Bury, 2013; Martínez-Alier, 2003).

It also sheds light on the social composition of environmental movements. Poor, marginalized social groups such as Indigenous peoples loom large in Latin American cases of resistance to the extractive imperative. In class terms, they are precarious rural, frontier dwellers and precarious urban workers. However, since most of Chile’s indigenous peoples live in different parts of Chile, and therefore were not directly affected by the HidroAysén project, they were not the central actors of the Patagonia without Dams campaign. Although they were sympathetic to the issue, especially since they had been affected by a similar project in the 1990s, because of repression they were not in a position to support the Patagonia without Dams campaign.

The class composition of the Patagonia without Dams campaign supports theses about the complexity and diversity of social groups involved in the environmental movement. Claus Offe (1985) and others (Baviskar, 2011) have argued that middle classes support for environmentalism is rooted in the development of post-materialist values. Indeed, there was a substantial middle class component to the Patagonia with Dams campaign that espoused such values. However, the case highlights that such values intertwine with materialism as artisans, business people engaged in eco-tourism, and rural populations from landowners to farmers, to fishermen, to people in animal husbandry find their livelihoods adversely affected by extractive industries (Martínez-Alier, 2003; Painter and Durham, 1995; Silva, 1999).

Thus, as we shall see, the Patagonia without Dams campaign challenges theories that pit middle class post-material nature preservation interests against a lower class and subaltern environmentalism that must exploit nature to survive (Baviskar, 2011). The two can and do make common cause in indirect, mediated processes as well as, on occasion, directly. Similar dynamics have also developed elsewhere, for example in anti-coal power struggles in Turkey (Arsel et al., 2015).

Which brings us to social movement theory. Social movements and protest are often the weapons of relatively powerless, poor marginalized, underrepresented, and excluded peoples organizing for social, and in this case, environmental justice. Social movement theory can help us to understand the sources of power in movement to contest their subordination (Tarrow, 2011). In the process many movements seek to effect policy change, not just as defensive reactions to dispossession but also by raising alternative policy agendas. The leaders and activists of these social movements often think of themselves as political actors representing excluded interests and explicitly engage the political system. They negotiate with authorities and/or build alliances with disgruntled

political elites to push their demands and think strategically about how to influence the decisions of power holders. From this perspective, social movements may be defined as collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in *sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities* (Tarrow, 2011).

What, then, constitutes power in movement? In the first instance it depends on the organizational capacity of subordinate social groups, specifically, their capacity to forge associational and collective power (Silver, 2003). Associational power refers to organizing along class, status group, identity, or other specific interest (such as the environment). Confederations of like interests, such as urban labor, are the highest form. Collective power depends on coordination between two or more different organized interests, such as environmentalists, urban labor, peasants, precarious workers, indigenous peoples organizations, and so forth. At its peak, collective power involves coordination among environmentalists, popular sector organizations, middle class associations, political parties, state officials, and at times, the military (Silva, 2009).

Thus, as social movement theorizing has long established, networking and coalition building among organizations with similar purpose or among two or more organizations serving different interests is central to understanding power in movement. How much associational or collective power needs to be brought to bear on authorities depends, in part, on the structure of political opportunities and threats for aggrieved social groups, such as the relative openness or closure of the political regime – or of an issue area – to societal interests (Tarrow, 2011). The more closed power holders are the more associational or collective that has to be brought to bear (Silva, 2009). As we shall see, building associational and collective power among environmental organizations and in constructing urban-rural and local-national coalitions was key to the outcome in the case of the Patagonia without Dams campaign.

The political process approach to social movements from which this paper draws emphasizes the structure of opportunities and threats as well as resource mobilization in the form of organizational development discussed above. It also stresses the importance of more contingent factors, strategies and tactics (to engage authorities or protest), the repertoire of contention (type of direct action), and issue framing (cognitive mechanism that allows individuals to recognize a common problem). Relational mechanisms are also important, especially brokerage and diffusion. Brokerage refers to nodes of contact that link two previously unrelated sites. Diffusion refers to the spread of an action, strategy, tactic, or idea to another site (Tarrow, 2011).

### 3. The Patagonia without Dams campaign

The political economy of Chile would lead one to expect that the HidroAysén hydroelectric project would prevail. Chile was well known for strong continuity with the free-market socioeconomic development model imposed by the military dictatorship [1973–1990]. The 1980 constitution enshrined private property rights and privatization begun under military rule continued well into the 2000s with the exception of state-owned copper mines. Privatization encompassed, industry, land, water rights, utilities, and social services, such as education, healthcare, and pensions. Chile's agromineral, export oriented development model is dominated by oligopolistic economic groups with strong ties to international capital. After democratization in 1990, governments of the center left coalition Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia consistently adopted business-friendly pro-growth policies and avoided redistributive social policies. Significantly, Concertación

governments also intensified privatization of the energy sector (Borzutzky and Oppenheim, 2006; Borzutzky and Weeks, 2010).

Another significant feature of Concertación government was its consensus policymaking style that emphasized close cooperation with the private sector and tightly controlled channels of access to the policy process for social and political groups advocating bolder reforms to Chile's *laissez-faire* economy. Consensus politics, and cautious incremental reformism dominated constitutional reform, taxation, regulation, human rights, and civil-military relations (Borzutzky and Oppenheim, 2006; Borzutzky and Weeks, 2010).

The policy process in the environmental issue area was no different. It was further handicapped by its low salience, meaning that it had low priority in relation to other policy issue areas. Consequently, only a weak environmental framework law was passed in the early 1990s establishing an equally weak inter-ministerial environmental agency, the CONAMA (Silva 1996–1997). For our purposes, one feature of this law stands out. New development projects must have CONAMA approval of an environmental impact report (EIR). Within a short window of time, before a determination is made civil society groups may review the EIR and raise objections. This is the only formal instance of civil society participation in the policy process for approval of new development projects. It is purely consultative.

In this unfavorable context, the small Chilean environmental movement suffered. It lost early battles with Concertación governments over state institutional design for the issue area, the elaboration of alternative approaches to development, and opportunities for building coalitions with other movements (Silva 1996–1997, Silva and Rodrigo, 2010). Given limited mobilization capacity, political ecologists focused on nature conservation and on challenging the technical merits of company produced EIRs (Brandiaran, 2015).

The Patagonia without Dams campaign began in 2006 with news reports of a major hydropower development in the remote Patagonian frontier region of Aysén. Although Aysén is Chile's third largest region in terms of surface it is its least populated with just over 100,000 inhabitants and isolated due to insufficient infrastructure development. Its fractured landscape includes mountains, volcanoes, lakes, rivers, archipelagoes, and forests. Fishing, tourism (including eco-tourism), government employment, and sheep herding drive the regional economy. Protected areas, parks and wildlife refuges, cover about half of its territory (Biblioteca Nacional del Congreso, 2015).

In this landscape, to relieve Chile's projected energy deficit a consortium of international and national companies – Endesa-Chile and Colbún S.A. – proposed damming several pristine rivers to generate power exclusively for the central and northern mining regions. Endesa-Chile held 51 percent of the shares in HidroAysén. Although it was originally it was controlled by Spanish capital (Endesa-Spain), in 2009 an Italian multinational firm, ENEL, bought them out. Colbún, controlled by Chilean capital, was the junior partner with 49 percent of the shares. Both were politically well connected to the Concertación. Endesa-Chile through its parent company Enersis and Colbún because it was part of the powerful Matte conglomerate.

The HidroAysén project also entailed the construction of a 2300 km high-tension power line with attendant firebreak and maintenance roads. Translec – controlled by Canadian capital (Brookfield Asset Management Company) – was in charge of this part of the project. It required the expropriation of thousands of properties and it would spoil twelve wildlife refuges, directly impact 15, 645 ha of landscape and indirectly affect an additional 4,600,000 (Rodrigo and Orrego, 2007). The consortium touted that the project required a nearly USD 2.5 billion investment and would provide 20% of Chile's demand for electricity (18, 430GW/h) by 2020 (Rodo, 2007).

For environmentalists, HidroAysén's mega-dams posed several threats. First there was the impact on the region and beyond. It ignored the environmental and economic costs the project externalized. These included lost scenic beauty, negative economic impacts for ecotourism and tourism more generally, and biodiversity loss due to pollution and habitat destruction (Rodrigo and Orrego, 2007). Second, HidroAysén threatened longer-term policy objectives, such as building stronger state commitment to planning and investment in alternative energy strategies with smaller impact on Chilean ecosystems. It also jeopardized efforts to implement stronger environmental cost accounting measures for economic development projects (Rodrigo, 2014; Larraín 2007; Maldonado and Castillo, 2004; Márquez, 2007).

At first, HidroAysén seemed unassailable. It bought up all necessary water rights giving it strong legal footing.<sup>1</sup> It used its considerable economic power and extensive political connections to lobby Michele Bachelet's first government [2006–2010] into supporting it and to influence public opinion in its favor. HidroAysén argued that the project would contribute to solving Chile's energy problems and, by extension, resolve a deepening public policy problem for the government (Cuevas, 2007). The underlying policy issue was how to make up for natural gas exports from Argentina and how to generate energy to meet the needs of rapid development. The consortium argued that without the project Chile would suffer energy deficiencies that would stunt economic growth and, hence, the wellbeing of all Chileans.

Chilean environmentalists and concerned citizens from the region stood up to the HidroAysén juggernaut. The Patagonia Without Dams campaign officially began in February 2007 with the founding of the Patagonia Defense Council. It was a significant exercise in associational power building.

At its core stood major Chilean environmental organizations supported by noteworthy international actors, notably Douglas Tompkins. National environmental organizations included the Comité Pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora (CODEFF), the Instituto de Ecología Política, and the Corporación Chile Ambiente. Tompkins, co-founder of the apparel companies The North Face and Esprit, was a billionaire U.S. conservationist and philanthropist who had developed a deep affinity for Chilean Patagonia ever since his first adventures there the mid-1960s. After selling his shares in The North Face and Esprit Tompkins turned to deep ecology in the 1990s. In 1992 he founded the Conservation Land Trust (registered in California) to develop nature parks. His second wife, Kris McDivitt, helped him found Conservación Patagonia in 2000. As the name of the foundation suggests, its main activity was to buy land to turn it into nature sanctuaries and national parks, most notably, the 756,000 acre Pumalín Park supported by the Fundación Pumalín.<sup>2</sup>

The Patagonia Defense Council developed a clear strategic objective. It was to create a campaign against the environmental destruction of Chilean Patagonia and the country's energy monopoly, and for more eco-friendly energy. Achieving those objectives required action in several interrelated fields, such as technical-environmental, socioeconomic, political-institutional, legal, communications, activism, and international (Rodrigo, 2015).

The Patagonia Defense Council's organization supported those objectives. Notably, it coordinated regional and national groups working in those action areas through a Regional Secretariat and a

national Executive Secretariat, which also worked with international organizations. Each of the major action areas had teams to develop and implement strategies (Rodrigo, 2015).

Between 2007 and 2010, the Patagonia Without Dams campaign devised distinctive regional and national action plans. Most of the campaign's direct action concentrated in the Aysén region. The repertoire of contention included small-scale demonstrations and marches calculated to gain national media attention. The campaign developed regional collective power with the inclusion of business sectors linked to tourism and sheepherders. It also mobilized people locally to challenge HidroAysén on the merits of its environmental impact evaluation (Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia Chilena, 2014; Barandiarán, 2015). At the national level – meaning the capital city – the Patagonia Without Dams campaign focused on sophisticated media drives. This raised public awareness and generated favorable public opinion.

The national media campaign was quite successful. In 2008, Patagonia Without Dams obtained a favorable intermediate result. The smart media campaign backed by peaceful, innovative small-scale direct action had put political pressure on the project. A public opinion survey conducted by a reputable polling organization showed that 53 percent of respondents opposed the project and that only 35 percent supported it. Before the campaign the figures were 54 percent favoring construction and 35 percent against (Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia Chilena, 2014).

The Patagonia Defense Council also had some successes in mobilizing resistance to EIR approval. In November 2008, massive numbers of critical observations to the project's EIR (3150 from government agencies and over 11,000 from citizens and civil society collected by the Patagonia Defense Council) forced an eight-month extension of the evaluation period. At minimum, that bought time and lifted spirits (Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia Chilena, 2014).

Through 2009 and 2010 the case wound its way through institutional channels and fierce media campaigns to sway public opinion. In 2010 the Patagonia Defense Council systematically monitored negotiations between HidroAysén and the Aysén regional environmental agency over EIR conditions hoping to raise the bar.<sup>3</sup> This scrutiny resulted in the imposition of stricter requirements on the project to avoid the appearance of cronyism or collusion. In April 2011, now during the center-right government of Sebastián Piñera, a new poll indicated a 61 percent disapproval rate for HidroAysén (Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia Chilena, 2014).

Several features of this first phase of the Patagonia Without Dams campaign are worth stressing. Chilean environmental organizations stuck to familiar tactics developed in the 1990s. National organizations worked with local organizations to mount local protests, while simultaneously using the political-institutional-legal framework – specifically the EIR process – to delay or defeat the threat.

There were, however, important innovations to these practices. The associational power of the Patagonia Defense Council outweighed any that Chilean civil society had yet seen since re-democratization. In part this was due to the brokerage function of Douglas Tompkins, the American ecologist and philanthropist who, as previously mentioned, had built Chile's largest private park in Aysén. He brought Chilean environmentalists together with international environmental NGOs, beginning with the National Resource Defense Council that had extensive experience with legal tactics (which diffused to the campaign). He also brought in other foundations and organizations that helped to fund the campaign,

<sup>1</sup> For water rights in Chile see (Budde, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Sources: Conservacionpatagonia.org, accessed 7/18/2016; Kathy Enders and Jonathan Franklin, "Doug Tompkins: Life and Death of the Ecological Visionary Behind North Face," *The Guardian*, 12/13/2015, in theguardian.com, accessed 7/18/2016.

<sup>3</sup> In a politically significant move, the presidency had assigned the EIR review to Aysén's Regional Environmental Agency (Corema-Aysén) rather than CONAMA in Santiago.

including its media drive (Zambra, 2010). These involved International Rivers Network, Free Flowing Rivers, and Greenpeace, as well as his Conservación Patagonia and Fundación Pumalín (Rodrigo and Orrego, 2007).

Building collective power in the Aysén region was also a new development. In addition to conservation-oriented environmental organizations, the Patagonia Defense Council included organizations and associations that supported alternative development in the region, such as the Corporación para el Desarrollo de Aysén, Cámara de Turismo de Río Tranquilo, the Agrupación de Defensores del Espíritu de la Patagonia, the Escuela de la Patagonia, Chile Sustentable, the Corporación Chile Ambiente, Defendamos la Ciudad, Fundación Terram, the Instituto de Ecología Política, Radio Encuentro, and the Obisepado de Aysén (Rodrigo and Orrego, 2007). This lent credibility to the campaign's claim that it was about much more than naturalists stopping development, it had ample social backing for alternative concepts of nature's worth, development and energy models.

Political parties as such did not play a direct role in the first phase of the campaign. However an Environmental Caucus – principally, but not exclusively, from center-left parties in the lower house of the legislature – did help. Some members sat on relevant legislative commissions, such environment and energy. They facilitated meetings in which the Patagonia without Dams campaign got its technical reports circulated and arranged press conferences to give the campaign national visibility. They also worked with campaign members on an alternative energy plan and gaining a modicum of political support for it.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, HidroAysén was confident that its political connections in the business-friendly political establishment would bring the project to fruition. Its executives had direct access to the highest levels of government. As early as April and July 2005, Endesa's president declared that the project was the solution to Chile's energy problem and that talks with the government were progressing "magnificently" (Ibarra, 2005).<sup>5</sup> In May 2006, shortly after newly elected center-left president Michele Bachelet took office, HidroAysén executives – friends of Bachelet's economic team – met with the new Energy Minister (Ibarra, 2006). In October, Colbún's president, Bernardo Matte, stated that the construction of the electricity centrals was inevitable.<sup>6</sup> Endesa and Colbún's top executives stressed the benefits of the project, that it was a clean alternative to solve Chile's energy shortage. In its absence Chile would have to resort to dirty coal and suffer diminished economic growth rates. They also placed confidence in their legal teams' capacity to win injunctions in court. In 2009, HidroAysén responded to the thousands of observations to its EIR statement with thousands upon thousands of pages of material to snow understaffed regional environmental agencies into approval. The responses were more to the form than to the content, suggesting contempt for the technical abilities and professionalism of public officials and their technical staff. Perhaps they believed that their connections to business-friendly administrations would carry the day.<sup>7</sup>

HidroAysén's media campaigns were reflections of the mindset of the corporate leadership of Endesa and Colbún. Its first campaign emphasized the importance of supplying energy for Chile's economic growth urging citizens to get the facts. But this

was a lackluster response to the Patagonia without Dams imaginative communications campaign that had already been underway for two years (Tirado, 2009). HidroAysén's campaign relied on the private sector's hackneyed discourse of the benefits of market-led economic growth that dated back to the days of the military government's radical market reforms. By contrast, Patagonia Without Dams ran a more emotion-based campaign with creative, emotive images of environmental degradation (for example, giant high tension towers and their wires looming in the foreground marring the scenic beauty of pristine landscapes). This struck a chord with urban Chilean middle classes that longed to move past the ubiquitous discourse of rapid market-led economic growth after re-democratization, as evidenced by the 2011 public opinion poll mentioned above in favor of rejecting the HidroAysén project.

However, insider political connections were not working for HidroAysén. The Aysén regional environmental office delayed EIR approval by raising additional observations because it was dissatisfied with HidroAysén's response to the original set of EIR observations in 2008 (Esturillo, 2010).<sup>8</sup>

Frustrated HidroAysén's executives went on the offensive in 2010. They hired Burson-Marsteller, an international public relations firm that specialized in high profile cases of corporations in need of an image refurbishment, to advise them.<sup>9</sup> In the context of a new, conservative, pro-business presidency, HidroAysén launched a two-pronged attack. One prong essentially involved buying approval. In the wake of the February 2010 earthquake, the Enersis Group, which controlled Endesa-Chile, contributed ten million dollars to a reconstruction fund set up by president Sebastián Piñera. Concomitantly, HydroAysén executives called for more even-handed and objective treatment of their EIR evaluation. This was accompanied by a compensation strategy to municipalities and landowners to generate local support for the project in Aysén under the rubric of corporate social responsibility. This included corporate donations for infrastructure improvements and services in health and education as well as rents to persons whose lands would be directly affected by the dams and high-tension lines (Patagonia without Dams, n.d., pp. 42 and 48).

The second prong involved an aggressive negative advertisement campaign. HidroAysén aired television spots depicting the dire consequences of arrested energy production for Chilean citizens (for example, an operation is underway in a hospital and suddenly the lights go out). The implication was that Chileans were being held hostage by a narrow interest group of misguided eco-terrorist simpletons. The heavy-handedness, reminiscent of the dictatorship, allowed Patagonia without Dams to adroitly neutralize the ads by labeling them a "terror campaign" (Tirado, 2010; Patagonia without Dams, n.d.).

The corporate social responsibility tack no doubt generated some support for the project in Aysén but it was insufficient to dismantle the regional Patagonia sin Represas movement. Moreover, the multiclass character of the movement is clear from numerous videos produced by local movement organizations, especially the Coalición Ciudadana por Aysén Reserva de Vida and an hour-long documentary produced by the Patagonia Defense Council that was released in October 2009. Videos of demonstrations support the argument that those testimonials represent

<sup>4</sup> Personal communication with Patricio Rodrigo 12-21-15 and with Patricio Segura (journalist and press liaison for PSR) 12-21-15.

<sup>5</sup> "Licitaciones de suministro de largo plazo proclamarán nuevas centrales eléctricas, Estrategia, Santiago, 9 April 2005, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> "Presidente de Colbún Matte: Inevitablement se van a construir las centrales de Aysén," El Mercurio, 18 October 2006, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> "HidroAysén entrega respuestas a observaciones de servicios públicos," El Diario Financiero, 21 October 2009, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> "HidroAysén respondió la totalidad de consultas aclaratorias," Estrategia, October 29, 2010, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Its clients have included, Three Mile Island's parent company, Union Carbide after the Bhopal disaster, and the private security company Blackwater after it was accused of killing Iraqi civilians.

the thinking of many people from the region.<sup>10</sup> They were well attended and from their manner, speech, and dress participants clearly came from many walks of life.

The general framing of the struggle was the defense of a viable, community centered, alternative eco-friendly lifestyle against the anonymous, cold, impersonal, materialistic, and hypercompetitive world of Chile's dominant culture, exemplified by the capital city, Santiago. It was a struggle for the defense of cherished Chilean values of rugged individualism and hard work tempered by solidarity, mutual aid, and the sharing of life's rituals in small face-to-face communities. These sentiments combined with a spiritual attachment to a spectacular natural frontier setting in which people lived in nature rather than destroying it wholesale for profit. One humble *poblador* in a video of a demonstration in May 2008 articulated these views by stating, "We are defending what is ours, our culture, customs, or water and more." An 82-year old *poblador* was pithier: "I will never stop fighting for our *patria* for our *pueblo*." In a march to the offices of the regional environmental agency delivering citizen observations to HidroAysén's EIR in November 2008, a protester said, "Nature is the source of development and it belongs to all not just to a privileged few."

*Pobladores* also articulated a clear vision of the problems that HidroAysén would unleash that would tear their communities apart. In a documentary released by the CDP in October 2009 that was shown all around Chile, Aquilano Olivares said, "The construction alone, which is scheduled to last almost 10 years, would change our way of life with the arrival of thousands of workers from outside. What is to become of our life, our culture, and our schools and hospitals?"

The community of Caleta Tortal (circa 700 inhabitants) at the mouth of the river Baker felt especially threatened. In a referendum it held in 2008 78% of its people voted against HidroAysén. They had full political support from the mayor, Mr. Bernardo López. In an interview for the aforementioned documentary he explained, "The company promises jobs but they will not be filled by our people who know only animal husbandry and forestry. The 3000 plus workers will come from outside and bring big city problems such as prostitution, drugs, and alcoholism. We know this from the Ralco experience of Endesa's damming of the Alto Bío-Bío [in the 1990s]." We see, then, a connection between *pobladores* and local political authorities.

However, the class composition of local resistance was broader. Alternative small-scale development was an option for the future, especially in eco-tourism, which had become the second largest industry in the region and was growing quickly. It is not surprising then that businesspeople investing in tourism opposed HidroAysén. For example, Mirtha Lagomasino of Coyhaique, had built a successful tourist enterprise over 25 years. In her view, "We have what the international tourists want: a place free of contamination, with pristine nature, small farming enterprises, no towers, power lines, or industrial development." Tabara Ulrich and Francisco Roxato, owner-operators of a hostel and expedition enterprise in Puerto Tranquilo, were pithier, "no nature, no business."<sup>11</sup> This observation applied equally for sources of spillover employment such as guides, trailblazers, provision suppliers, wranglers, etc. The

broad social composition of the Patagonia without Dams campaign was also evident in the names of local resistance organizations, such as Coalición Ciudadana por Aysén Reserva de Vida, Escuela de Guías de la Patagonia, and the Cámara de Turismo de Río Tranquilo. Meanwhile, middle class professionals who were committed environmentalists led regional movement organizations, such as the aforementioned Coalición Ciudadana and the Corporación para el Desarrollo de Aysén (Codesa).

The second phase of the struggle began in May 2011 when the regional environmental agency approved HidroAysén's EIR. This outcome dramatically increased the threat to opponents and prompted adjustments to the Patagonia Defense Council's strategy and tactics. In the institutional track, playing for time the Patagonia Defense Council began to file legal injunctions against HidroAysén.

In a bid to increase pressure on the government to retract its political support for HidroAysén, the Patagonia Defense Council also changed its mobilization strategy by calling for an all out public protest in the capital city, Santiago. This was a desperate gamble because Chile was a largely demobilized society and environmental protests rarely attracted numbers beyond a few hundred. To everyone's surprise, some 30,000 to 40,000 answered the call that May. It was a massive demonstration by the standard of the period (*Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia Chilena*, 2014). It suggested many Chileans were fed up with politics as usual that favored the rich, the wellborn, and the powerful. People were getting tired of the abuses and arrogance of power.<sup>12</sup>

The political context for the government and HidroAysén became even more complex in June 2011. That was the month massive student demonstrations erupted against the privatized education system, its cost, and its inequities. The demonstrations, up to 100,000 or more strong, became a monthly event and symbolized an indictment of the comfortable consensus politics and pro-business character of Chilean politics that ignored emerging citizen demands for a more egalitarian and politically participatory society (*Lustig et al.*, 2012).

The demonstrations of May, June, and July 2011 were more than isolated protests. They facilitated the emergence of national *collective power* by bringing together three established Chilean social movements. Largely middle class university and high school students and environmentalists alongside labor unions, especially public sector unions, demonstrated in a cycle of contention that lasted until 2014 (*Véliz et al.*, 2011).<sup>13</sup> All were protesting the entrenched pro-business orientation of center-left and center-left governing coalitions that left pent up demands for a more egalitarian society harkening back to the democratization movement of 1983–1990 unattended. They formalized collective power building in August 2011 by forming the Mesa Social for a New Chile, a network of social movements, unions, and student organizations in August (*Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia Chilena*, 2014). The Mesa Social had a proactive agenda: to create an alternative platform for political change based on constitutional reform, more public education, environmental protection, stronger labor rights, and social equity in general.<sup>14</sup>

In the midst of these events, Aysén had its own social explosion

<sup>10</sup> Videos on Youtube.com discussed in this paper include: "Patagonia sin Represas: Documental Completo," published September 23, 2014, originally shown in theaters in Chile from October 2008, accessed July 20, 2016; "Marcha Patagonia sin Represas," uploaded April 28, 2011, accessed July 20, 2016; "Marcha Patagonia sin Represas en Coyhaique," uploaded April 26, 2011, accessed July 20, 2016; "Conferencia de Prensa Patagonia sin Represas," published June 4, 2014, accessed July 20, 2016; Marcha Patagonia sin Represas 21, uploaded May 21, 2011, accessed July 22, 2016; "Patagonia sin Represas en las Calles de Aysén," uploaded May 3, 2011, accessed July 22, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> All featured in the October 2008 Patagonia sin Represas documentary.

<sup>12</sup> Personal communication with Patricio Rodrigo, Executive Director of the Patagonia Defense Council, June 2014.

<sup>13</sup> University students were primarily represented by the Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile, high schoolers by the Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios and the Coordinadora Nacional de Estudiantes Secundarios. The principal unions were the Agrupación Nacional de Empleados Fiscales but also on occasion the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores. The major national environmental organizations were Comité Pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora (CODEFF), the Instituto de Ecología Política, and the Corporación Chile Ambiente.

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication with Ana María Silva, Patagonia Defense Council coordinator with the Mesa Social and Patricio Rodrigo, Executive Director of the Patagonia Defense Council, January 2015.

in February 2012. Citizens protested, sometimes violently, against central government neglect of the region. Inadequate infrastructure and isolation drove up the cost of basic goods and services such as fuel, transportation, electricity, and essential foodstuffs. Medical and educational services lagged the rest of the nation. Protesters, organized under the umbrella of the *Movimiento Social para la Región de Aysén*, demanded improvements, including fuel subsidies, wage increases, quality health care facilities, protection for the livelihood of artisanal fishermen, and a regional public university.<sup>15</sup> The emergence of regional protest on this scale outside of indigenous areas was a new development for Chile.

The class composition of the protesters was mixed, although in contrast to the *HidroAysén* campaign it lacked a business component. At its core were working class and middle class sectors. Working classes were led by artisanal fishermen organizations, public sector unions, and neighborhood associations (*juntas de vecinos*) generally run women, students. Because they also organized white-collar workers middle classes were represented by public sector unions, as well as by the *Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile*, and by environmental organizations, principally *Patagonia sin Represas* (Pinto, 2012).<sup>16</sup> The protesters also had strong local political support from the Mayor of Puerto Aysén.

*Patagonia sin Represas* played a critical role in these events. It coordinated communication with the social networks involved in the protests. It coordinated the direct action of the organizations, such as roadblocks and the interruption of public services. It was deeply involved in crafting the list of demands and their negotiation with ministers of state and the regional executive (*Intendencia*). *Patagonia sin Represas* also supported the artisanal fisherman's tactic of maintaining mobilization whilst negotiating with authorities to keep the pressure on them (Pinto, 2012).<sup>17</sup>

Sebastián Piñera's government, and the political establishment more generally, were baffled by the cycle of protest that engulfed the country. The mass protests and their demands for policies that mitigated the sharp edges of aggressive pro-market driven economic growth put them in a delicate political situation that influenced the course of the *Patagonia Without Dams* campaign. In 2011 and 2012, the legal battle against *HidroAysén* was not going well. Although each injunction delayed action, courts were ultimately ruling in its favor. Nevertheless, given the explosive situation in Aysén and the rest of the country, the presidency suspended approval of *HidroAysén* pending review of the project by the Council of Ministers that oversaw the national environmental agency (*Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia Chilena*, 2014). The government's ambivalence towards the project in the midst of a politically charged atmosphere eventually doomed *HidroAysén*.

The *Patagonia Defense Council* shifted tactics again in late 2012 with an eye toward the December 2013 presidential election. The objective was to keep pressure on the political establishment by combining protest with engagement. To this end, in September 2012, the *Patagonia Defense Council* in coordination with the *Mesa Social for a New Chile* organized a social summit to challenge the political establishment with the development of a *Citizen Program for change*. In May 2013, the *Mesa Social* distributed the *Citizen Program* to presidential candidates urging them to publicly state their position on *HidroAysén*. In December Michele Bachelet, the candidate for the *New Majority center-left coalition* (the old *Concertación* plus the *Communist Party*), and frontrunner for the presidency, declared that *HidroAysén* was not a viable project and that if elected president her administration would not support it. A

few short months after taking office, In June 2014, the Council of Ministers formally rejected *HidroAysén's* EIR, effectively killing the project (*Consejo de Defensa de la Patagonia Chilena*, 2014).

As in the first phase of the *Patagonia Without Dams* campaign, although political parties as such did not play direct a role in these developments the intervention of specific politicians did. For example, Bachelet did not declare herself against *HidroAysén* until the second-round run off election, when it was clear that she would win the presidency. In part this was due to pressure from Aysén conservative/independent Senator Horvath and Independent Senator Bianchi who were against the hydroelectric project. Theirs were critical swing votes in a deadlocked Senate and they conditioned their votes for government-sponsored legislative bills on this issue. Be that as it may, Bachelet delivered on her promise. Before taking office she instructed her soon to be minister for the environment to contact the *Patagonia Defense Council* in search of legal and juridical footing for rejecting *HidroAysén*. This was a difficult decision because *Endesa* (an *HidroAysén* partner) had been a generous contributor to Bachelet's presidential campaign.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4. Lessons of the Patagonia without Dams campaign

What are the implications of the *Patagonia Without Dams* campaign for the puzzle of Latin America's extractive imperative? Sustainable development generally is a low salience issue area, which means that authorities will not expend many political or economic resources on it.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the dominant economic, social, and political structures do not favor social inclusiveness and alternative eco-friendly approaches (Andrade, 2015). Under these structurally unfavorable conditions, what are the drivers of change outside of international factors? The *Patagonia Without Dams* campaign and others like it demonstrate that, among other factors, social movements are a potential source of change. It also makes clear that major outcomes tend to be politically mediated.

##### 4.1. Social movement theory and political ecology

If social movements are considered agents of change, then social movement theory can fortify political ecology. The political process framework has much to offer for understanding the potential and limitations of social movements to move us in a more inclusive and environmentally sustainable direction. It helps us to answer the question, what conditions improve a movement's chances of obtaining favorable outcomes. This is significant if case-by-case resistance is the principle path available.

The political process approach stresses the importance of the structure of political opportunities and threats, strategy and tactics, repertoire of contention, issue framing, and resource mobilization (Tarrow, 2011). The *HidroAysén* case highlights two crucial issues with respect to the structure of opportunity and threat. First, while opportunities and threats may be objective, action depends on whether and how they are perceived (Lichbach and Zuckerman, 1997). For example, in the context of Chilean

<sup>18</sup> Patricio Rodrigo, email communication December 21, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Although sustainable development is generally a low salience issue in Latin America compared to more traditional development issues, it does vary across countries. In some, at least at the symbolic level, it would seem to be quite important, as in Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Bolivia. But as the extractive imperative argument of Arsel, Hogenboom, and Pellegrini shows, even in these cases when push comes to shove traditional development issues trump concerns over sustainable development, especially its livelihoods and alternative eco-friendly component. It is also most likely that on a spectrum, the issue salience of sustainable development is particularly low in Chile (See, Silva 1996–1997 for an explanation).

<sup>15</sup> Aysén en llamas, Pulimitro, 16 February 2012, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Aysén en llamas, Pulimitro, 16 February 2012, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Personal communication with Patricio Rodrigo, June 2014.

democracy the legal system and institutional administrative structures of the state were considered opportunities for action. The development of a broader cycle of contention against the inequities of the establishment was perceived to be an opportunity for coalition building and issue expansion rather than a purist entrenchment in a single issue. Second, opportunities can be created. This was most clearly evidenced by the creation of the Citizen's Program as a means to bring added pressure to bear on presidential candidates. This involved inventing new spaces for citizens to autonomously develop an alternative policy agenda and the mechanisms to force politicians to engage with it. Because similar tactics had already been in use in Argentina and the Andes, Chileans probably became cognizant of it through the mechanism of diffusion (Svampa and Pereyra, 2003).

In the context of democratic regimes that legally protect opposition, the Patagonia Without Dams campaign also highlights the value of pursuing both institutional or "insider" tactics and protest or "outsider" tactics simultaneously as means to obtain carefully defined, multiple objectives (Goldstone, 2003; Giugni, 2004). These could be employed to achieve goals such as delay, wearing down of the target, government officials, or both and ultimately defeat of their opponent. The use of a smart media campaign to influence public opinion as a means to bring pressure to bear on elected governments was also significant (Giugni, 2004).

These characteristics of movement underscore the connections between context, objectives, and means to obtain them. In this respect, the campaign supports the well-established theoretical proposition that organization is important to a movement's sustained interaction with authorities, targets, and publics. The Patagonia Defense Council was well organized, capable of planning, following through, and innovating when necessary.

The case also suggests that when considering the significance of organization it may be useful to distinguish between associational power and collective power. The Patagonia Defense Council clearly built associational power. However, in an issue area that has low salience, such as the environment, movement organizations tend to lose quickly in head-to-head conflict with authorities or politically and legally protected corporations. Under these conditions, collective power building may be necessary, although not always achievable. This involves forging horizontal linkages with others and gaining support from international organizations, institutions, and regimes movements can increase their power.

The Patagonia Defense Council aggregated a broad spectrum of Chilean and international organizations that included environmental groups, social organizations (both business and the Catholic Church), neighborhood groups, concerned citizens groups, and even local and national political figures (mayors, a conservative Senator from Aysén, and a caucus of center-left deputies). They all shared a common vision of Chilean Patagonia's heritage and future, a vision linked to its regional culture, conservation, tourism, and sustainable development.

Most importantly, the agenda of this coalition went far beyond conservation or any other single issue. If environmentalists were only against mega dams and high tension wires for the sake of conservation, the coalition would not have been possible. Business, international actors, concerned citizens, and the Catholic Church joined in because all supported alternatives to regional economic growth. They saw an economic future and jobs in the preservation of nature through tourism based on scenic beauty, wilderness, and alternative energy policies. Important national issues were involved in this local struggle. Whose property rights prevail, the distribution of property (goods, services, and income), and state support for alternatives to mega

projects in energy provided a common interest for broad-based coalition building (Silva and Rodrigo, 2010).

Making common cause with the student and labor movements was a crucial expansion of collective power based on shared interests. This simultaneously pressured authorities on several issues in which public opinion – important for electoral purposes – was going against them. This is perhaps the highest expression of collective power building during a cycle of contention.

Of course, it has long been known that organization and building coalitions are important sources of social movement power. In that sense, the Patagonia Without Dams campaign, no matter how compelling, is simply a theory confirming case. Two points about the case, however, are potentially more novel. One is the proposition that the degree of associational power and/or collective power that must be brought to bear, in part, depends on nature of the political, economic, and social structures that movements face. To the extent that they are closed, or non-porous, or possess the capacity to ignore movement demands higher degrees of associational and collective power may be necessary (Silva, 2009).

A second novel point is this. Building collective power – and negotiating with authorities – requires a clear understanding of shared, although not necessarily identical, interests. The current framing of the extractive imperative dilemma by scholars and activists – reducing poverty and inequality vs. ensuring inclusion and sustainability – builds in (or reinforces) deep urban-rural cleavages. Natural resource extraction takes place outside of densely populated urban areas. That makes the uphill battle for inclusiveness and sustainability even steeper. Rural social groups with interests in alternative forms of development are especially marginal in national politics and society. If building collective power is crucial for meaningful contestation, then urban-rural networks must be cultivated. This will require creative framing to find common ground and to build solidarities that can withstand tensions. The Patagonia Without Dams did this admirably.

#### 4.2. *The outcomes of protest*

If social movements are agents of change, then the policy outcomes of protest are a relevant question. Here it may be useful to think about outcomes at different stages of the policy process. Equally beneficial might be to establish whether outcomes are the direct result of movement actions, mediated by another party, or indirect (Amenta et al., 2010; Kolk, 2007).

The long Patagonia Without Dams campaign had some clear outcomes. The most significant one was the final outcome. The environmental commission did not approve the EIR and, therefore, the project was defeated. The evidence showed that this outcome was politically mediated: first when Piñera's government suspended the national Council of Ministers final deliberation over its merits and secondly when Bachelet withdrew political support for the hydroelectric project. This suggests that political mediation is critical in the extractive industries because such large-scale projects generally require political support. Hence if social movements are to be agents of change in the extractive industries' issue area they need broader societal and political support, which can be problematic to achieve. The significance of this for the extractive imperative question is that it reinforces the value of engaging authorities, albeit from a principled autonomous posture.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> A spillover-mediated outcome of the Patagonia Without Dams campaign was defeat of a legislative bill that paved the way for long transmission lines, dubbed electric highway, or the HidroAysén Law.



There were at least two significant intermediate or transitory outcomes that can be directly attributed to the campaign. First, legal tactics deferred official action. This bought time, if nothing else, for the possibility that new opportunities might open up. Chile's cycle of mobilization between 2011 and 2013 was such an opportunity. That cycle shook up the comfortable political arrangements of Chilean consensus politics, opening an opportunity for a new political movement, Nueva Mayoría to be more receptive to the Patagonia Defense Council-Mesa Social's Citizen Program. Second, engagement with the EIR institutional process brought about an interim change in the policy formulation process. Dogged monitoring resulted in a stricter protocol, which also bought time.<sup>21</sup>

Did Patagonia Without Dams have more general policy impacts? Arguably, it contributed to putting some issues on the policy agenda. One was the Citizen's Program itself, which called for a constitutional convention to reform such things as the quorum requirements for constitutional amendments (important for reforming things like water property rights) and more channels for citizen participation in the policy process. Bachelet's government has initiated action on constitutional reform. The Patagonia Defense Council and other organizations and experts, are working with the political establishment to formulate a citizen participation law.<sup>22</sup>

The campaign's alternative energy plan emphasized non-conventional renewable energy sources and small-scale eco-friendly hydropower generation. Before Patagonia without Dams this was a subject for technical experts exclusively. By 2013 it was part of everyday public discourse in Chile. Moreover, the Patagonia Defense Council had prepared technical policy position papers that were distributed to legislators working on a bill to develop non-conventional renewable energy in Chile. The bill, dubbed Law 20/25, stipulated that 20 percent of Chile's energy should be from such sources by the year 2025.<sup>23</sup> Two members of technical consultancy team of the parliamentary commission working on the bill were leaders of the Patagonia Defense Council. The bill became law in October 2013.<sup>24</sup> A further subject for investigation would be to establish the degree to which adherence to international treaties and protocols influenced the policy process for the law as well.

Despite these positive outcomes, the Patagonia Defense Council was not able to alter Chile's general policy towards large-scale hydropower generation. Bachelet's Energy Minister, Máximo Pacheco, was clear on the point when he said that rejection of HidroAysén did not mean that the country could afford not to utilize the rivers of the region for power generation.

As a result, some activists worry that they may have won a battle but lost the war since a backlog of other current and future mega-dam projects may be implemented. For example, a rival project to HidroAysén on the Río Cuervo is winding its way successfully through the approval process. In part this is because it is not quite not as pharaonic as HidroAysén and in part because the company has cut less corners in the project's development and has complied with the letter and spirit of observations made during the EIR approval process (Astudillo, 2014).<sup>25</sup> However, activists from the Patagonia Defense Council also stress that they are not against

all forms of hydroelectric development; projects involve less invasive small-scale technology are desirable.<sup>26</sup>

This raises a larger general point: the necessity of establishing clear medium and longer-term objectives. The extractive imperative forces some hard decisions. The governments' framing of the issue, that it is necessary to intensify extraction to reduce poverty and inequality, poses a threat that forces a reaction by those who advocate inclusiveness of alternative views about development and ecological sustainability. Short-term movement goals may just be to stop a specific project, as it was in Chile. But it is necessary to be clear whether medium and longer-term goals frame alternatives as extractivism and poverty reduction *versus* inclusiveness and sustainability or as extraction-based development, poverty reduction *and* inclusiveness and sustainability?

The answer shapes debates about the spaces, mechanisms, and supporting policies for inclusiveness of currently excluded groups and their policy preferences. Is the call for pluralist inclusion with sector specific policies, budgets, and small-scale alternative ecologically friendly development (alongside, say ecological modernization) or much deeper change? Barring extraordinary circumstances incremental change is more likely.

#### 4.3. Redefining the margins in a decentered epoch

In the debate over the effects of the extractive imperative on marginalized social groups, indigenous peoples take pride of place. Yet, if one focuses exclusively, or even predominantly on them, one probably inhibits recognizing opportunities for collective power building. Indeed, cutting the Gordian knot of the extractive imperative cannot just be about indigenous. In addition to being a small proportion of the population in most countries, they have special claims to nationhood, territorial rights, and consultation not available to other groups.

The Patagonia Without Dams campaign offers another dimension to the specification of what is marginal. The marginal need not be indigenous with a focus of subsistence agriculture or agroecology. Ironically, it can be more integrated to dominant economy. The point being the example offers an opportunity to shift our attention to more eco-friendly development in ways that apply to more people, larger, more diverse social groups. The overarching goal is to find shared interests.

Aysén is marginal in terms of its population size and remoteness to and isolation from the center of Chilean political and economic activity. This gives the region a distinctive culture of rugged self-reliance in harmony with nature alongside a spirit of solidarity and collective action for ceremony, ritual, and public goods. The ability to articulate this integrating regional identity gave it strength to act collectively. It bound disparate social groups and identities. The small indigenous population was part of the larger movement, but it was predominantly made up of non-indigenous Chileans (and some citizens of other countries). They came from different social classes, from fishermen to workers to middle class entrepreneurs, professionals, and political leaders to wealthy landowners and business people.

However, the ability to frame the region's uniqueness in terms of being a part of the nation, of expressing valued aspects of Chilean culture was critical, such as self-reliance *and* solidarity. This connection to the rest of the country was key to the campaign's staying power. So was the ability to show what the region had to offer the rest of the country in terms of valuable alternative lifestyles. Lastly, the capacity to connect local troubles to pent up frustrations at the center about Chilean politics,

<sup>21</sup> From another perspective, the EIR can be seen as a policy implementation issue. The campaign monitored the implementation of EIR protocols in the policy process.

<sup>22</sup> Personal communication, Patricio Rodrigo, June 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Ley 20.698, Propicia Ampliación de la Matriz Energética Mediante Fuentes Renovables No Convencionales, published in Diario Oficial de la República de Chile, October 22, 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Email communication with Patricio Segura, 12-26-15.

<sup>25</sup> Aprueban central Cuervo, segunda mayor hidroeléctrica de la Patagonia, La Segunda, September 10, 2013, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> Personal communication with Carmen Silva, a Patagonia without Dams activist close to its core leadership, June 2014.

economic, and social order was also crucial. In short, while marginalized, the region and its troubles were intertwined with those of the rest of the nation. The deeper lesson might lie in a need to uncover connections and exploitable fault lines between extraction and poverty reduction on the one hand and exclusion and unsustainable development on the other hand.

#### 4.4. Cumulative effects of local struggles

Patagonia Without Dams was one campaign. There are many such defensive actions in virtually every country of the region. Some are won, some are lost, and some, no doubt, have indeterminate outcomes. What are the cumulative effects of local struggles? This seems to be an important yet understudied issue (Bebbington, 2015; Bebbington and Bury, 2013) and I can do here is to raise questions to guide future efforts.

Although this subject is related to the outcomes of movement discussion it goes beyond that. On the policy side, there are questions regarding the passage and implementation of new laws, regulation, and budget allocations that result from cumulative unrest. This can be at the national, international, and subnational levels. They can relate to citizen deliberation and participation in development policy; the creation of favorable conditions for self-managed alternative eco-friendly development strategies; expanding implementation of nonconventional renewable energy sources to name a few. Has environment moved up in priority in the policy arena and, if so, on what issues? Is it mainly on “technical” problems where market solutions dominate, such as climate change? Are policy responses mainly repressive?

A second line of inquiry relates to investigating whether there have been institutional changes and the degree to which they overcome implementation problems. Do we see changes in principles, norms, rules, and procedures? Do new institutions appear? Do we see incremental changes in existing institutions? What is their enforcement capacity? What constitutes meaningful institutional change?

A third line of research asks if there have been any changes in the distribution of power. For example, do we see new channels of access to power by subordinate groups or the reverse? Are favorable changes in public perceptions or a diffusion of values identifiable? Has there been an expansion of institutional resources to support the consolidation of channels of access to power and support for new values?

In conclusion, debates over extractive industries and their consequences for the environment and local peoples emphasize the ineluctable logic of economic, social, and political domination that violates the landscape and inhabitants of rural spaces. A frequent policy prescription to ameliorate this situation is the strengthening effective local autonomy. That would certainly help. However, the main lesson from this case study is that the power to do so passes through politics at the national as well as subnational levels. It must be wrestled from dominant socioeconomic and political elites. It will not be surrendered even in the face of paper decrees and laws. Social movements have a role to play. Building associational and collective power is one of the keys. It may be useful to think beyond indigenous and rural peoples as the main source of resistance and alternative development. Bridging the rural-urban divide looms as a necessity. Significant results in a positive direction are likely to be mediated by political actors.

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