

Development, blessing or curse?
Mining, development and governmentality in Guatemala



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¹ Aguacatán says no to mining, 03-10-09, photographer unknown.

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Index

| | | |
|--|----|----|
| 1. Introduction | 5 | |
| 1.1 Research situation | | 7 |
| 1.2 Research methods | 8 | |
| 1.3 Research population | 8 | |
| 1.4 Outline of thesis | 9 | |
| 2. Theoretical framework | 10 | |
| 2.1 Development | | |
| 2.2.1 The global use and meaning of development | 10 | |
| 2.2.2 Development discourses | 12 | |
| 2.2.3 Different perspectives on the instrumental use of development | 14 | |
| 2.2.4 Converging perspectives of development | 16 | |
| 2.2 Governmentality | 17 | |
| 2.3.1 What is governmentality and how does it relate to development? | 17 | |
| 2.3.2 Resisting governmentality | | 18 |
| 3. Context | 20 | |
| 3.1 Exploitation of natural resources in Guatemala | 21 | |
| 3.2 Communities opposing the exploitation of natural resources | 22 | |
| 3.3 The consequences of mining | 23 | |
| 3.4 A national movement | 24 | |
| 3.5 Licenses and consultas | 24 | |
| 4. The <i>consulta</i> : How local becomes global | 26 | |
| 4.1 The meaning of the consulta | 26 | |
| 4.2 Asamblea | 27 | |
| 4.3 Local organization of the consultas | 27 | |
| 4.4 What has been done with results | 29 | |
| 4.5 The organizations in the movement | 31 | |
| 5. Development discourse: A contested Area | | 34 |
| 5.1 Local discourse of development | 35 | |
| 5.1.1 Environment and Mayan Cosmo vision | 35 | |
| 5.1.2 Desarrollo integral | 37 | |
| 5.2 Governmental discourse | 38 | |

| | |
|--|----|
| 5.3 Municipality discourse | 39 |
| 6. Framing the struggle: Autonomy | 42 |
| 6.1 <i>'Por la tierra'</i> | 43 |
| 6.2 <i>'Por la territoria'</i> | 44 |
| 6.2.1 Indigenous rights | 45 |
| 6.3 <i>'Por nuestra casa'</i> | 45 |
| 6.3.1 Confronting local governmentality | 46 |
| 6.3.2 Neocolonisation | 47 |
| 6.3.3 The political goals of the autonomy movement | 48 |
| 7. Conclusion | 50 |
| 8. References | 52 |
| 9. Appendices | 55 |
| Appendix 1: Reflection on fieldwork | 55 |
| Appendix 2: Resumen | 58 |
| Appendix 3: Pictures of remembrance march Aguacatán | 59 |
| Appendix 4: Pictures of demonstration for day of earth | 60 |

1. Introduction

*'A large truck and two cars drive to the entrance of the village. One curious man sees these vehicles and that 'minería' (mining) is written on the truck. He tells the strangers, which include foreigners, to wait. After a little while, he returns with a group of neighbors. Together with the others, he tells the people of the mining company to leave their village; they do not want mining here. At first the outsiders do not want to leave and try to move on. Consequently, the villagers start a fire to block the passage, and the vehicles leave.'*²

Why does mining provoke such strong emotions? How come that these people are so determined to stop the company? What will happen if the company tries to come again? Many questions arise, when reading this story. It is an example of local people who decided they do not want mining activities in their area and will prevent that mining companies to initiate their projects. Plans for mining are in or near their village, but the residents of the area do not agree to these plans. They have heard about the Marlin mine; stories of violence, contamination, and sicknesses: problems. These people do not know when the mining company returns, however the residents know, they do not want these problems. In their opinion mining does not bring advantages, and they are ready to confront the company.

The local resistance of this village is part of a larger movement of many local communities who do not want mining. Probably, each of those communities would take similar actions as described above. Not just communities, whole municipalities are opposing mining, which are united as regional movement. Just as the movement is much broader than a local resistance, the issues which are resisted to are also broader than just mining. Besides mining, other megaprojects, such as hydro-electric dams and highways are also opposed. The government names these changes and projects as 'development', stating it brings progression to the communities and the country as a whole. The movement and its villages state that this 'development' does not bring development to their community, it only brings problems.

Thus, we see that resistance against mining is connected with resistance to a larger issue, namely, a distinctive type of development. It becomes a struggle between local communities and the government over what development is, both using the meaning of development to pursue their interests. In order to understand these power dynamics of development, it is necessary to understand the practical meaning of development as well the more profound meaning of power inherent in

² Cocode interview

development. When something is called development, it comprehends a certain legitimization for an action, development implicitly has positive connotations. (Allen & Thomas, 2000: 23) Thus when a certain action or certain change is interpreted as developing the community or the country, the action is legitimized as a progression for the community, or the country respectively.

The concept of development holds the possibility to govern, as it legitimizes changes in society. Because the seemingly neutral term can be such a powerful instrument, development can turn into an area of struggle. Consequently, its meaning becomes a display of power and therefore a complex network of power and interests is attached to the concept. Because the struggle over the meaning of development is a deeper struggle over power, a development project becomes a political arena. (Li, 1999: 297) In Guatemala this political arena is the issue of mining. In mining the interests of many groups meet, on the one hand the historically marginalised, rural indigenous people, and on the other hand a government of rich elites and transnational interests.

This paper attempts to form an understanding of how these seemingly powerless local people pursue their interests in relation to development, this subject has often been neglected. (Gow, 2008) The meaning of development as a display of power has been studied widely, frequently the focus here lies in the gap between local perspectives of development and global or national, dominant, perspectives. (Grillo & Stirrat, 1997) To provide more insights in how the local tries to change its position in power, the following question will be answered:

How do local and national actors give meaning to, and practise 'development' as a way of contesting and negotiating governmentality in a context of democratisation and neoliberal mining policies?

This question encompasses several aspects. A first important aspect is the stratification; the connectivity between local, regional, national and even transnational will be assessed. Secondly, I will illustrate how these different actors give different meanings to development, and how this meaning of development is placed in a context of power. The third part of the research question, governmentality, which is, a power holder (often a state) aims to make somebody behave and think in a specific manner. Governmentality is incorporated power, ideally its subject does not realize that he or she is liable to power. (Burchell et al, 1991) Development is a vehicle to exercise this power and therefore, by influencing ideas of development, governmentality can be contested. (Escobar, 1995: 9) The last part of the research question is concerns the context, it is necessary to asses the context to understand wherein the actors base their struggle over development. The present is influenced by the 1996 peace accords. In the peace accords, agreements regarding democratisation

processes, to provide more opportunities to the local were signed. Secondly the peace, and therefore increased safety, provided opportunities for multinationals to do business in the country, this was encouraged by the government as the change of the mining law in a neoliberal direction illustrates. The different ideas of development are related to these changes.

1.1 Research situation

To find the answers to this multifaceted question I went to Aguacatán. This village is situated in the region of Huehuetenango, which is a mountainous and poor region, with a history of armed resistance during the civil war. (Kobrak, 2003) I have conducted research in Aguacatán and the departmental capital, Huehuetenango, from the end of February till the end of April 2010. This research was in these two levels, because the local events of Aguacatán provide insights in the regional movement of Huehuetenango. The local people are resisting the mining company through direct actions, while these events are connected to the regional movement. In Aguacatán are two licenses for mine explorations and plans to build a hydroelectric dam. (Krenmayr & Mérida, 2010: 33) An important event was a community *consultation* in 2008, here the people of the municipality spoke out against mining.

1.2 Research methods

I used distinctive qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, participant observation, observation and analyzing documents to collect data. (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002:2)

In depth interviews were my primary method, these were semi-structured, in which I used topic lists and sometimes particular questions. I have conducted interviews with nineteen different informants. In these interviews my aim was that the informant led the conversation, while I directed the dialogue towards issues I found relevant. In practise the interviews differed much, sometimes it was more of an answer-response conversation, while other times it was more natural. During the interviews I also observed implicit information such as the setting and body language.

Besides planned interviews, I also held a lot of informal conversations, these form part of the participant observation technique. (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002: 4) These conversations took place when spontaneously meeting an informant or when engaging in other activities than interviewing. Examples of such activities are the five meetings in which I participated. These meetings often provided deeper insights, for example in demonstrating relations between different actors or themes of which I did not realize the relevance before. An especially interesting meeting was participating in a demonstration. Here I realized the distinctive cultural characteristics of the manner it was

organized, through participating I obtained tacit information, i.e. information that needs to be experienced in order to understand. (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002: 1) Beside obtaining information, these meetings helped building up rapport with informants. (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002: 40) Instead of being an interviewer from the outside I participated and therefore became a peer to the other participants. Building rapport is essential in the researching mining issues, it is a sensible issue. Repeatedly people thought I related to the mining company, and were afraid of repercussions. To build rapport, I tried to reciprocate, for example in telling about myself, but also through engaging in an informal relation.

In addition to these active research methods, I have also used a lot of Spanish-written documents. Such as brochures about mining or development, information about licences and development projects, especially the books in the CEDFOG³ have proven to be of use.

1.3 Research population

My research population has been based in two societal levels; the local and the regional. The local perspectives provided the direct visions on mining and development, while through assessing the regional ideas I could place it in a broader perspective. In Aguacatán, my informants were largely based around the community *consultation*, *consulta*⁴. A broad coalition was involved in the organization of the *consulta*. To acquire a representative sample in regard to the *consulta*, I spoke with representatives of diverse organizations. These were a development NGO, a cooperative, a church, women's organization, a language institute and a cocode⁵. Besides these organizations, I also spoke with specific actors. Firstly, the Junta⁶, which played a crucial role in organizing the *consulta* and the mining issue as whole. Secondly, I spoke with representatives of the municipality, that is; the mayor, a civil servant and participants of the municipality council. Thirdly, I spoke with a few other actors involved in local development projects, in order to receive a more profound interpretation of what development is. Lastly, I went to village where a mine is planned. Here I spoke with local community leaders, to acquire insights in the perspective of the most directly affected.

At the regional level, of Huehuetenango, I spoke with governmental institutes, i.e. the governor of Huehuetenango, MARN and INAB.⁷ These actors provided a governmental viewpoint of the

³ CEDFOG, *Centro de Estudios y Documentación de la Frontera Occidental de Guatemala*. A research and documentation centre in Huehuetenango, which published critical investigations about the region.

⁴ I prefer using the term *consulta*, instead of consultation, as it grasps the specific characteristics of the consultations in Guatemala.

⁵ Local development council, more about the cocode in chapter 6.

⁶ The Junta is a local organization for protection of the environment, more about the Junta in chapter three.

⁷ Chapter 4 provides descriptions of these organizations.

situation. Beside these governmental organizations I spoke with representatives of activist's NGOs, namely, Asamblea and CEIBA⁸.

Some informants played a larger role in my research than others. Some functioned as gatekeeper, persons who have access to the research subject (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002: 36). An administrator of the municipality helped me to contact community leaders and the representative of the Junta had the trust of people involved in resisting mining, which gave me access to meetings. Secondly, I had several key-informants. In Aguacatán these were the people most involved in the organization of the *consulta*, and in Huehuetenango these were a coordinator of the Asamblea and Cecilia Mérida. Cecilia provided much information, as she wrote two books concerning Asamblea and knew a lot of the regional movement. Besides providing information, Cecilia also played a role as expert-informant, as anthropologist she provided some analytical insights in the issues.

With regard to data, the focus changed throughout the research. In anthropological research, reassessing and reinterpreting data is part of obtaining the data. (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002: 13) At the start I focused on acquiring an image of the local situation. I spoke to main actors in relation to mining and development. Later I moved to the regional movement, and also to broader issues than mining, as became clear through the broad ideas of development. Where in the last part I was particularly investigating the deeper meaning of the movement, of which resistance against mining is part.

1.4 Outline of thesis

In order to answer the research question, the structure of the thesis is as followed. Firstly, I will discuss the theoretical concepts, to understand and explain the underlying processes that take place in constructing the meaning of development. Besides describing these processes, I will show how development is a form of governmentality. Consequently, it becomes clear why development can be such a contested area and how power is regulated. Subsequent to these theoretical issues, I elaborate on the context. Here it becomes clear that the struggle over development is a national struggle between localities and the government. Further on, I will discuss the results of the investigation in three chapters through which the struggle is illustrated and interpreted. In the first empirical chapter, an image of the regional movement is sketched, where after in the second chapter I describe the different discourses of development. Moreover, in the third chapter the nature of the movement and its broader meaning, which I argue is an autonomy movement, will become clear. Together these chapters will provide the insights of how governmentality is contested. Finally in the conclusion, I will summarize the findings and discuss the answer of the research question.

⁸ These activist's NGOs are discussed in depth in chapter 3.

2. Theoretical Framework

To understand why mining and development are such contested subjects, and to give meaning to development processes in Aguacatán, a theoretical perspective is needed. The struggle over mining and therefore, the meaning of development, is an intersection between local and governmental interests. The people of Aguacatán resist to mining, whereas the government supports mining. While the core of the issue is between local and governmental, development is strongly related to power relations at the global level.

To comprehend these deeper meanings of development several subjects are treated. Firstly, development is placed in the global context. I will dismantle the meaning of development, so to clarify the implicit power differences which are related to different interpretations of development. The global historical relations underlying the concept will become clear, and thus the role of 'West'⁹ in constructing 'development'. Secondly, I will explain the manner in which development is constructed, at the local and global level. Because the meaning of development is constructed it is subjected to trends and changing power relations. Theories of discourse are used to grasp this fluidity. Herein, the practical consequences through which a discourse is solidified are discussed. Thirdly, I treat the debate between scholars over the interpretation of development and its relation to power. Thereafter, the concept of governmentality is explored, and attached to the idea of development. Lastly, I reveal how development, and thus governmentality, is encountered by the 'underdeveloped'.

2.1 *Development*

2.1.1 *The global use and meaning of development*

According to Arturo Escobar the idea of development as a global necessity can be traced back in the period shortly after the Second World War. Following the speech of President Harry S. Truman, the 'West' seemed to realize that a great part of the world, the 'Third World' was poor. He stated that with 'our' scientific advances we could help the underdeveloped areas and overcome their poverty, being poor was defined through economical indicators. International organizations such as the UN realized that great differences between poor and rich could bring instability, thus to prevent new wars the situation had to change. (Escobar, 1995: 21-23) The solution seemed obvious; to ameliorate the deteriorated countries, a process of development was needed. This meant to become

⁹ The 'West' is defined as the global dominant, rich countries, also described by the 'North' and 'South' divide. Throughout the paper I will use 'Third World' to generalize the often marginalized countries, poor by socio-economic and geo-political standards. Guatemala is part of this so called Third World.

as prosperous and developed as the West, radical changes in the social and economic affairs of the 'poor' country had to be made. (Escobar, 1988: 429, Tsing, 2005: 21) Consequently the ideas of development are largely based in Western ethnocentric assumptions. The West assumes they are most developed, implicitly meaning they are somehow better and the rest should become like the West. The government of Guatemala shares this idea of development, as demonstrated in the context chapter.

The assumptions described above within development are explained by modernization theory. In this theory a distinction between traditional and modern is made. One society is determined as 'traditional' and another as modern. Here traditional means the lower end of the evolutionary ladder. The 'traditional' societies ought to become modern, which essentially means becoming like the West. Thus development in the post WOII context is equated with modernization. (Hobart, 1993: 6) From this point of view a parallel can be drawn. Just as the traditional is needed in opposition to the modern, the underdeveloped is necessary to determine what developed is.

Escobar coined this construction of the underdeveloped, the making of the Third World. Diverse cultures and societies were homogenized as underdeveloped and so the developed countries were created. (Nustad, 2001: 480) As 'developed' countries, these countries knew how to become developed and were able to solve the poverty problem and other problems associated with underdevelopment. The Western model was considered the ideal model for the third world. (Metoyer, 1996: 324)

To understand development in a global context, the above interpretations are accentuated. The argumentation line made by Escobar displays the bottom line; the West needed the underdeveloped in order to be the better part of the world, providing opportunities for the West to 'help' others. Whether the development apparatus is based in altruistic reasons, or is deliberately meant to broaden Western hegemony, is irrelevant. The reality is, development can be a Western power tool and has been used as such. In Guatemala, the interpretation of mining as development demonstrates these Western interests. To understand the opportunity to exercise power and the represented power relations within, I will analyse development as discourse below, herein providing examples of different discourses.

2.1.2 Development discourses

If the West can determine what developed is and what not, implies that there is a power differential between the West and the Third World. This also counts for other levels than the global level. In a local context are also actors or groups of actors, who influence more than others what development is. To appreciate development and its relation to power development, it can be studied as discourse, like most present anthropologists do. (Everett, 1997: 2) “A discourse identifies appropriate and legitimate ways of practising development as well as speaking and thinking about it.” (Grillo & Stirrat: 12). Thus by constructing the meaning of the discourse there is an opportunity to control. As such it becomes clear that a discourse is constructed in a context of power relations. Escobar states: “The production and circulation of discourses is an integral component of the exercise of power.” (Escobar, 1988: 430) Because the possibility to control within a discourse, giving meaning to the discourse is necessary to exert power.

Following the trend, throughout this study development is studied as discourse. By assessing development in terms of discourse, underlying power relations which shape the discourse can be found. Herein it is necessary to realise that several discourses can coexist, where one is dominant over others. An ongoing struggle over dominance of one discourse takes place. These discourses are related to actors which have an interest ‘their’ discourse. In the case of Guatemala this struggle over the meaning of discourse also takes place. Different actors desire their interpretation of development to be dominant, because through development the local situation is influenced. (Grillo & Stirrat: 12).

To analyse what discourses exist and what the dominant discourse is, the practical effects of a discourse should be studied. This means examining development practices, which are policies and development projects. For instance the policies and projects of the World Bank could be studied because it is a leading institution in development, and often followed by other development agencies. (Grillo & Stirrat, 1997: 14, 16, Escobar, 1995: 12) As a consequence it is an important actor in determining the discourse on a global level with local consequences. To understand the discourses in the local context of Guatemala other actors will be of greater importance. These are policies and projects of governmental organizations, the municipality and local development NGOs. It will be shown that the development discourse of the government often does not resonate with local visions of development. Therefore by assessing these discourses and interpreting the differences we will see how a dominant discourse, in this case of the government, is contested. For example, the government focuses on infrastructural projects, while other problems within the country are neglected. Other actors try to put the attention on these other problems as lack of

development. In the second empirical chapter concerning development this is discussed in more detail.

The practical side of development and its interpretations are fluid. This especially becomes clear through annual development reports of the World Bank. These change in focus over the years.¹⁰ Different discourses within have dominated the discourse of the World Bank at different times. I discuss only certain ideas of development in order to study the power of development in Guatemala. One perspective is more based on neoliberal ideas of development, such as industrialising and economic growth. (Allen & Thomas, 2000: 26-28) That is the vision of the Guatemalan government and its institutes which is related to multinational corporations, this link is showed in the context chapter. Where on the other hand there is the local perspective, which are more diverse depending on locality and where generally a wider interpretation of development exists.

The first, neoliberal, perspective can be divided in two main tendencies. Firstly development is roughly equated with industrialization. The proportion of industrialization in a country is proven to be positively related with the growth of Gross National Product (GNP). (Chataway & Allen, 2000: 512-513) This demonstrates the underlying economical reasoning; a growing GNP leads to a growing overall economical prosperity of the population. Within this reasoning we can also find another related assumption; development is poverty alleviation, though poverty is here defined in its smallest sense: as lack of income. Consequently, companies will inevitably bring development through their monetary input for the local, and therefore poverty alleviation and development, as the national economic growth is expected to trickle down to the local. However, the earlier sketched idea is not the only possible discourse of a multinational. The basic tenets are similar, but could be broader. Workers could for instance be educated or provided healthcare. The key is that these projects are also indirectly related to profit of the company. That is what is inherent in the development idea of the company. Development can only be possible if the corporation profits, the company needs to 'develop' as well. This is the case in Guatemala, the company profits the most from the development which mining is supposed to bring.

A local or national alternative discourse of development could be surprisingly different. As already became clear in policies of development agencies, development has more dimensions than the economical aspect. The local idea of development might emphasise other issues. It could be grounded in agriculture instead of industrialization for instance. Certain agricultural communities in Columbia define development in relation to land. To them development means fertile land, a market

¹⁰ www.worldbank.com, Here the annual development reports can be viewed and can be concluded that these are subjected to trends.

near to sell products and education based in better use of land. (Gow, 2008: 79) As we will see this also counts for a number of people in Guatemala.

The above interpretation of development is still in material terms. Local development ideas could also seem entirely irrational to Western spectators. They are positioned in the dominant cultural framework, while the local idea can be based on an entirely different cultural framework, which does not echo to the dominant cultural framework. For instance in the case of a holy place, it can be expected that the local believers would not want to exploit this place, even if it would lead to large profits. The inhabitants give a spiritual meaning to a territory, based on their culture. Thus they would not sell this land. In Guatemala this is often the case, for the indigenous people some places are connected to their ancestors. From another cultural perspective and more pragmatic point of view, these indigenous people could be framed as not willing to develop.

Imagine a given situation would be as sketched above; two parties, a local population and a multinational, have conflicting ideas of development. These ideas are incompatible, both are based in entirely different frames of meaning and want their version as the version. The local actors are affected by the activities of the multinational in their area and thus want a saying. On the other hand, the multinational has economical interests in the same area. To push through the idea, the earlier pronounced power struggle takes place. The multinational legitimises their planned actions as development and will draw on the western dominant economical ideas. Thus basically it becomes a representation of Western interests or power. While the local population draws on other articulations and power bases.

Below I will explain the perspectives and interpretations of the meaning of development and also the gap between local ideas and Western ideas.

2.1.3 Different perspectives on the instrumental use of development

I will treat several theories of the instrumental use of development because in academic circles disagreement exists over to what extent development is a power tool. This is strongly related to the earlier explained idea, the construction of developed and underdeveloped. There are three perspectives of development. In the first development is merely seen as Western tool of dominance. Secondly, also as Western power instrument but complemented by the possibility as power tool to a national elite. Lastly, in the third perspective it is argued that besides these perspectives, the local can also use development. Thus the primary academic disagreement is based upon whether development could also be an instrument for the local or not. In the empirical chapters it will be

demonstrated that the local can utilise the concept of development.

The first perspective led by Escobar, interprets the Western discourse of development as most dominant and essentially a mean to exercise Western power.(Escobar, 1995: 9) He explains development as vehicle to implement 'Western economy'. This is divided in a system of production, a system of power, and a system of significations. Development is seen as a continuation of colonialism. Under the resort of developing, the third world becomes ruled and neocolonised. Just as in the time of colonization where colonising was justified through the 'white man's burden', here it becomes the moral duty of the developed to ameliorate the negative aspects of the underdevelopment. (Escobar, 1988: 438, 1995: 9, Hobart, 1993: 1-2)

Ferguson studies the discourse of development through the policy of the World Bank. He has a more nuanced view about the development. According to him, it is not just of use for the West but could also be used by national actors. He does agree that development is a tool to expand bureaucratic state power and emphasises the de-politicizing effects within development. Political issues are described in a technocratic manner under the scope of development. (Ferguson, 1994:180 –181, Li, 1999: 297, Nustad, 2001: 481) For example social problems related to unequal distribution of goods could be explained by lack of income. The result could be measurements to facilitate more labour opportunities, ignoring the inequality problem. A political problem, the unequal society, is neglected and explained in a technical manner.

As development de-politices, coined by Ferguson 'the anti-politics machine' development then has a broader meaning than just imposed and invented by the 'West' to serve Western capitalist interests. By emphasising development as a Western project the role of national actors is left out. Just as international development agencies can serve for geopolitical interests of one country so can a national government, representing small elite, adopt development for their own means. (Ferguson, 1994: 181) Again using the example of inequality; a rich elite in a country where the majority is poor may find it very useful to explain the poverty problems without considering the role of unequal distribution. In that manner responsibility is avoided.

Ferguson, Escobar, Hobart together with others emphasise the negative consequences of development, whether intended or not. This leads them to advocate alternatives to development instead of alternative development. (Escobar, 1995: 215) This view is criticised because then agency of local, less powerful actors, is neglected. The vision of a hegemonic discourse of development intended to dominate and top-down is seen as too simplistic and essentialising development itself by Grillo and other scholars. Simplistic, because the dynamics in policies of the World Bank and other development agencies are ignored; these policies are also subjected to

changing discourses. The reaction on this stance is that the manner it is acted out does not change the underlying goal. Secondly, as essentialising because by envisioning development as a political tool to dominate, the affected are portrayed as powerless or even incapable subjects. In that sense, implicitly agreeing with the Western idea of the incapable undeveloped. This rigidity of the developers and the developed leaves no room for exchange of power in between and influence of bottom-up. (Grillo, 1997: 20, 21, Everett, 1997: 138, Gow, 2008: 4)

These debated issues lead to the distinction between advocates of alternatives to development and proponents of alternative development. The scholars studying local alternative development stress the agency within the institutions and of the local actors. Development institutions can be changed or even manipulated to do what is said they intent to do; develop. Gow stresses that even when in academic circles development might be called for a stop, the reality is development will be propagated both by local and international actors. (Gow, 2008: 4) He studies how local marginal groups, the underdeveloped, influence development processes and set their agenda. Herein is demonstrated that the development apparatus can be influenced by local actors. In this study of Gow it is also the local who influences in their manner the dominant idea of development. In the empirical chapters we will see this also counts for my research in Guatemala. I will show that the public opinion can be won and thus other ideas of development can gain support, thus influencing dominant ideas of development.

2.1.4 Converging perspectives on development

To recapitulate, the manner in which development and its meaning should be studied is debated. Scholars do agree that development is a powerful tool to initiate social change and is too much a Western power project to appropriate Western values and modes of organising. (Metoyer, 1996: 324) They also agree that there is a gap between the Western idea of development and the local idea of development. But there is a continuum between seeing development as imposed, Western and thus harmfully, towards a more dynamic vision of development where the local influence and local willingness to development is emphasised. This is divided in proposing an alternative to development, thus ending the influence of the West and alternative development, which is about local ways of doing development and not breaking with development institutions. Both are based on another critique, that development is too much based on scientific (Western) knowledge instead of local knowledge. (Ferguson 1994, Escobar 1995, Gow, 2008: 4, Grillo & Stirrat: 7, 14, Hammergren, 1999: 181) A last remark is that the theoretical perspective of most studies is based in a Foucauldian manner of studying discourse.

Foucault's theories of power are useful to explain more profoundly how development works as power tool and also how it is debated. He emphasises that ideally subjects incorporate the ideas of the power holder, often a government. (Burchell et al, 1991) Development is one of such ideas. It is often essentially a Western power project which, whether intended or not, primarily benefits the West and dominates the Third World. Although it is false to perceive development as singularly imposed upon its subjects. The subjected need to incorporate the idea of development and here lays an opportunity; they can manipulate the ideas of development. Thus they do influence the discourse of development, though the degree of influence differs. Therefore through influencing the discourse they exercise power. Below I discuss how the concept of governmentality explains the Western dominance or dominance of a government, and the influence or power of subjects of development in shaping development.

2.2 Governmentality

2.2.1 What is governmentality and how does it relate to development?

Governmentality is a concept founded by Michel Foucault. (Burchell et al, 1991) The concept has widely and broadly been applied to explain power relations and contemporary power relations in society. Tania Li explains governmentality as: '*Foucault's shorthand for the emergence of a distinctive, modern form of power which seeks to govern or regulate the conditions under which people live their lives; the rationality that renders the activity of government thinkable to its practitioners, those on whom it is practiced; and the concentration of government in the (expanded) apparatus we have come to call "the state".*' (Li, 1999: 296) This definition grasps concisely what is meant by governmentality, though it does not convey interpretations of governmentality of other actors than the state. Governmentality does not need to be based in a state entity, it can be concentrated other entities. For instance, the transnational apparatus of development.

To further elucidate how development is governing, I will use Astrid Ulloa's definition of eco-governmentality, adapted to development. The international environmental community has similar characteristics as the international development community. Therefore it is a definition of the governmentality of development. That is; all policies, discourses, representations, knowledges and practices (local, national and transnational) that interact with the purpose of directing social actors to think and behave in particular manners towards specific ends. In this a wide range of agents (development organisations, social actors, activists, etc.) are in a process of regulating and directing social actions according to logics and discourses that contribute to the global conception of development. (Ulloa, 2005: 6)

Development can be seen as a form of governmentality because under the scope of development, subjects are directed to behave in a particular manner and towards specific ends. (Ulloa, 2005: 6) These local subjects also participate in the shaping of the governmentality of development, but they are subordinate to more powerful actors. Development subjects are governed to do what the 'developed' tell them to do, which is becoming developed. Thus, mining is development because the 'developed' pronounce it as development; this stance is taken over by the government of Guatemala. The government tries make its subjects integrate this idea, thus seeing the mining activities as progress. The goal of the governmentality of development is that the underdeveloped incorporate the ideas of the dominant, whom articulate what their actions should be. This aim is not always successful, below I will address of how governmentality is contested and resisted.

2.2.2 Resisting governmentality

Because the struggle over discourses of development is a deeper struggle over power, a "development" project becomes a political arena. (Li, 1999: 297) In Guatemala this political arena is the issue of mining. Because we are speaking of a political arena, the struggle against the dominant development discourse has to be explained in relation to other political processes. The process of unmaking development as phrased by Escobar starts by articulating alternatives to the Western development discourse. According to Escobar the key in alternatives to development are cultural differences. Through their cultural traits, local groups can reconceptualise the meaning of development, and engage in ways of organising other than capitalism or 'modernity' (Escobar, 1995: 225)

The local communities who articulate their vision of development engage in a process of combining 'traditional' and 'modern' values. The idea of Western development is related to other processes such as modernization and democratization. Through demanding facets of a modern state, such as participation, democratization and indigenous rights, they can acquire the right to permeate dominant values with their own cultural or traditional values. (Gow, 2008: 12) By doing so indigenous people change their own identities and their relationship within the structure of power. (Ulloa, 2005: 3) In relation to mining this is illustrated by emphasising it brings damage, reasoning from a 'traditional', in the sense of indigenous, worldview. This indigenous view is connected to issues which are accepted modern values such as international conventions on indigenous rights. In Aguacatán this means that inhabitants claim their indigenous right to judge development, by their worldview, thus judging that it is not development.

Another aspect in the resistance of development is that local people connect with processes in the West, often combining local and global processes. Instead a dichotomy between the West and the Third World the dominant development frame and alternative developments are both based deterritorialised nodes. (Escobar, 1995: 225) A transnational connection between local and global actors helps to form more powerful alliances. They form processes of globalization from below instead of the expected picture of a “top-down” globalization. Just as the international organizations such as the World Bank exercise power on a global scale. The local can also establish these transnational connections and become part of a transnational network. Here the local actors draw on a network of transnational governmentality. (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002: 990) Through these connections they form a liable resistance. For example, indigenous people use international environmental laws or international environmental NGOs, for their intertwining goals. (Ulloa, 2005: 4-5) In the case of a mine the local population states that the mine is not according international regulations, supported by an international NGO instead of just stating they do not want the mine.

In relation to the governmentality of development it then becomes clear, that through resistance, its power can be undermined and its meaning shaped. The underdeveloped are engaging in a process which can be seen as their version of governmentality. They incorporate parts and manipulate the Western development discourse, but as a mean to exercise their power. We see that in this manner they are breaking down Western power structures and form their governmentality through the same or similar institutions. They contest the governmentality and demand autonomy. The last empirical chapter treats the framing of the movement and enlightens why the struggle over development is a struggle for autonomy. Now, the context is discussed, I show the struggle over development is waged throughout the country and exemplified in several environmental issues.

3. Context

Guatemala is a 'developing' country. Based on the earlier explained theory; it should follow the Western model of development, in order to develop. (Metoyer, 1996: 324) The country needs to move from the 'traditional' towards the 'modern'. (Hobart, 1993: 6) It is this vision that is taken by the Guatemalan government, the country desires to make up to the development in the West. In order to achieve that, a range of changes take place. Large projects such as mining, hydro-electric plants, oil exploitation and highways are planned or constructed. These projects are supported or initiated by the national government and often executed by multinational companies. (Krenmayr & Mérida, 2010) ¹¹ This illustrates the discourse of the Guatemalan government, to them this kind of projects are development.

The changes brought by these projects bring tensions; in the territories where those projects are intended, the government is confronted with local unwillingness. A large part of the local inhabitants do not agree with the idea of development which the government has in mind. They try to change or stop the plans. In their resistance, two factors play an important role; the majority of the local population is indigenous and the civil war has left its marks. These issues provide a context of the manner how the development is confronted, the area has a history of struggle (Kobrak, 2003) and this is the latest struggle. Again the local population is resisting the government. This time not armed and violently, but in another area, the area of development. The local people are confronting development governmentality, and this especially comes forward in the resistance to mining.

Below I will provide a broad picture of the development issues in Guatemala. Illustrated with a few examples, we will see that throughout the country the development discourse of the government is confronted. This comes forward most vividly in the issue of mining, therefore I will discuss a few key issues related to the first mine in Guatemala. By assessing these negative consequences, it can be understood why the resistance against plans for new mines is so strong.

¹¹ Interview Ceiba Chimaltenango

3.1 Exploitation of natural resources in Guatemala

In order to trace back the problems surrounding the mining issue in Guatemala I will start at the change of the mining law in 1997. The political situation in Guatemala was more or less stabilised after 36 years of civil war. To attract foreign investments the mining regulations were revised. Companies were allowed to be hundred percent foreign, had to pay one percent instead of six percent in tax revenues, import taxes on equipment were abolished and water could be used for free. (VandenBroucke, 2008: 5) Together with increasing prices of natural resources it became very profitable for transnational mining companies to start digging in Guatemala.

The altering of the mining law was part of the structural adjustment programs proposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. (Sandt, 2009: 11) This law was changed without the mandatory *consultations* of local communities. (Fulmer et al, 2008: 99) Structural adjustment programs are based upon the neoliberal ideas of free market policies leading to economical growth. It is assumed that the economical growth will also trickle down to the poor parts of the population. (Hewitt, 2000: 302) Thus development is seen purely as economical growth, combined with steps towards a neoliberal economical system. Through this reasoning the foreign investments and projects are justified. Implicitly it shows that a certain idea of development, which mainly affects a part of the population, is dominant.

The investments are broader than mining alone. The government desires to maximise the profits from the natural resources of Guatemala. That is, resources such as forests, water, minerals and oil. To profit from Guatemala's natural richness changes need to be made, according to the government. Forests are cut, hydro electric dams planned, mining licenses given and oil exploited. Especially the Ministry of Energy and Mines¹² (MEM) plays a large role in these changes. On the website of the MEM is some information concerning the present ideas and projects. The vision of the MEM is that through contributing to the development in energy, the economical and social standards of the country will increase.¹³ This should be done with the end goal of economical, social and environmental sustainability.¹⁴ Thus their perspective is that these changes contribute to development. A kind of development based upon exploiting natural resources and thus industrializing the country. Social and environmental sustainability are mentioned as goals, though as we see below it is especially the economical sustainability which has priority. They support the classical ideas of development as mentioned in the theory, that is national economical growth, based

¹² *Ministerio de la Energía y Minas*

¹³ *Visión: Coadyuvar al desarrollo energético para fortalecer el crecimiento económico y social del país.*
<http://www.mem.gob.gt/Portal/Home.aspx?secid=14>

¹⁴ *Misión: Contribuir al desarrollo energético sustentable, impulsando el suministro y utilización eficiente y competitiva de la energía eléctrica, de las energías renovables, y de los usos pacíficos de la energía nuclear, con la finalidad de apoyar la sustentabilidad económica, social y ambiental del país.*"

on large industrial projects. (Allen & Thomas, 2000: 26-28) The ideas of the Guatemalan government in regard to development are discussed more profound in the chapter on development discourses.

3.2 Communities opposing the exploitation of natural resources

Throughout the country we see that local communities have another perspective considering such projects. On the 17th of May 2010 tensions arose in Nebaj, a village in the province of Quiché. The inhabitants blocked the passage of vehicles from the company which constructed a hydro electric dam. They do not think the project brings benefits to the community. For instance, there has been damage to houses and infrastructure consequently to the construction activities. The inhabitants want this to be repaired, stating that if the company does not comply with their demands, they shall not pass. (Ren, 2010) Here it is proved that the social sustainability, as mentioned by the MEM, is not that vital. Negative social consequences such as damaged houses are not resolved. Thus for the community of Nebaj the hydro electric dam is not development, their discourse of development does not comply with the governmental discourse.

Another example is in the national park *Laguna del Tigre* in the province of El Péten. 6000 signatures have been offered to the president, on the 13th of May 2010, requesting to suspend the plans of exploiting in this area. (Prensalibre.com) Just as in March the same year a public statement was made by civil society organizations in El Péten where they speak out against the exploitation of oil in the present manner. Complaints of misinformation and pressuring are made, and asked for proper mechanisms where people are informed in advance of projects. The local communities are not consulted, just as with the Marlin mine. (Advertisement Prensa Libre) It is an example of neglecting the environmental sustainability, as it is planned in a national park. Besides, it shows lack of social sustainability. Local participation is suppressed. Their alternative discourse of development is not taken in account; therefore they have turned to other tactics to shape the governmentality towards their interests.

Last but not least is the issue of mining. The government, supported by the World Bank (Fulmer et al., 2008: 93), sees mining as development, however, the majority of the local populations does not to agree. This clash between visions specifically comes forward in the problematic consequences of the Marlin mine, the first mine after the change of the mining law. Below, I will describe several contested issues which are related to the Marlin mine, these disagreements are based on different perspectives on development. They illustrate the underlying power struggles over governmentality.

3.3 *The consequences of mining*

The first issue of contestation, regarding the mine, is the supposed economical benefits for the poor. The Goldcorp Company is the largest taxpayer in Guatemala, through the state revenues on mining. (Paley, 2008: 10) Consequently, it certainly contributed to the national economy. Still, it is false to assume that this has a positive effect on the local situation. The revenues for the local municipalities are negligible, the free usage of water is one reason. The main benefit for the local communities is supposed to lay in the employment opportunities. At the construction of the mine a lot of local workforce was used, but open pit mining is not labour intensive and for the greater part higher skilled personnel is needed. Because most local people are uneducated farmers, only 160 local jobs are provided. (Vandenbroucke, 2008: 32, Koehl, 2007: 31, Fulmer et al, 2008: 93)

The second issue of contestation is about the environmental impact of the mining. Key problems usually related to open pit mining include deforestation, erosion and a large need of water. Together with the use of large amounts of cyanide, it is considered one of the most polluting activities in the world. (Vandenbroucke, 2008: 16, Paley, 2008: 3) However, Guatemala has legislation to protect the environment. In order to start a mine project, an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) has to be done. Yet, two sorts of critics exist regarding the EIS. Firstly, they are seen as not feasible, no specific instruction exists, on what should to be studied. Besides, the time to review and to object is 30 days. Secondly and specifically the EIS of the Marlin Mine has been criticised for being unrealistic. Among others, it does not discuss the impact of the water use in a water scarce area and it does not treat the possibility of cyanide leakage and the necessary extra protection. (Moran, 2004: 10)

These critics contrast with the company's statement, as the Marlin Mine received its International Cyanide Code Certification in 2009. Chuck Jeannes, Goldcorp President & Chief Executive Officer, proclaimed '*Marlin's certification highlights Goldcorp's ongoing commitment to maintaining the highest possible standards of environmental stewardship*' (Goldcorp) At this very moment, stories of sicknesses and contaminated food in the area of the Marlin mine can be heard.¹⁵ It is hard to believe that development encompasses sicknesses and contaminations, it does not resonate with what the local people see as development. From their perspective a clean nature is part of development, which we will see in the chapter on development discourses.

¹⁵ Common answer on the question what the consequences of mining are: sicknesses, contamination. Interviews with member Junta, mining license village, Asamblea etc.

3.4 A national movement

The earlier illustrations of communities opposing exploitation show how actual and broad the movement against the development ideas of the government is. On the 22nd of April 2010 this was especially illustrated. At this date was the international day of earth. Throughout Guatemala manifestations, marches and roadblocks were organised. The roads to the Marlin mine were blocked and the Inter Americana highway was also blocked. There was also a small roadblock of around 150 people in Huehuetenango this day. Banners were raised against mining, hydro-electric plants and environmental destruction as a whole. The people also complained about the price hikes which are blamed to the free trade agreement of Guatemala with the US and Mexico.¹⁶ It is illustrative here that although mining was the key reason to protest, the agenda was broadened to other aspects as well. The population articulated they want another kind of development. In the third empirical chapter I discuss how the national movement is characterised and how the attempts to shape the governmentality are articulated. We shall see that the movement is inherently political and resists to the governmentality of the government and the West.

3.5 Licenses and consultas

The movement which is confronting the governmentality of development is especially articulated through the discontent people have with mining. At the moment there are not many mines in Guatemala, though there are 408 licences for new mines throughout the country. (MEM) These licences are divided in three kinds, recognition, exploration and exploitation licences. To start exploiting, a process starting by a recognition license and ending with an exploitation license needs to be completed. 273 exploitation licences exist at present, (MEM) therefore in the near future more mining can be expected.

In the department Huehuetenango is one licence for recognition, eighteen for exploration and 20 for exploitation. (Krenmayr & Mérida, 2010: 29) To prevent these licences from becoming an actual mining project, the population is organising. This is illustrated, by similar examples as mentioned before, that is, protests, advertisements, but also *consultas*. Particularly the *consulta* is a key instrument to organise against these plans.

In a *consulta* inhabitants of an administrative area are asked to vote 'yes' or 'no' to a certain subject, in this case whether they want a mine nearby or not. In Huehuetenango 28 *consultas* in 28 municipalities have been held. Only four municipalities have not yet had a *consulta* and plans are

¹⁶ Own observation on 22th of April in Buenos Aires, Huehuetenango. I have pictures of the different banners, see appendix

made to also organise them here.¹⁷ The results of these 28 *consultas* are striking, 373,980 persons voted no, 109 in favour. (Krenmayr & Mérida, 2010: 72) Notable in the *consultas* is that many minors and women have voted. The reason for minors being allowed to vote is supported from the point of view that it is especially about their future. (Krenmayr & Mérida, 2010: 75)

In Aguacatán the *consulta* took place at the third of October 2008. 23.523 persons voted against mining, while zero voted yes. (Krenmayr & Mérida, 2010: 72) This is a proportion of around 47 % of the whole population, 49.631 people live in Aguacatán (Camposeco et al, 2008: 16) In the first empirical chapter a more profound description of the *consulta* in Aguacatán is sketched, herein the organizational aspects and participants are treated. Besides that, the movement in Huehuetenango is discussed and the national and international features of the movement addressed.

The resistance in Aguacatán is strong. Nobody voted for the mining, and I did not meet people who wanted mining activities. At the roadblock, the people from Aguacatán were also fierce. Each regional group got appointed a side of the junction, at some sides cars were still passing through, but at the Aguacatán side nobody passed. The people of the villages where mines are planned, are determined in opposing the development governmentality. Even though plans to build mines are not suspended, how this tense situation between local and governmental interests meeting in the power struggle over mining, will develop remains unclear. High interests for both parties are at stake. In the next chapters the present situation shall be described. The local movement against mining and related issues are discussed, just as the different visions of development. Lastly, the broader meaning of the movement shall be discussed.

¹⁷ Coordinator Asamblea

4. The *consulta*: How local becomes global

This chapter discusses the community consultations, *consulta comunitarias*. The *consulta* is a legally supported act to consult communities about a specific issue. (Fulmer et al, 2008: 101) Throughout the country *consultas* have been held, of which most internationally known, the *consultas* with regard to the Marlin mine. In Huehuetenango *consultas* have been used to speak out against mining licenses and planned hydro-electric dams. The *consulta* in Aguacatán is an example of these. Below, I will employ the *consulta* in two facets. Firstly, the deeper meaning of the *consulta* is explained, to illustrate how the *consulta* is a primary tool to contest governmentality. The second purpose is describing the movement by means of the *consulta*. Starting at the local level a picture of the broader movement will be sketched. We will see that the resisting of mining and related issues is not merely a local affair; it is connected regionally, nationally and even internationally. The reason for this connectivity is that governmentality is also represented at several levels, hence, a resistance at different levels is also needed to contest governmentality.

4.1 The meaning of the *consulta*

The primary tool to oppose mining in Guatemala and thus to oppose the dominant development ideas is the *consulta*, therefore the *consulta* is a device to contest governmentality. As a coordinator of Asamblea states: “The *consultas* are a form of direct democracy and an act of prevention”¹⁸ They provide a democratic tool to prevent changes in the local situation, organized in an indigenous manner¹⁹ (Fulmer et al, 2008: 101) and legally supported by indigenous rights. That is the ILO 169 convention, which is ratified by the Guatemalan government. (Fulmer et al, 2008: 102) The *consulta* provides insights of in which manner governmentality is contested, i.e. traditional and modern values are combined. The population demands a facet of the modern state, indigenous rights, but also bases it in their cultural framework in organizing it in their specific cultural way. (Gow, 2008: 12) Thus it finds resonance in the 'modern', that is, the government and the international community, besides that it also resonates in the traditional. The local people give meaning to the *consulta* through their cultural traits.

Beside the higher analytical function of the *consulta* as contesting governmentality, other more practical meanings also provide explanations for its prominence as strategy in resisting governmental ideas. Firstly, it creates the possibility of articulating either discontent or content. A local population has the opportunity to speak out in a democratic manner over a certain subject.

¹⁸ Cedfog meeting

¹⁹ Coordinator Asamblea, Carlos (key informant)

Hence, it is a participatory mechanism, giving voice to the community. Secondly, a role lies in unifying the population. Certainly it could also split a community, however in the case of mining it unifies whole villages against the issue. Actors which normally have many different interests are joined for one cause. A third aspect is that it helps to construct relations and connection between the actors. At the local, as they need to work together in organising, but also at the higher, regional, level where the organizational capacities and experiences lie. Lastly, a role lies in drawing attention, but more importantly in the reification of an opinion. A *consulta* documents the outcome and therefore factualises the opinion in time, supported by law and culture.

4.2 Asamblea

In de region of Huehuetenango especially one organization is of key importance in the resistance against mining and other environmental issues. This is *Asamblea*²⁰; the Departmental assembly to defend the renewable and non-renewable natural resources of Huehuetenango. From now on I will use Asamblea to refer to this organization. The primary aim of Asamblea is the coordination and organization of *consultas* throughout Huehuetenango. In this they keep track of approved mining licenses and where these are. This information is communicated to the affected community and if they want Asamblea will help organising against the mining.²¹ Except for the first five *consultas* all *consultas* in Huehuetenango have been organised by Asamblea.²² Herein their exact role ranges from actively to advising or observing. (Krenmayr & Mérida, 2008: 38) To understand better how the *consultas* are organised, the situation in Aguacatán is described below. Hereafter Asamblea and related organizations are assessed more profoundly, to acquire a better picture of the situation. The earlier pronounced functions of the *consulta* are also illustrated.

4.3 Local organization of the *consultas*

The situation in Aguacatán is an example which, neglecting that specific local situations differ, can be generalised to the whole of Huehuetenango. In 2007 Communities in Aguacatán were informed by people of Asamblea that mining licenses for exploratory activities were given in their territory. These licences are in the areas of Cantzela and Llano Coyote.²³ Although the planned area of the licenses is known, a lot of information remains unclear. For instance, it is unknown when the company comes. This is also a reason why people are very suspicious when a foreigner asks about

²⁰ *Asamblea departamental por la defensa de los recursos naturales renovables y no renovables de Huehuetenango*

²¹ Coordinator Asamblea

²² Cecilia Merida, Ceiba chimaltenango

²³ http://www.mem.gob.gt/portal/MEMDocuments/DGM/CatastroEnLinea/DerechosMinerosEnSolicitud/marzo_2009/ot_huehue.pdf

mining.²⁴

When the local people knew about the license, they organized a meeting between fourteen communities of the affected areas, in order to make a decision. It was then that all determined they do not want mining in their area. The board of directors of the environmental council in Aguacatán, the Junta²⁵ was a fact. Every municipality which had a *consulta*, has a local Junta to form a connection to the department. All Junta's are represented in the Asamblea. The Junta initiates and coordinates the organization of the *consulta* at the local level. In Aguacatán the starting point was 21st of September 2007. 72 communities needed to be informed and represented in the Junta. In order to achieve that a diverse range of actors worked together and these were coordinated by the Junta.²⁶

This broad range of actors consists of many civil society organizations. As several informants proclaimed "everybody is unified against the mining except for the banks."²⁷ Although often the different interests of the institutes and organizations lead to disagreements, the *consulta* brought together these diverse actors. Each of the organizations had its role, using their specific qualities. For instance the students of a local indigenous language institute helped with administration. A cooperative supported by arranging an office for meetings and providing juridical advice. The church was also involved, they offered a room for meetings in the pastoral house and the pastor himself spoke on the radio.²⁸

The role of the municipality is a different type. Politically they do not choose side in the issue of mining, which is also the official position of the *Partido Patriota*, which is the dominant party. Still, the mayor did accept the holding of a *consulta*, which is a requirement to hold a *consulta*. Besides, they provided financial support, they paid the majority of the costs needed to organise the *consulta*. The position of the municipality is interesting because it is the connection between the government and the local population. According to representatives of the municipality the reason that only financial help is provided, is that legally the municipality is not allowed to take an anti-governmental stance.²⁹ Legally, this is a complex issue, because the municipality has far reaching autonomy in certain issues, but is also part of the government. It is unclear whether the municipality can take a stance against the government.³⁰ Presumably, the municipality does not hold this position because the government might cut of financial funds.

²⁴ Own experience. Confronted with suspiciousness in interviews and meetings.

²⁵ *Junta Directiva Consejo Ambiental de Aguacatán*

²⁶ Member of *Junta Directiva Consejo Ambiental de Aguacatán*.

²⁷ Representative of cooperative a trustee and councilor of municipality council, coordinator of Asamblea, among others

²⁸ Member of *Junta Directiva Consejo Ambiental de Aguacatán*.

²⁹ A trustee and councilor of municipality council 20-04-10

³⁰ Carlos Loarca speaks about this issue on his website <http://pluriculturalidadjuridica.blogspot.com>

The reaction to the neutral position of the municipality differs. Some state that the municipality supports their cause and is on their side, as the municipality paid for the costs.³¹ Others, for instance the representative of the Junta, proclaim that the municipality does not provide sufficient help for the local population: “The mayor is the representative of the people, he should be the voice of the people and tell the government Aguacatán does not want mining.” One of the civil servants explained the municipality is pressured by two sides, on the one hand the national government and on the other hand the local people.³² In the mining issue the municipality can take this stance, supported by the legal issue. Though in the broader issue of development the municipality needs to be active, they have a crucial role in local development. In the next chapter, discussing development discourse, this problematic position of being in between the local and the government will be elaborated.

4.4 What has been done with results

After the holding of the *consulta* several actions have been taken in order to increase the importance of the *consultas*. These actions were also done with support of Asamblea. In Aguacatán these were printed statements throughout the communities, offering the results to governmental institutes and a remembrance march.

First of all every village has a minute with the results of the *consulta*, this act is kept in the school or by community leaders. In such acts the names, signatures of the people who participated and the result of the *consulta* are written. As a participant of the Junta proclaimed, “When the mining company arrives, we will show them the documents and tell that we do not agree with mining activities in our area”.³³ Thus we see how the *consulta* provides an opportunity to solidify a public opinion.

Secondly, the results of the *consultas* were offered to governmental officials. The mayor of Aguacatán and the governor of Huehuetenango received the results. Besides that, the *consulta* organisers went together with the municipality of Soloma to the capital. Here they have been to the Congress, the Ministry of Energy and Mining (MEM) and the Supreme Court. Representatives of the Congress stated that they should have come with more people, “400 persons are not enough to take the issue seriously was the unofficial reaction, you should have come with 6000.” One of the *consulta* organizers stated that for the local people of Aguacatán a day to Guatemala City is an expensive affair, about 25 US dollars. He reacted that if the congress wants to see people, they

³¹ Carlos (key informant), member of cooperative

³² Administrator municipality, Cecilia Mérida

³³ Member of Junta

should come to Aguacatán. He suspected that it was just an excuse to ignore the *consulta*. The papers should speak for themselves.³⁴ The MEM did not state an official reaction. The people of Soloma and Aguacatán wished to speak with its minister, however they could only speak with a representative of the MEM. The last institute which they visited, the Supreme Court, does not accept the results of the *consultas* as legitimate. (Fulmer et al, 2008: 100) The offering of these results to governmental institutes illustrates the contesting of governmentality. Through the *consulta* and its results they try to change the governmental stance. In part they succeed in their contesting of governmentality, as the local people do not agree to the governmental position. Not incorporating governmentality is the first step, though they have not yet succeeded in actually changing the governmental idea.

Another way of emphasising the importance of the *consulta* was the celebration exactly a year after. At this remembrance of the *consulta*, a forum and a protest march were organised. Many of the same organizations which organised *consultas*, participated in organising the event. With regard to the attendance, informants gave different numbers. Based on pictures there seem to be around 300 persons³⁵. People walked with banners, speaking out against mining and damage of the environment, on the main road of Aguacatán and through the village, to the forum. Here, among others, speeches were held by persons from Bolivia and Peru to show solidarity and to exchange experiences.³⁶

The celebration of *consultas* and offering the results to the political institutions are two examples of strategies in the resistance against mining. Every *consulta* people from Asamblea and local representatives have been to the capital to present the results. Next to organising *consultas* the Asamblea holds manifestations, roadblocks, makes banners against mining and tries to involve foreign or national experts and organizations to support their cause. They want to create awareness about the situation in Huehuetenango and also in Guatemala. The primary point of departure is non-violent action.³⁷ Thus the Asamblea is a significant actor in contesting the governmentality in this sense, by changing the minds of the people.

³⁴ Carlos (key informant)

³⁵ A few pictures are printed in the appendix, also see front image.

³⁶ Local NGO, Carlos (key informant)

³⁷ Cedfog meeting, Ceiba seminar, Coordinator Asamblea

4.5 *The organizations in the movement*

Although the *consultas* are the *raison d'être* of Asamblea their agenda is much broader. Issues in which they are involved, are environmental but also indigenous rights as the *consultas* are an exercise of indigenous rights. Other issues are for instance, the hydro-electrics, biodiversity issues and they are also involved in creating awareness about global warming. For Asamblea one of the main missions is informing and educating the people about environmental issues. In their aim they have successfully used the *consultas*. Often has been proclaimed that, the *consultas* are the reason that mining activities in Huehuetenango have been prevented.³⁸

As their name suggest, Asamblea is an assembly of several organizations. “Everybody should forget their flags and unify under the banner of Asamblea”.³⁹ Often groups with similar goals end up hindering eachother instead of cooperating, this should be prevented. Asamblea is the macro organization which brings together the different actors in Huehuetenango. Organizations that are involved change over time, the assembly is open to who is willing to participate. At present the main organizations are representing three geographical regions which are also the main linguistically similar. These are Maya Mam, Red Huista and Norte de Huehuetenango. Other organizations are part of these different clusters. (Krenmayr & Mérida, 2010: 48) Beside these there are the juntas of different municipalities, like the one in Aguacatán. Other examples are organizations for the rights of women and local church organizations⁴⁰

Asamblea is part of a larger organization, namely the Council of the Western Peoples, CPO⁴¹. The CPO consists of five departments in the Western share of Guatemala, namely: Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango, San Marcos, Quiché, Totonicapán and Sololá. The role of CPO is similar to that of Asamblea, though on a higher level. CPO was established in the middle of 2008, with the aim of unifying the different movements in the eastern parts of the country and thus to form a stronger movement. At present the organization is still in a developmental stage, some departments have stronger movements than others. Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Quiché and Quetzaltenango each have a councils connecting to more local organizations. (Madreselva) At present in Totonicapán and Sololá a coordinative council as lacking. Through the expertise of the other departments, the CPO attempts to form a stronger resistance there as well.⁴²

³⁸ Cecilia Mérida, Ceiba Chimaltenango, coordinator Asamblea

³⁹ Cedfog meeting

⁴⁰ Cecilia Mérida

⁴¹ *Concejo de los Pueblos Occidente*

⁴² Ceiba Chimaltenango

We have seen how the local resistance connects to higher levels through different organizations. A presumably local act such as a *consulta* is connected through Asamblea, towards a more regional movement. Another organization which especially illustrates the connectivity is Ceiba⁴³. The association for the promotion and the development of the community. Ceiba is presented at the local level, for example they initiated the first five *consultas* in Huehuetenango, though they are also internationally connected. By organising the first *consultas* Ceiba was at the root of Asamblea and at present still involved. That Ceiba assisted the Asamblea to grow illustrates which role Ceiba often takes. When there is a certain issue and the local population wants to change it. Ceiba is the organization who can help in organising and supporting the cause.⁴⁴

Ceiba is an important actor on the national level, especially presented in the north-Western parts of Guatemala and at the coast. There are two branches of Ceiba. Firstly, Ceiba as development organization of which I will elaborate further in the fifth chapter, concerning development discourses. Secondly, as activists organization, the *incidencia politica* part. Loosely translated, that means actions to influence politics. Here the keywords are informing, articulating and sensibilisation. It is here where Ceiba supports people with social, economical and/or environmental problems. For instance they organise against large industrial projects such as mining and hydro electrics. Besides that, they organise workshops to educate people and create a more critical awareness.⁴⁵

The role Ceiba takes in the *incidencia politica* is similar to that of Asamblea, i.e. the coordination and organization of activism. Though while for the Asamblea the principal focus is Huehuetenango, Ceiba is more nationally and internationally connected. For instance, representatives of Ceiba have been to the alternative climate top in Bolivia and they are part of several Latin American organizations which are involved in a similar fight. For example, Friends of the earth, an international organization represented by 77 countries.⁴⁶

Another much younger organization is MOVIAC⁴⁷ the Central American movement of victims and affected of the global climate change. A Latin-American counterpart also exists. Moviac organises international meetings to speak about the often similar problems the participating countries have, in order to learn from each others experiences and form a front.⁴⁸ Moviac was launched in June 2008 and tries to pressure governments and to stand up for the unprotected, often

⁴³ *Asociación para la Promoción y el Desarrollo de la Comunidad*

⁴⁴ Cecilia Mérida, Ceiba Chimaltenango

⁴⁵ Ceiba chimaltenango

⁴⁶ <http://www.foei.org/en/who-we-are>

⁴⁷ *Movimiento de Centroamericano Víctimas, afectados y afectadas por el cambio climático*

⁴⁸ Seminar Ceiba, Ceiba Chimaltenango

marginalised victims of climate change. They consist of environmental organizations throughout Central America. (BBC Mundo)

A specific illustration of the leverage which is gained from international connections is the statement of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The ILO formulated the ILO 169 convention, concerning indigenous rights. They made an official statement, stating that the government of Guatemala should suspend all mining activities, as it is not in compliance with the conventions of indigenous law. On the 15th of April, a group of organizations published this statement in the national newspaper.⁴⁹ For them the support, unclear whether it has significance or not, shows the righteousness of their battle.⁵⁰ The international community judges that the government is not acting properly.

Concluding, we see that the movement against mining is not just local or national. It is connected to similar organizations throughout Latin America, in that sense basing its power in a transnational governmentality. The *consulta* and its related organizations therefore, form part of a much larger international environmental network. It is these networks which provide the opportunity to reach a larger and international public, thus providing opportunities to draw on power sources beyond the national boundaries. Through these connections, they move to a similar level of organizations such as the World Bank. This transnational organization has a large influence in Guatemala, as for instance it supported the Marlin mine financially. Therefore a movement such as Moviac can be seen as an attempt to counter this type of organization, representing another kind of transnational interests. It forms a resistance to governmentality, by acquiring power from another transnational governmentality. (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002: 990)

⁴⁹ Prensa Libre, A digital version of this advertisement is not available, I do have copy.

⁵⁰ Coordinator Asamblea

5. Development discourse: A contested area

“How can mining be development? How can contamination of nature be development? That's why we do not agree to mining, we don't want contamination, destruction and sicknesses.” About twenty men with hats and walking sticks, which means they are community leaders, are standing around me. The man who is almost shouting looks angry and the tranquillity of the beautiful mountain view on the background seems to be out of place. Some of the other men nod approvingly, others are just minding their own business. Some are calling, others are chatting to each other, while again several are listening or watching quietly. Next to me a man is trying hard to read my notes.

„51

After this man, others also state their opinion about mining and what they consider development. They come up with similar stories. As illustrated above, great dissatisfaction exist over how the government treats the people. Secondly, discontent in regard to the mining plans which are situated in this village. The community desires development, but not the kind of development the government offers. A gap between discourses of development is demonstrated. Local people have very different ideas than the government, in regard to how their communities should develop. This different ideas clash in the mining issue, here the gap is most vividly illustrated. In a broader sense, this show that the local discourse of development does not echo to that of the government. (Grillo & Stirrat, 1997)

Below I will sketch a general image of the different ideas of development. That is, development according to the government and its supporting institutes, the municipality and development to the local people. We will see that both the local and governmental have interests in pursuing their vision of development, for many actors wish to decide what happens to the locality. Consequently, tensions between the actors giving meaning to development arise. (Grillo & Stirrat: 12). These tensions are seen in the opposing of mining and other megaprojects, for instance in demonstrations and *consultas*.

It is especially the local discourse where a range of different interests meet, therefore the local discourse is very heterogeneous. Because of its fluidity, it is difficult to sketch an exact picture of the local discourse, even though, several tendencies can be found among this diverse population. Sometimes, what they understand as development is similar to the governmental idea. For instance, in the call for roads and other infrastructure, however, in most cases they have a different vision,

⁵¹ Village of mining license

which includes ideas on sustainable and integrated development, in relation to a protected environment. Not surprisingly, mining does not fit in this idea of development. In broad terms, development is spoken of as good living, the improvement of all aspects of life in harmony with nature.

5.1 Local discourse of development

5.1.1 Environment and Mayan Cosmo vision

One issue which is particularly important in the local perspective of development is the environment. Ecological protection and a sustainable relation with the environment are important aspects to the local inhabitants. Megaprojects which destruct or damage nature do not fit in this conception. In their view, mining does not contribute to development as the natural environment is irreversibly modified. The church leader proclaims: 'A human needs natural surroundings in order to live peacefully, mining destructs the nature'. Thus people desire development, but it should be sustainable with regard to nature. These opinions are largely rooted in the indigenous Mayan Cosmo vision. This indigenous cultural perspective of nature and the world, involves a special relation with nature. Nature should be treated with respect.⁵² (Fulmer et al, 2008: 94, Holdon & Jacobsen, 2008: 335) Next to the symbolic significance based on the Mayan Cosmo vision, key points in the environmental aspect of development are agriculture and reforestation.

Because the primary income of Aguacatán is obtained from agricultural activities, (Composeco et al, 2008: 53, 54) improvement of agriculture is an important facet of development. The majority of the people who live in Aguacatán are farmers, therefore they advocate better education for land use. 'We used to grow and export many vegetables, garlic, onion, corn and so on. Nowadays, we still do, but it was much more, a lot of the ground is exhausted or the opposite, full of chemicals. We need to learn how to grow better, we want to get education!'⁵³. Sustainable agriculture is frequently advocated in this request, i.e. organically grown vegetables and soil which is protected from exhaustion.⁵⁴

Another point is the issue of water. While water sources are available, more irrigation projects are needed in Aguacatán.⁵⁵ Availability of water is crucial to farmers in order to cultivate their plants. Therefore considering mining, water is especially an important matter. Stories circulate in Aguacatán, proven by an investigation, that water near the marlin mine is contaminated (COPAE,

⁵² Carlos (key informant)

⁵³ Cocode

⁵⁴ Local NGO, Carlos (key informant), meeting several development organisations

⁵⁵ Local NGO

2009). “We have heard from our brothers in San Marcos that the mine took their water, contaminated their sources and now even their children get sick”⁵⁶ Beside the problem of contamination, and disproportional use of water by a mine is often spoken about related deforestation.

Trees play an important role to many people in Aguacatán. In the area of Aguacatán many forests have been cut, for timber, but also in order to clear land. Trees keep the groundwater at level and prevent the hills from eroding.⁵⁷ To regain these functions, reforestation projects are desired by the local population. This request should be answered by the National Institute of Forests⁵⁸, INAB. According to national regulations chopped trees need to be compensated in another area. Even though, in Aguacatán only 20 people participate in such reforestation projects, comprising 40 hectares.⁵⁹ 40 hectares is not a lot for the size of the municipality, communities want compensation projects from earlier deforestation.

The proposition of the inhabitants of Aguacatán of more agriculture and more forests is hard to combine. A balance is needed. The farmers need to eat and make a living, but there should also be enough forests in order to be sustainable.⁶⁰ Several informants state the need for education, though in another aspect. “People need to learn that nature is vulnerable, we need to create this awareness”⁶¹ Many people complain about trash, lack of trees, and destruction of the nature as whole, though in practise do not everybody complies with these statements. For example, trees are still cut and trash thrown where they like. When I was walking in the mountains of Aguacatán, the path that was used most, was marked by trash on it and along the side, just as often people throw garbage out of the window in busses. One could ask, why mining is such an issue, while the nature is damaged anyway? Even though, a large part of the community is aware, but more is needed, therefore education is necessary. The NGOs want the people to incorporate certain ideas of development, they need to learn what is best for themselves, what development of their community is.

The emphasis on environmental awareness can be explained by practical factors, but also by the cultural background of the people. As I explained earlier the Mayan Cosmo vision plays an important role. A community leader explains: “The earth is like our mother, how could you bring damage to your own mother? Mother Earth gives food, and takes care of us, mother earth and the animals and plants which live on it need to be treated with respect.”⁶² In order to have a good

⁵⁶ Community leader speaking in the village of mining license, similar statements have been made by others.

⁵⁷ Carlos (keyinformant), Representative of cooperative

⁵⁸ INAB, Instituto Nacional de Bosques

⁵⁹ Representative INAB

⁶⁰ Churchleader

⁶¹ Local NGO, meeting development organizations

⁶² Village of mining license

relation with nature, complicated rules, related to the Mayan calendar exist. These rules guide the manner of how to treat the environment.⁶³ (Fulmer et al: 94, Holdon & Jacobsen, 2008: 335) The strong relation with the environment explains the kind of development which is called for. It also justifies the resistance against mining and other environmental unfriendly projects. “Such projects ‘kill’ Mother Earth, the flora and fauna disappears, the land cannot be cultivated, therefore Mother earth needs protection.”⁶⁴

5.1.2 *Desarrollo integral*

Even though the environment plays a major role in the local alternative discourse of development there are many other aspects. In interviews held with local actors a broad range of issues was mentioned. For example good healthcare, roads, electricity, schools, security and organizations which give opportunities to participate. Though it also counts from a social point of view. People should be able to live in peace and treat each other well. Development should be for the whole community and should be sustainable. By some respondents these subjects are put under the larger term of ‘*desarrollo integral*’, integrated development. Integrated development means progression in all aspects of life.⁶⁵ This is in opposition to the ‘*desarrollo gris*’, grey development. By grey development is meant a prominence in the construction of buildings, roads and other infrastructural projects. *Desarrollo integral* and *desarrollo gris* are illustrative of diverse discourses of development. The meanings are far apart, demonstrating the gap in local and national development ideas. (Gow, 2008: 4)

Some of the characteristics of integrated development are obvious, for instance schools and healthcare. Other qualities, such as participation and social cohesion are harder to grasp. One term is especially illustrating to understand the local idea of development: ‘*Buen vivir*’ which means good living.⁶⁶ Surely good living has personal aspects, and therefore it is more a concept of establishing opportunities so people can live well. Development is not just material.⁶⁷ *Desarrollo gris* is illustrative of material development, particularly mining shows that grey development is rectangular to the idea of integrated development. No other aspects than material development are taken into account, while the idea of integrated development means providing basic (material) needs, but also that is listened to what the population defines as good living. Participation in development is needed.

⁶³ Carlos (key informant)

⁶⁴ Churchleader

⁶⁵ Representative of cooperative

⁶⁶ Coordinator Asamblea, Cecilia Mérida

⁶⁷ Red de mujeres maya

At the local level laws and organisations exist to allow people to participate. At the most local level this is the COCODE, Community Councils of development.⁶⁸ Every little village has a cocode, the cocode does some small development projects and tries to make clear to the municipality what is needed in their community. Often this is a large list, summarised by integrated development.⁶⁹ These institutions are supported by laws to increase the local democratic participation. (Congreso 2002) In these laws there have also been measures to establish ties between the different governing levels. The institution on the municipal level is the COMUDE, Municipality Council of Development⁷⁰. In Aguacatán the main objective of the Comude, to establish communication between the local communities, the municipality and other actors which play a role in development, has not yet been achieved.⁷¹

5.2 Governmental discourse

The Comude meeting where I participated, was essentially a presentation of what the national government thinks is needed to develop. The meeting illustrated a dispute between the grey and integrated development. The other side was represented by civil society actors, such as cooperatives and NGOs, though the cocodes of Aguacatán were absent. The presentation of Segeplan⁷² was focused on risks in development, especially natural risks such as earthquakes and storms. “Development projects should have a risk assessment in advance, we cannot build roads, houses and bridges, without looking if it is vulnerable to disasters.”⁷³ He was especially speaking about construction projects, the grey development. The reactions in the public were illustrating; “Development is much more than infrastructure, social risks and insecurity should also be taken into account, what about lack of education, contaminated soil and women discrimination for example?”. The governmental official responded that infrastructure is just a first step, but he was outspoken by the argument that the basic infrastructure in Aguacatán is sufficient.⁷⁴ This meeting exhibited a clash between the different development ideas. The government focuses on the infrastructural projects while the people want much more than that, or have other priorities.

The government of Guatemala participates in a wide range of development projects. Often these seem to answer the local demands. For example in the institution of Prorural, which supports rural

⁶⁸ *Consejos Comunitarios de Desarrollo*

⁶⁹ Cocode

⁷⁰ *Consejo Municipal de Desarrollo*

⁷¹ Administrator municipality

⁷² Governmental institute on development planning

⁷³ Segeplan representative

⁷⁴ Comude

communities and the MARN⁷⁵, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Though in practise there is another dominant discourse which can be extracted. This idea of development fits in the neoliberal idea of development as mentioned in the theory, i.e. primarily based on an industrial and economic perspective. (Allen & Thomas, 2000: 26-28) This comes forward in the governmental support for the large projects such as mining and hydro electrics, but also the tendency to prioritise infrastructural projects. When speaking of development often is referred to the larger geopolitical context. The West and its 'developed' countries are seen as an example of development. This illustrates the broader project as explained in the theory of creating a distinction of developed and underdeveloped so that the developed can state what development is. The dominance of the West in the global power relations is demonstrated. (Escobar, 1988: 429, Tsing, 2005: 21)

Thus to develop, the Guatemalan government considers becoming part of the world economy as crucial. DR-CAFTA⁷⁶, which is a free trade agreement between Central America, Dominican Republic and the USA have been part of this effort. It is worth mentioning that, while there was only an English version of this agreement, it still has been accepted by the Guatemalan senate. It shows how willingly the government is. For them the exploitation and exploitation of the resources of Guatemala is essential to develop.⁷⁷ The Guatemalan government has taken the Western view, they seem to incorporate ideas of a Western governmentality of the 'undeveloped' countries. This is a vision of development where the growth of the national economy is seen as most important. More export, and the related profits should somehow end up at the local population, trickle down. (Allen & Thomas, 2000: 27) The encouragement of mining is a component in this reasoning, exporting resources and multinational presence make Guatemala part of the world economy, which is interpreted as necessary to develop.

The perspective of organizations such as Asamblea and Ceiba and actors with a more analytic view is different with regard to this idea of development. They have not incorporated the ideas within the Western governmentality, as exercised through the Guatemalan government. To them the selling of the resources of Guatemala is a negative development which only brings benefits to the ,mostly foreign owned, companies. These actors stress local self subsistence and independency of global price hikes, opposing the focus on export and being part of the global economy. The price hike in basic commodities such as corn and sugar is one of the local consequences of the free trade

⁷⁵ Ministerio Ambiental y Recursos Naturales

⁷⁶ http://www.sice.oas.org/Trade/CAFTA/CAFTADR_e/CAFTADRin_e.asp

⁷⁷ Segeplan representative, Comude

agreement, which brings much discontent.⁷⁸ Because the movement against mining also opposes the related ideas of development, we see that their ideas are anti-neoliberalistic. They contest the governmentality of development, in which neoliberal discourses are dominant.

5.3 Municipality discourse

The municipality plays a key role in development. Its position is interesting because it is situated between the government and the local population, as mentioned in the fourth chapter, concerning the *consulta*. Legally it is part of the government, because the mayor is from a political party and represents the government, though on the other hand the municipality administers the municipal area and has an amount of freedom in deciding. (Congreso, 2002: 2) This sensitive situation especially comes forward in the issue of mining. As explained in relation to the *consultas*, the municipality is pressured by two sides. The government wants mining, while the inhabitants are against. Because mining and development are equalised, the same counts for development. While the government instigates certain development measures, the communities often desire other measures. In the issue of mining the municipality can take a neutral position, but in the case of development it needs to take responsibility. As a consequence the municipality needs to manoeuvre between interests and is pressured by two sides, that is the local population which have their interests and the government which also have their interests. The mayor of Aguacatán did not elaborate much on this problematic position, to him the government should not force projects, but should find a way to do their projects but also make the local population content. 'Give them presents!' ⁷⁹ The mayor seems to understand that the government needs to find a way to exercise their power, the local people need to be convinced, or even bought with presents, that they are receiving development, in that manner complying with the governmental interests.

In regard to municipal development projects, the mayor proclaimed that the municipality is here to serve the requests of the communities.⁸⁰ In practice, development programs are often based on election promises, resulting in placing other priorities. Frequently the promised measures are executed for political reasons. Another factor are the financial funds, if the government provides funds for infrastructure, it should be used as such.

In Aguacatán the present development projects of the municipality consist of roads, a bus terminal, schools and the availability of water.⁸¹ Thus again infrastructure is at the centre in development. Nevertheless development according to representatives of the municipality council is

⁷⁸ Ceiba Chimaltenango, Seminar Ceiba, demonstration, Representative of cooperative

⁷⁹ Mayor Aguacatán

⁸⁰ Mayor Aguacatán

⁸¹ Administrator municipality

much broader than infrastructure, i.e. integrated development.⁸² One reason is lack of financial funding and thus the first main concern is infrastructure. Also here a properly working Comude is crucial to prevent neglecting of community needs.

As illustrated in the preceding section, a wide range of interpretations can be attached to the idea of development. Different actors try to pursue diverse interests. Here the discourses are generalised and divided in a governmental and a local discourse, where the municipality is in between. Still, development projects primarily consist of infrastructural projects. This demonstrates the dominance of the governmental discourse. The government has the power, they are governmentality and thus decide what development is. Though the local actors engage in influencing the dominant discourse, and thus contest this governmentality of development. Unintentional or intentional an alternative discourse is formulated in Aguacatán. In Huehuetenango the Asamblea intentionally plans to formulate a regional development plan, but at the moment misses the organizational capacities and financial funds to accomplish this effort.⁸³ The first step to contest the development governmentality is formulating another discourse. (Escobar, 1995: 225)

As explained in the theory this articulation often consists of a blending of traditional and modern values. Modern facets, such as more participation and democratization are called for through their cultural framework. (Gow, 2008: 12) This process is demonstrated in Aguacatán. The idea of the inhabitants in regard to development is largely concised through the Maya Cosmo vision, at times reframed in a modern manner. Here is called upon environmental protection and a need of participation. This is justified from cultural values, such as environmental protection for mother earth and indigenous participatory domains such as *consultas*, though again it is also justified from a Western modern perspective, where environmental sustainability is a popular issue and democratization as well. Thus the local inhabitants change their position in the structure of power by connecting to other discourses. (Ulloa, 2005: 3) Especially in mining this contestation comes forward. The population uses indigenous mechanisms though related to modernity and thus effectively confronting the discourse which is also related to modern and therefore Western ideas.

⁸² Consillor and trustee of municipality council

⁸³ Coordinator Asamblea

6. Framing the struggle: *Autonomy*

I assessed how the resistance to development governmentality is framed. Different actors frame the struggle in several manners, for the environment, the territory and indigenous rights. The issue of different articulations of the struggle can be understood as the need to resonate in a different reference frames. For local people especially the environmental consequences are most vivid and urgent, while at the regional movement the problem of unfair exploitation is emphasized. Both intersect in the need to be taken in to account, they demand autonomy, to not only have a voice, but to decide what happens in 'our house'. Our house, has a double meaning in relation to governmentality, the power of the national government should decrease, but also the Western development governmentality and its neoliberal connotations should stop dominating the local situation. The guerrilla resistance is continued in a political struggle.

“La lucha por la tierra, por la territoria, por nuestra casa” The struggle for the earth, for the territory, for our house.⁸⁴

Through the above statement several aspects of the struggle prevail. Firstly, it illustrates the different imaginations which are attached to the words. The earth as most direct, the nature and the environment need protection, while the territory is a larger imagination, that is the space where is lived which should be defended from unwanted changes. In the struggle for territory especially resources of the territory are emphasized, our resources. Indigenous rights are not comprised in the quote, but are an important characteristic in the struggle, it is aim in itself, but even more a tool to achieve what is comprised in the last part of the sentence, *nuestra casa*. 'Our house' illustrates the merging of earlier articulations and the enlargement of the imagination. It is not just the natural environment nor the spatial territory, it is *our* environment and territory. Inhabitants should decide what happens to their nature and environment, thus in broader sense the struggle is for local autonomy.

A reason for the difference in articulation is the level in which actors reside. The local level finds resonance in its reference frame by underlining the protection of environment. The practical consequences of the mega projects are especially are felt here, and thus the objections are declared in a more practical manner. At the regional level the problem of exploitation is pronounced, it finds resonance in a politically based reference frame. The other aspect, indigenous rights, is intersecting

⁸⁴ Cedfog meeting

between levels as the movement is largely indigenous and thus echoes in the cultural framework of the people. All three articulations have in common that they are summarized by the complaint, we are not taken in to account, consequently autonomy is called for. This call for autonomy elucidates the resistance against governmentality, they do not want to be governed and dominated. Below the differences in articulation shall be described and the struggle will be interpreted. In this struggle, resistance of mining is the focal point of diverse interests and diverse power struggles.

6.1 'Por la tierra'

Member of the Junta: "It is about the protection of the mountains, the nature, the air. I am not just talking about mining, I mean all of nature and the environment, it is better to seed than to destroy. Our mission is to have a little bit of nature left in the future. We need to wake up people, make them understand we need nature."

When I asked community leaders in Aguacatán what the struggle is particularly about, environmental protective characteristics of the resistance were emphasised. Presumably this is because especially on the local level the consequences are felt most, they are directly affected if a mega project would be near. Here the environment would be polluted and trees cut, therefore protecting the natural beauty is mentioned as the primary reason for the resistance.⁸⁵ We see this connects to earlier described local ideas of development, it should not mean a destruction of the environment.

Just as in the local discourse of development the indigenous Cosmo vision also plays an important role here. This is illustrated in the articulation of the struggle, the protection of Mother Earth especially for future generation is called for.⁸⁶ The primary aim is preserving the environment, which is endangered by the government's plans. The government has a completely different interpretation of environment, also related to their ideas of development. Natural resources, and therefore the environment, are opportunities to make profit. The government tries to pursue its policies, to make money out of the environment, while the local fights against this destruction. We see another example of the fight against governmentality. The local movement is resisting to interpret nature as a commodity and tries to provide the people with a sustainable perspective on nature.

⁸⁵ member of Junta, Representative of cooperative

⁸⁶ member of Junta, Carlos (key informant)

6.2 'Por la territoria'

On the departmental level of Huehuetenango the struggle is articulated more as a territorial and therefore political matter. The primary aim is the defence of natural resources, thus pronouncing these as property. The environment also plays a role, but protection of nature is not the main aim⁸⁷. The departmental movement is more political, a struggle for fair share, people who live in these lands they should also profit. It is about positioning itself more directly against the government: the government wants to exploit the natural resources, we don't want that. In this sense the imagination of *la territoria* is larger than just natural territory, it is the space we live in, and the resources are part of this space.

In the vision which Asamblea represents, territory belongs to the people and therefore the people should decide over their land. The disagreement between the government and anti-mining movement is fought out in the definition of territory. Asamblea defines territory in an indigenous manner. For the Mayas territory is everything within the borders of the territory for instance, the flora and fauna, but also what is below the ground.⁸⁸ Thus natural resources are part of the territory. Opposing this view, the government only interprets the surface as territory. According to the national law all resources beneath the soil are property of the authorities. Again the struggle over governmentality is demonstrated. Based on indigenous reasoning and supported by indigenous rights, the movement attempts to pursue their vision on territory and in that sense resisting to the interests of the government. They confront the neoliberal idea, which allows companies to exploit the resources.

6.2.1 Indigenous rights

Beside the environment and the territory, demanding indigenous rights also plays a major role in the struggle. This comes forward in several aspects. Firstly, the indigenous is the context in which the struggle takes place, because the movement is largely indigenous. Both alternative ideas of environment and territory are largely based in Mayan cultural frameworks, that is the idea of Mother Earth and territory. Secondly, in the laws which should provide indigenous rights, these provide tools to contest the governmentality. The acquiring of indigenous rights is therefore a goal of the movement, but even more a tool. It does resonate in the cultural reference frame of the indigenous, thus comprising a large part of the movement, but the struggle is much broader. This is illustrated by answers of respondents. Often I heard it is for indigenous rights *and* the environment or indigenous rights *and* the territory. The struggle is about power to inhabitants, the resisting of

⁸⁷ Cecilia Mérida

⁸⁸ Churchleader, local NGO

mining is a resisting of governmentality. This struggle does not only include indigenous peoples but, both at the local and departmental, also Ladinos.⁸⁹ All ethnicities are unified for the goals of the movement.

6.3 '*Por nuestra casa*'

As seen above, the struggle has several dimensions. The protection of environment, the defending of territory and claiming of indigenous rights, are comprised by the call for autonomy. Almost all proclaimed of '*no tomar en cuenta*' 'we are not taken into account'.⁹⁰ The people want to be taken seriously by the government, because at the moment they are not, local autonomy is a solution, they want their voice to be heard. For some persons certain aspects could be more important, for instance the environmental or the indigenous aspects, but the statement of not being taken into account shows the essence of the struggle. They want to exercise power over their 'house', instead of being subjected to the power of the government. The call for autonomy elucidates that people are aware of the power of development governmentality, they resist to this power.

That people are not listened to comes forward in several examples. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, official reactions on the *consultas* cease to be stated. Secondly, many politicians and administrators do not take their responsibility of representing the people. Often they take an impartial stance especially in mining. In Aguacatán this counts for the mayor.⁹¹ The key issue is that people are not taken seriously, the primary issue where is fought against, mining, is largely ignored. When the governmental institutes reacts, they emphasize their discourse of development by stating that these people who resist to mining do not want to develop.⁹²

In an interview with the governor of Huehuetenango I was confronted with how some politicians easily state certain things, while not live by it. Warmly welcomed in his office I spoke with the governor. He proclaimed that he is against mining in the present manner and had a very critical view on the system and the enrichment of a small group of capitalists. Even though I personally sympathise with this view, the issue here was that what he said corresponded with ideas of the movement against mining. When asked critical questions he simply evaded straightforward answers. For me as evidently low-status student this reflected the issue with which the local inhabitants are confronted. The governmental representatives are polite, friendly and even seem to be on the same side. However, no actions are undertaken to support their exclamations. Thus, because of this discrepancy people feel disempowered and do not have trust in the politicians.

⁸⁹ Ladino representative of municipality, meeting Cedfog.

⁹⁰ Representative of cooperative, village of mining license, member of Junta,

⁹¹ Interview mayor, official stance of municipality.

⁹² Representative of MARN

Above, I gave a direct example of a direct cause for the desire for autonomy, but beside that, this desire is also illustrated in a broader sense. Firstly in denouncing all governmental institutes, not just the national or municipal, but till the lowest, that is community, level. Secondly, in their vision on multinational companies. We see that the autonomy is a called for with regard to the national government, but also to the West. The Western and national governmentalities are related as the government can be seen as part of the Western governmentality, and supports Western companies and its 'development', though it is not just an extension of Western governmentality. The national elite also uses development to exercise power for its own interests, often justified by Western neoliberal ideas. (Ferguson, 1994: 181) The movement is resisting both these governmentalities. The people want to decide what happens to their territory, instead of being controlled by outside forces. Below an example is given of how far the call for autonomy, to resist governmentality can go.

6.3.1 *Confronting local governmentality*

Some actors in the regional movement have critical views regarding local mechanisms, to them conforming to such governmental supported structures, such as cocodes or *consultas* means weakening the indigenous movement. From this perspective these indigenous institutes are made to keep people satisfied and to prevent radicalization.⁹³ It is a way to contain and to regulate power, therefore these institutes are seen as a tool to incorporate governmentality. The institutes provide a false idea of participation. For true autonomy these institutions should also be denounced, and the movement should make their rules, thus autonomous in itself.

In practise the story is more nuanced. The local population is content with the indigenous mechanisms.⁹⁴ In a sense these institutes have increased the participation, although it is far from perfect. For example, the cocodes play an important role in the organization of the *consultas* and also, they have an influence on what development is at community level. Though in a broader sense, namely at municipal level, this is less. As proclaimed earlier, in Aguacatán the comude does not function properly, therefore strong participation of the cocodes on municipal level is lacking. Even though, the cocodes offer a space for more participation and thus for more local voice. Also in the demonstration against mining and related issues on the 'Day of Earth' was largely attended by members of cocodes. When the police tried to drive through the blockade community leader did not let them pass. A representative of Asamblea explained, the community leaders are the local

⁹³ Cedfog meeting

⁹⁴ Local NGO

authority and thus the police should listen.⁹⁵

The denouncing of local institutions as blocking autonomy is not shared by everybody, but it illustrates how far the call for autonomy can go. In a sense points can be made for this perspective, institutions such as the Comude in Aguacatán, as has been discussed in the development chapter, and Codede of Huehuetenango (the departmental equivalent) do not function properly. The Codede includes all 32 mayors, while 17 civil society actors participate.⁹⁶ A participant in the Codede proclaimed “When was spoken about mining, none of the mayors spoke out against, they not want to oppose the government. The mayors most of the time form a block, thus for me it does not make sense to go to the Codede, it is a waste of time.” In such a case it seems to be more effective to withdraw from these institutions. Even though as the cocode shows, while contesting governmentality through governmental institutes seems a contradiction in terms, it can be effective. The structures which are meant to govern, are changed to serve the goals of the ones which should be the subjected.

6.3.2 *Neocolonisation*

Another example of autonomy is the call for autonomy from the West. To understand the local connotations in the meaning of neocolonisation, some historical relations need to be shown. First, the colonization of Guatemala, when the roots of inequality between a Hispanic rich and indigenous poor were constructed. Then much later a second attempt was made to bring the indigenous down. The civil war in which was fought for more equality, because especially the rural and indigenous were extremely poor and without opportunities. The armed resistance was brutally beaten down by the military. (Kobrak, 2003: 70-72) The current developments, with the increased presence of multinationals in Guatemala and a political line of neoliberalistic measures is seen as the third wave of repression. Another colonization of the Western powers, the neocolonisation,⁹⁷

This view of neocolonisation resonates with the idea that development is a vehicle to exercise Western power. (Escobar, 1995: 9) The changes which are said to bring development, such as privatization, free trade agreements and low taxes, are just representing Western interests and the rich. As mentioned earlier this counts for the companies initiating the environmental damaging ‘development’ projects, though also in a broader sense. Illustrative are the opinions of Union Fernosa. A Spanish energy company, active in Guatemala since the privatization of electricity. Complaints consist of the price hikes in energy prices and the aggressive manner in which is dealt

⁹⁵ Coordinator of Asamblea, at demonstration for mother earth.

⁹⁶ Participant of codede

⁹⁷ Coordinator Asamblea, Cedfog meeting, church leader

with protesters.⁹⁸ This is just one of the foreign companies operating in Guatemala. For some the aversion of foreign multinationals goes as far that is opposed to the mobile phone companies which are all foreign owned. In a speech of a representative of Ceiba: “These companies take your money with their misleading promotions, we do not need mobile phones, people should spend money on food instead of phone credit.”⁹⁹ The resisting to Western companies, represents the resisting to Western governmentality and the neoliberal framework through which the government justifies its policies.

6.3.3 The political goals of the autonomy movement

In this section I specify what the goals of this movement are when autonomy would be reached. These are illustrated through the ideas of development as well, but are also stated clearly by participants of the movement. Firstly its goals are distinctively leftist. That is for instance, more equality and less freedom for companies. As proclaimed by representatives of Ceiba, they do not support local politicians when they have a right wing view. Even when it would be a 'good' mayor, i.e. who takes care of his people, they would not give support.¹⁰⁰ This leftwing view was literally illustrated by a representative of Asamblea, wearing a t-shirt with a picture of Ché Guevara.¹⁰¹ Obviously this was not for the sake of being fashionable.

In the political goals the environment plays a major role. Beside the obvious resistance to the megaproject, other environmental issues are important for example, mono crops, biofuels, genetical modification and other activities affecting the biodiversity.¹⁰² We see that this relates to the earlier described local development discourse. Another aspect is the economical visions, as stated earlier the primary goals are anti-neoliberalistic such as the privatization, involvement of foreign companies and free trade agreements. A more equal economical distribution is demanded and more equality overall, also for women.¹⁰³ It is a struggle for the poor, not just for indigenous people.¹⁰⁴ When we compare the goals in the civil war with the goals of this movement, parallels can be drawn. Here the guerrillas fought against inequality, lack of a proper democratic system and corruption, inspired by the Cuban revolution. (Kobrak, 2003: 24) The autonomy movement can be interpreted as a political continuance of the civil war. Ideals largely overlap with the ideals of the

⁹⁸ Ceiba Chimaltenango

⁹⁹ Ceiba seminar

¹⁰⁰ Ceiba Chimaltenango

¹⁰¹ Demonstration on day of earth

¹⁰² Ceiba Chimaltenango and Ceiba seminar

¹⁰³ Cecilia Mérida

¹⁰⁴ Cedefog meeting

war. Just as many people who were involved then, participate now.¹⁰⁵ Though there is a principal difference, the resistance is non-violent this time. They do not want to give the government opportunities to break the movement violently, through the military.¹⁰⁶

Above we have seen the characteristics of the movement. These comprise different imaginations and resonate in different frameworks, therefore it includes local, regional and also higher level actors. By taking the pieces of the struggle which is under the umbrella of autonomy, personal justifications, resonating in ones framework can be found. In that sense the people are unified in their aim to confront the power of the government, the governmentality. Though the struggle against governmental power alone is not enough to unify, mining is the crucial issue where the interests meet.

¹⁰⁵ Cecilia Mérida, Ceiba Chimaltenango

¹⁰⁶ Coordinator Asamblea

7. Conclusion

How do local and national actors give meaning to and practise 'development' as a way of contesting and negotiating governmentality in a context of democratisation and neoliberal mining policies?

This question is comprised of several aspects. We have seen that power is intrinsic in 'development', the concept is used to exercise power and its meaning represents power relations. This governmentality of development allows subjects think that particular changes, based on specific interests of several instead of the interests of the subjects, have a positive effect on their situation. They incorporate a specific idea without realizing it is not their idea, they are governed.

I have been interested in how this power, governmentality, is contested by the subjected. First, I have illustrated that 'development' is contested, this is manifested through demonstrations, statements and *consultas* throughout Guatemala. Industrial mega projects, such as mining, hydro electrics and oil exploitation are not interpreted as bringing development. Thus the subjected cease to conform to the governmentality of development, not incorporating the ideas of governmentality is the first step in confronting governmentality.

The second step is the aim to influence governmentality, the dominant discourse within governmentality needs to change. This is done by articulating an alternative discourse, i.e. attaching another meaning to development. In Aguacatán and Huehuetenango I have researched what this alternative meaning of development is. I showed this is a very heterogenic idea, but is summarized by 'good living' and integrated development. That is particularly a healthy environment and participation. Their idea contradicts the governmental idea, which is based in grey development, i.e. infrastructure and industry.

The next step in contesting governmentality brings us to the key question of how the subjected, the local population, try to pursue their idea of development. Two aspects are of primary importance, the mixing of 'traditional' and 'modern' values and connecting to actors in higher levels.

The combining of 'traditional', that is indigenous, and 'modern' which can be seen as Western comes forward several issues. Based on the Mayan Cosmo vision, they frame development, which does not only resonate in their culture, it also finds audience in Western culture, connecting to values such as democratization and environmental sustainability. In that sense they change their position in the structure of power by connecting to other discourses. This blending of cultural values also comes forward in practise, the *consulta*. The *consulta* is organized in an indigenous manner but

legitimized by the modern concept of indigenous rights connecting to the international community.

This connection between local and higher levels is the other aspect, which provides insights in the how governmentality is contested. I have used a seemingly local event, such as the *consulta* to show the connectivity of the movement. The local establishes regional, national and international connections. The national government is supported in their governmentality by Western relations, for example in the World Bank, but also through the idea of neoliberalism. To confront this transnationality the resistance moves to the same level, also connecting to (often Western) actors beyond the national borders, who provide leverage to their cause.

Besides providing understanding in the processes within contesting governmentality, I assessed how this resistance to development governmentality is framed. The struggle is framed in several manners for the environment, the territory and indigenous rights, by different actors. The issue of different articulations of the struggle can be understood as the need to resonate in a different reference frames. For local people especially the environmental consequences are most vivid and urgent, while at the regional movement the problem of unfair exploitation is emphasized. Both intersect in the need to be taken in to account, a demand for autonomy, to not only have a voice, but to decide what happens in 'our house'. Our house, has a double meaning in relation to governmentality. Firstly the power of the national government should decrease, but secondly, also the Western development governmentality and its neoliberal connotations should stop dominating the local situation. Just as in the civil war the power was contested by the guerrilla, now the resistance is continued in a political struggle.

An interesting end speculation is what this movement will bring; will its alternative discourse become dominant? While we have seen that the local people form a liable resistance to governmentality, it seems unrealistic to think that they will win the struggle in its most radical sense, i.e. local autonomy with a leftist agenda. Another more practical question is if they manage to resist mining. This also remains to be seen, national and Western economical interests are strong, however, they might succeed in negotiating the meaning of governmentality and for example find a compromise on mining. One thing is certain, the local people of Guatemala will not give up easily.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1: **Reflection on fieldwork**

Overall I enjoyed doing research in Aguacatán. It is not too small and not too big, and also near the city of Huehuetenango, which meant I was not forced to the classical anthropological experience of being in an isolated village without any luxury (I even had a TV). I found the people in Aguacatán and Huehuetenango very friendly. Most of the time I was greeted with a nice smile, though people did not force themselves on me, at least the majority. An interesting phenomena is the *borracho*¹⁰⁷ -when they were not occupied with sleeping on the sidewalk and saw clearly enough- I could count on a hand shake and an attempt to speak English. These attempts were good intended, but once a *borracho* kept following me, as he wanted to speak more with me, I avoided them more. After I while a recognized the specific look in the eyes, which reminded me of a certain Dutch friend when we go out together.

While Aguacatán certainly was a nice place, and my research went well, for example in feeling at home, enjoying to do research, however, I was confronted with some difficulties. I prepared my research well, expecting development projects of a mining company or a mine nearby, but both are not in Aguacatán. A place to 'hang around' or to 'be there', was lacking. Especially in the beginning it was difficult to find respondents who knew something about mining, people I met coincidentally did not know much about the issue. I decided to go to the municipality and here I they provided connections to some key actors and a broad sketch of the situation.

The main issue was, that these connections to actors were telephone numbers. Several problems arose in the subject of calling. Firstly, especially in the beginning my Spanish was quite basic, and I often found myself repeating: *Disculpa, no se escuché*¹⁰⁸. This problem of language was complemented by a personal issue, that is, I do not like calling. Even in the Netherlands I have a reluctance to call, thus it was quite a personal challenge every time I had to call a number. On top of these inconveniences, another issue was raised. People hung up on me during conversations. I figured that this was because of the sensitivity of the subject of mining, the informants told me that I had to be careful in talking about this. I interpreted this right, but later I found out this should not prevent me from talking with these people.

An example took place concerning Ceiba, I heard that this was an important organization, and already in the beginning I obtained a number of a coordinator and later of the secretary. I was promised to be called back a few times, hung up a few times, but in the end I had an interview with

¹⁰⁷ Spanish for alcohol addict, literally the drunk.

¹⁰⁸ Sorry, I did not hear you

this coordinator of Ceiba and after looking at my passport he was very friendly and open. I learned an important lesson; I needed to be bolder. I learned that in the Guatemalan culture, it is normal to keep calling, it shows you're truly interested. To me this felt impolite, just as the need to make a confirmation call before an appointment, I had to forget my cultural habits.

While I overcame some problems by being bold and persisting, in some cases this was not enough. Especially the villages where mining plans are based, are very suspicious. I found a solution to that, as I could come with the church leader to one of this villages, he would explain my presence. I was very content with this offer, he would leave at eight, and I could ride with him. As this was a very important issue for me I was even too early and decided to wait for half an hour outside. After a while I saw a golden car leaving the church area, I was thinking about running after it to check if the pastor was inside, but decided to ask at the church, to hear there that indeed the pastor just left. I jumped into a tuk-tuk¹⁰⁹, and ask him to search the golden car, we tried, but after a while we realized it did not make sense. The tuk-tuk driver brought me home, and softening my disappointment I did not have to pay (very friendly people in Aguacatán). Appointments in Guatemala are unpredictable.

The suspiciousness remained a problem, at some point I managed to arrange a meeting in one of the villages. I showed the paper, which proved I was just a student and not from the mining company, explained who I was and asked my questions. The situation was tense, 20 cautious men stood around me. At the end of the meeting of the meeting I asked if I could come again, or call when things remained unclear, the answer was unmistakable: no. Later I met some of these men at the Mother earth demonstration, they were very friendly, when I was not allowed to participate in a meeting between the governor and community leaders, one of these villagers said: don't worry we will tell you how it was!

The above examples illustrate several difficulties in doing fieldwork, the cultural differences, personal weaknesses (besides my issue with calling, several times I did not recognise informants) and the ascribed identity. As Western person I was associated with the Western mining companies. Lastly one needs to realize doing fieldwork is coping with unpredictability, as long as that is kept in mind, it will all turn out fine, as it went for me. My most important research lesson is to be bold. I also waited with contacting the participant of the Junta and Cecilia Mérida, as I was uncertain about their reaction, I should have contacted them right away.

¹⁰⁹ Three wheeled taxi, built in India.



This is in the park of Aguacatán where I often met with informants or worked out notes of an interview. The central park is an accessible and quiet place, besides everybody can find it.

Appendix 2: **Resumen**

Esta investigación fue en Aguacatán, Huehuetenango que es en Guatemala. Por dos meses yo viví en Aguacatán por investigar la situación de la minería. La resistencia de la minería en Aguacatán y Huehuetenango es una lucha entre el Gobierno y las poblaciones locales. Los actores están luchando que las minas estén deseadas o no. Esta lucha no es solamente sobre minería, hay una relación fuerte con diferentes significados del desarrollo.

El gobierno dice que la minería trae desarrollo para las comunidades locales y todo el país. En contraste, la mayoría de las comunidades dicen que no están de acuerdo con la minería, piensan que no trae desarrollo por ellos. Entonces, la resistencia contra los proyectos de la minería es una resistencia contra un tipo específico del desarrollo. Este desarrollo contiene más de la minería. Es un desarrollo gris, eso significa proyectos de la infraestructura y grandes proyectos industriales. Las comunidades quieren otro tipo del desarrollo, desarrollo integral, no solamente infraestructura pero cambios que mejoran la vida. Para ellos desarrollo es 'buen vivir'

Yo explico en la teoría, que desarrollo tiene la oportunidad de ejercer poder. Diferentes actores con diferentes intereses pueden usar desarrollo para cambiar la situación, como ellos quieren. Por eso, desarrollo es una zona impugnada. En Guatemala los actores que luchan sobre el significado del desarrollo están luchando sobre poder. Con mi investigación yo quiero explicar como las comunidades locales, que parecen sin mucho poder, intentan cambiar sus posición en las relaciones del poder.

Para entender este tema yo discuto algunos temas específicos. Primero, la teoría y el contexto. Hasta esos, yo uso tres capítulos empíricos con diferentes temas. El primero capítulo es especialmente sobre las consultas y las organizaciones que están involucradas en la resistencia. Yo explico los procesos en la consulta y explico las relaciones entre los diferentes actores y organizaciones. El segundo capítulo discute los diferentes significados del desarrollo. Que significado tiene la población local, y que significa desarrollo para el gobierno, y que es la posición del municipio porque lo es entre el gobierno y población. El último capítulo discute las características del movimiento. Que quiere los participantes cambiar. Yo describo que la lucha tiene muchos significados, por el medio ambiente, por defensa de la territorio y por derechos indígenas entonces yo concluyo que es una lucha por autonomía.

Entonces para contestar a el problema de esta tesis, que como las poblaciones locales impugnan el poder del gobierno? Argumento que ellos están involucrados en un proceso de mezcla. Una mezcla entre la cultura indígena y cultura del occidente. En lado de este proceso hay otro elemento también. Ellos hacen conexiones diferentes niveles, regional, nacional y internacional. Estos procesos son las fuentes del poder. Pero, solamente el futuro sabe que la resistencia va a suceder en sus objetos.

Appendix 3: Pictures of remembrance march Aguacatán

3rd of October 2009 (pictures not taken by me)



Appendix 4: Pictures of demonstration for day of Earth, 22nd of April 2010



