Logistics of Dispossession: A Transit through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec

Giorgio Sebastiani

Stop I: Colonia Cuauhtémoc — Where the Future Drowns

16/11/2024

"There used to be an avenue there." The sound of the wind blending with the crashing waves of the sea makes Virgilio's words—his name carrying a certain resonance as he guides me through Colonia Cuauhtémoc—feel distant, as if coming from another dimension. "It was called Avenida Cristóbal Colón. There were a dozen houses there. The sea swallowed them." I squint hard, partly to shield my eyes from the sand relentlessly whipped into the air by the wind, partly to better envision a past now erased by the sea. What I do not need to imagine, however, are the other houses still visible on the shore: crumbling, gutted, desolate. According to Virgilio, the village, which is part of the municipality of San Mateo del Mar, had been suffering for decades due to the rising sea level. In recent years, however, "The situation has become more critical, and more than twenty families had to leave." He tells me how they have been trying everything to get government assistance to relocate to another, safer area they have identified, but so far with little success.

He explains that the problem is not just the general rise in sea levels but also what locals call *mar de fondo*—a phenomenon of long, continuous swells generated by storms far out at sea, which then travel across the Pacific Ocean. This *mar de fondo*, which had always been part of life for the Indigenous Huave community living in the Colonia, has become uncontrollable in recent years. During peak moments of *mar de fondo,* the entire village is now forced to abandon their homes, leaving them at the mercy of the sea and its

destructive force. “But none of this is a coincidence,” Virgilio asserts with a resolute gaze. “All of this started getting worse when they began those works. What they did diverted the ocean current in the Gulf of Tehuantepec and made the tides worse. It is not like it used to be.” We step inside what until a year ago had been a home—inhabited, alive. Now it stands as a ruin, deserted, dead. There, with his gaze fixed on the ground, somewhere between lost and incredulous, Virgilio stands in what might once have been a bedroom, a bathroom, or a kitchen (there are no clues left to tell) and finishes: “It is all because of the new breakwater.”

Figure 1: Colonia Cuauhtémoc. Photograph by the author, November 16, 2024.

The breakwater stands as the most significant maritime infrastructure project in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, officially inaugurated by the federal government in February 2024. According

to the Government of Mexico, this new structure at the port of Salina Cruz—a coastal city in Oaxaca located approximately 10 kilometers from Colonia Cuauhtémoc—is the largest and only one of its kind in Latin America, distinguished by its depth, dimensions, and construction process. Spanning 1,600 meters, its construction required 5.6 million tons of rock and generated over 500 direct jobs.[1] The total investment is estimated at over 6 billion pesos.[2] Once fully operational—alongside ongoing dredging operations—it will enable the port of Salina Cruz to accommodate the world's largest container ships.

During the inauguration, Oaxaca's governor, Salomón Jara, emphasized its geopolitical relevance, declaring: "With a visionary approach and geopolitical foresight, the new breakwater and the port of Salina Cruz will become part of the logistical and industrial platform known as the Corredor Interoceánico and will turn the Isthmus of Tehuantepec into a new alternative for global trade routes."[3] This statement highlights the strategic role of the breakwater within a broader effort to modernize and expand the port of Salina Cruz—an integral part of the larger Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

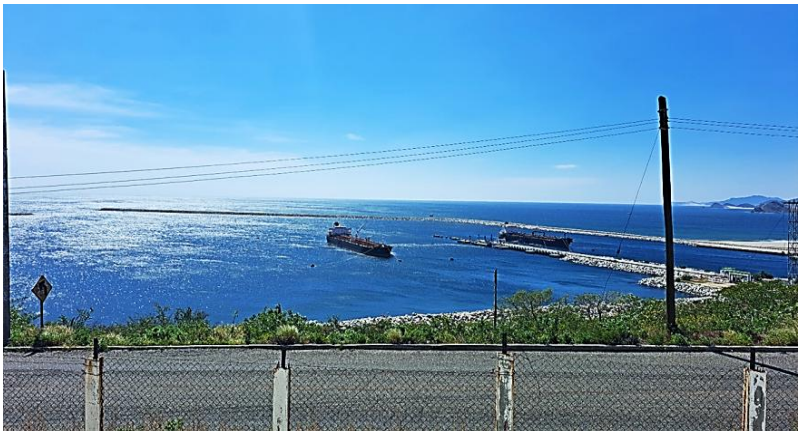

Figure 2: Breakwater of Salina Cruz. Photograph by the author, November 14, 2024.

[1] Secretaría de Marina, *Inauguración del Rompeolas de Salina Cruz, Oaxaca.*
[2] Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, "Rompeolas de Salina Cruz."
[3] Andrés Manuel López Obrador, "Inauguración del Rompeolas del Puerto de Salina Cruz en Oaxaca."

To understand the significance of the Corredor Interoceánico, one must first consider the geography of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Located in southern Mexico, it is the country's narrowest landmass, stretching roughly 200 kilometers from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. It spans the states of Veracruz and Oaxaca, with extensions into Tabasco and Chiapas. Beyond its economic significance, the Isthmus is an ecologically and culturally rich region, home to diverse ecosystems and Indigenous communities such as the Zapotecs, Mixes, Zoques, and Huaves, whose presence and traditions have long shaped the territory.

The strategic value of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec has been recognized for centuries. Since the early colonial period, Spanish authorities focused on the Isthmus as a potential interoceanic route. Yet, it was only under the Porfirio Díaz regime that such a project was finally realized. In 1907, the Ferrocarril Transístmico was inaugurated, connecting the newly constructed ports of Coatzacoalcos and Salina Cruz. By 1913, over a million tons of cargo were transported across the Isthmus. However, the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 relegated the railway to a secondary role, maintaining significance only for local trade.[4] In the following decades, various projects sought to reestablish an interoceanic corridor, but none materialized, in part due to local resistance.[5] Yet, from colonial times to the present, the Isthmus has remained a recurring target for integration into global trade networks.

In 2019, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced the launch of the megaproject known as the Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (CIIT, by its Spanish acronym), managed by a decentralized public body under the Mexican Navy. This initiative seeks to transform the Isthmus into a logistics platform, with key infrastructure projects including the rehabilitation of the Trans-Isthmic Railway, linking Coatzacoalcos to Salina Cruz and extending further to Chiapas. This railway, projected to transport around 1.4 million containers annually, will connect the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, passing through the Dos Bocas oil port in Tabasco, and linking with the flagship

[4] Reina, "El Ferrocarril de Tehuantepec."
[5] Ceceña et al., *El Istmo de Tehuantepec en Riesgo.*

Tren Maya project.[67] In addition, major ports—Coatzacoalcos, Salina Cruz, Dos Bocas, Puerto Chiapas—and airports in Minatitlán and Ixtepec are set to undergo expansion and modernization. New highways will be constructed to connect the two seas. These developments are being carried out by national and transnational private companies through competitive bidding, while a favorable legislative framework will be established for investors.[8]

The CIIT aims to enhance transport and energy networks in the region, strengthening the connection between Mexico's largest energy production area in the Southern Gulf of Mexico and key regional and international markets. The project also envisions the creation of an energy-industrial enclave to boost manufacturing and export capacity.[9] At least twelve industrial parks, known as Polos de Desarrollo para el Bienestar (Development Poles for Welfare), will be established along the Trans-Isthmic Railway route. These poles, together with the entire CIIT project, form the core of the broader Programa para el Desarrollo del Istmo de Tehuantepec 2020–2024 (Program for the Development of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec 2020–2024), which declares its main objective as "strengthening the domestic market and creating regional production linkages to promote the well-being of the population and regional growth."[10] However, the CIIT has faced significant criticism from various civil organizations, particularly regarding the Polos de Desarrollo para el Bienestar. Critics argue that these developments are causing irreparable damage to the Isthmus's delicate ecosystem and leading to the dispossession of local communities from their land and livelihoods. As illustrated in Figure 3, created by GeoComunes, the full scope and complexity of the megaproject becomes evident.[11] The Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec aims to completely reshape the territorial dynamics of the region, with the intention of integrating it into global production and distribution circuits.

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[6] CIIT, *Estatuto Orgánico del Corredor Interoceánico.*
[7] Secretaría de Marina, *Marina informa avances del CIIT.*
[8] Diario Oficial de la Federación, *Decreto.*
[9] Geocomunes, *Análisis General del CIIT.*
[10] Gobierno de México, *Programa para el Desarrollo del Istmo*, 6.
[11] Geocomunes, *Análisis General del CIIT*, 4.

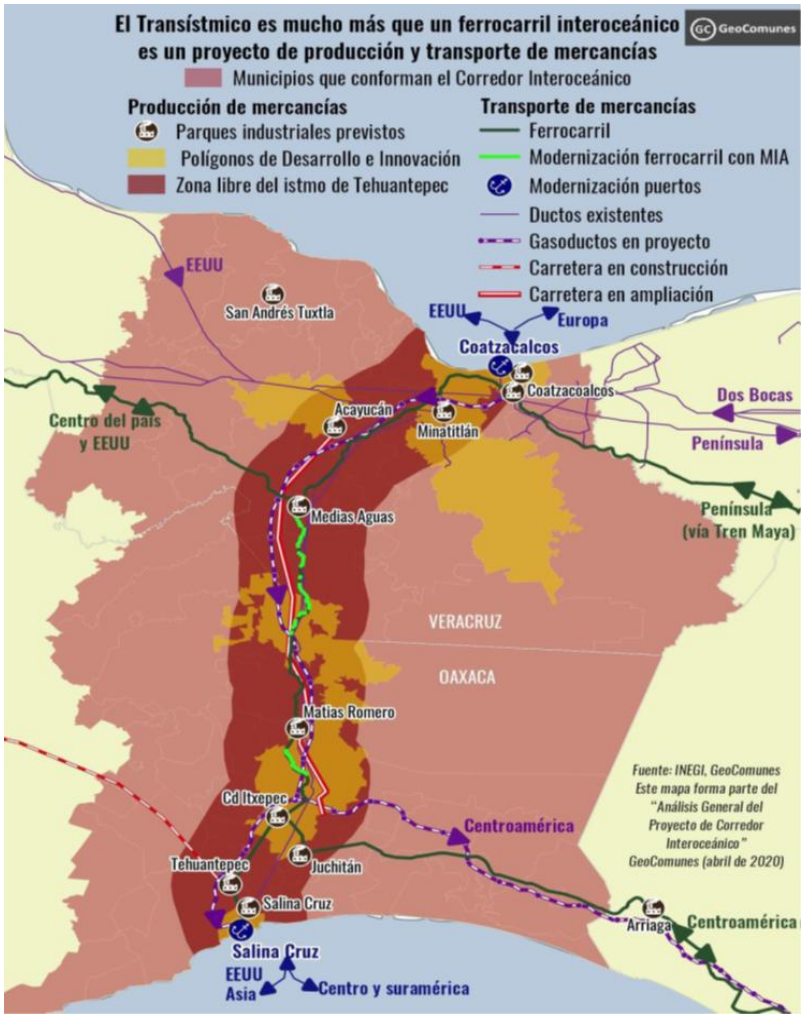

Figure 3*:* Map of the Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, developed by GeoComunes, 2020.

Stop II: Matías Romero – A Hope Riding from the Past

23/11/2024

I had never tasted a more tender chicken, I think, my head bowed over a plate at the market in Matías Romero, the last city of the Oaxaca Isthmus before entering the Veracruz region. I was there with the goal of taking the new passenger train, the renovated Ferrocarril Transístmico inaugurated in December 2023, which

ignites the dreams of many of the locals. My initial plan had been to take the train the week before, while I was in Salina Cruz. However, I found out that the passenger train had been out of service for nearly a month due to track issues. But this Saturday, finally, the train would be running again, departing from Coatzacoalcos (Veracruz) to arrive, after several stops, including one in Matías Romero, at Salina Cruz, on its only daily journey.

The city of Matías Romero has, since its origins, been deeply connected with the interoceanic railway. The previous day, Dr. Carrasco Toledo, Director of Education of the municipal government, told me a bit about the city's history. Since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the construction of the Trans-Isthmic Railway profoundly transformed life in Matías Romero. What was originally the settlement of Rincón Antonio Nuevo, thanks to its strategic location almost halfway between the two main ports of the region (Salina Cruz and Coatzacoalcos), became a prosperous city due to the railway boom in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, earning the title of "railroad city."

Its workshops grew to be among the most significant in the country, offering employment to nearly a thousand people. For much of the 20th century, the trains governed the rhythms of daily life in the community, shaping everything from the economy to politics. The railway became more than just a mode of transport—it was a physical embodiment of a national vision, one that aimed to turn the Isthmus of Tehuantepec into a key artery for global trade, a vision championed by diplomat Matías Romero Avendaño, after whom the city is named. However, by the 1990s, with the relative privatization of national railroads, the workshops closed, passenger trains ceased to operate, and of the nearly three thousand railroad workers in Matías Romero, only fifty were hired by the new company. In 1999, the Matías Romero railway station closed permanently.

"This chicken is something special, seriously." I cannot help but compliment the woman running the small eatery where I stopped for lunch inside the market. "*Gracias, m'hijo*[12]. And you haven't even tried the *mondongo* (tripe) yet—that's my real

[12] Contraction of "mi hijo," literally "my son," used affectionately.

specialty!" she replies, busy at the stove. It is 12:30 p.m., supposedly the busiest time of the day, but I am the only customer. She tells me she is getting a head start on preparations for the following day. I take the opportunity to ask how work is going, how long she has run her food stall in the market, and similar questions.

> "Ahh, *m'hijo*, I've been here since I was young."
> "But you're still young," I interrupt.
> "*No digas mentiras*,"[13] she laughs heartily. "I've been here since the town was bustling. You wouldn't believe how much traffic there was—people coming and going, customers from everywhere. I never had a moment to rest! But now... well, just look around." She is right—her stall is not the only one that is practically empty.
> "And it was so lively... because of the train?" I ask.
> "*Claro*, because of the train. But that was a long time ago, too many years. We'll see what happens now..."
> "Exactly," I add. "I was just going to ask—what do you think about the new project? Looks promising, doesn't it?"
> "*Bueno, vamos a ver*.[14] Politicians talk and talk, but in the end, they never actually do anything."
> "But the train is already running, right? Have you noticed any changes so far?" I ask, trying not to sound pushy.
> "*Sí, sí*, the new train is here. But I haven't seen much difference yet. A few more customers, mostly soldiers, and that's about it. They're building, doing some work back behind the new station. They say we need to wait, so we wait. But for me..." She pauses, then bursts into another infectious laugh: "I don't have that much time left to wait."

I glance at my watch—the train is leaving soon. I thank her and head off, not before asking for the recipe for that delicious chicken.

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[13] "Don't tell lies."
[14] "Well, we'll see."

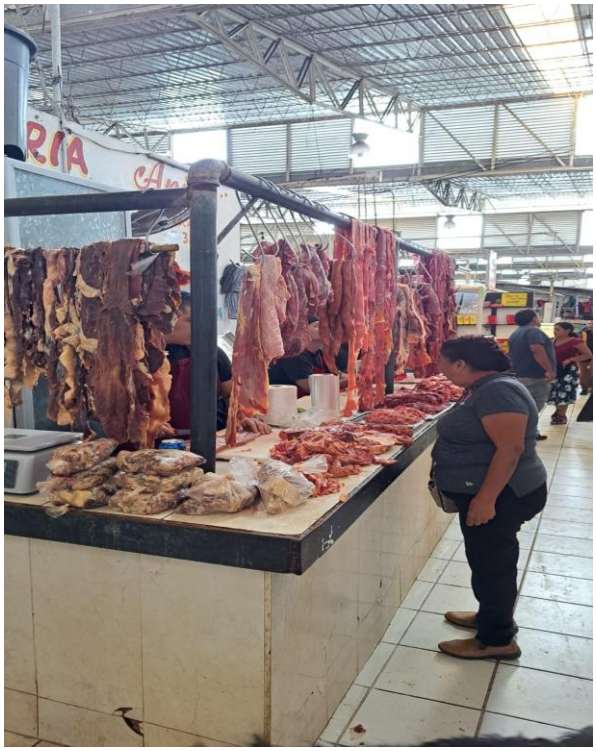

Figure 4: Central Market of Matías Romero. Photograph by the author, November 23, 2024.

The newly renovated Matías Romero station gleams brightly. In the atrium, three attendants with welcoming smiles provide information to passengers. A small stand sells merchandise: pens, notebooks, and USB drives branded with the Ferrocarril Interoceánico logo. The rehabilitation of the passenger train was not originally part of the Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec megaproject. "It was added later, by direct order of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador himself," Dr. Carrasco Toledo had explained to me during our conversation the day before. The director expressed great confidence in the success of the project, convinced it would bring renewed life to the city. "On the other side of the station, they are preparing the ground for the return of rehabilitation and repair workshops for all the trains that

will pass through here in the near future. Matías Romero will become the nerve center for freight transport in the Isthmus."

The Isthmus of Tehuantepec is set to become a key node in global trade, embedded within a form of contemporary capitalism that scholars like Anna Tsing have termed "supply chain capitalism."[15] This system is built on vast production and distribution networks, where commodities cross multiple continents before reaching their final destination. In such a model, the smooth circulation of goods is essential, and any disruption can have far-reaching consequences. One of the greatest challenges to this system is the presence of bottlenecks—points of congestion that slow down the flow of trade. When these occur, as seen recently with the Panama Canal due to drought, the repercussions extend across global supply chains.[16] It is in this context that the creation of a new interoceanic route through the Isthmus is viewed as a strategic necessity.

Yet a corridor is not merely a transport route. With its capacity to attract investment and form industrial clusters and logistics hubs, it is considered a key instrument of economic development and regional integration. These corridors do not just alter infrastructure and trade routes; they profoundly reshape the territories they traverse—socially, legally, politically and environmentally.[17] However, as scholars have pointed out, corridors are far from neutral development tools—they often reinforce existing inequalities, benefiting some while displacing and marginalizing others.[18] These megaprojects embody "supply chain capitalism," a system in which supply chains strategically expand to maximize profit by exploiting diversity in areas such as raw material costs, labor, legislation, and infrastructure. As Tsing argues, this form of capitalism fosters both global integration and growing disparities, reinforcing gaps between rich and poor, and North and South.[19]

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[15] Tsing, "Supply chains and the human condition."
[16] Delcas, "How drought is forcing the Panama Canal's painful slowdown."
[17] Grappi, "Asia's era of infrastructure and the politics of corridors."
[18] Enns and Bersaglio, "On the coloniality of 'new' mega-infrastructure projects in East Africa."
[19] Tsing, "Supply chains and the human condition," 150.

The whistle of the train echoes faintly in the distance. I quickly make my way to the platform—the only one. As I glance around, the scene strikes me as somewhat peculiar. About fifteen people are waiting, presumably more for the novelty of tourism than out of any real need to travel. I can see the excitement on the faces of two elderly women, probably in their seventies, who seem to be emotionally carried away by the sight of the train—an image that, perhaps exaggerated by nostalgia and propaganda, evokes the city's long-lost prosperity after more than twenty years of absence. Nearby, younger passengers smile as they snap photos and record videos of the approaching train on their smartphones. There is a festive, lively atmosphere among the passengers. A child jumps with relentless energy on the platform, filled with excitement, while his mother stands, torn between the joy of his happiness and the fear that he might stray too close to the edge.

What truly stands out, however, are the four heavily armed soldiers stationed on the platform, fully equipped, wielding assault rifles. I am unsure of their exact purpose here, guarding a quiet passenger train on a lazy Saturday afternoon at a modest station like Matías Romero. Still, I am not entirely surprised. Every interview I conducted during my journey through the region highlighted the increasing military presence in the Isthmus in recent years.

Figure 5: The arrival of the train at the Matías Romero station. Photograph by the author, November 23, 2024.

At its core, supply chain capitalism depends on the seamless movement of goods—a process fundamentally driven by logistics. And it is precisely a logistical vision that seems to propel this megaproject forward. But what do we mean by logistics? The term originates from the Greek *logistikē*, initially referring to practical calculations applied to tangible matters, particularly in administrative functions.[20] In the nineteenth century, another meaning emerged in France, where *logistique* described the military art of organizing and managing supply and transportation for armies.[21] In this context, logistics was not merely about moving goods—ranging from vital supplies like food to lethal ones like

[20] Chua, "Logistics".
[21] Grappi, *Logistica.*

ammunition—but also about determining mobilization, positioning, and timing.[22] These definitions emphasize logistics' fundamental components: calculation, movement, space, and the management of materials or bodies, all crucial for executing specific activities.

Today, logistics is primarily associated with the business world. In contemporary capitalism, it orchestrates and mobilizes global production.[23] The uninterrupted circulation of goods has become so vital that states treat it as a matter of national security, adjusting laws and operations to ensure its protection.[24] Any disruption to this flow is perceived as a direct threat to trade itself, and those who interfere—whether through strikes, blockades, or resistance—are cast as enemies.[25] In logistics, the boundaries between civil and military domains are exceptionally blurred and often indistinguishable. More than just a technical system, logistics operates as a form of power—through strategic calculation, it generates measures, facilitates circulation, and incessantly reshapes space to serve the supply chain.[26] Yet, in doing so, its violent dimension emerges—one that extends beyond its deep ties to military practices. As Chua et al. emphasize, logistics "marks the continuation of centuries old processes of imperial circulation and colonization."[27] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten trace the roots of modern logistics to what they call "the first great movement of commodities, the ones that could speak"—a direct reference to the transatlantic slave trade.[28]

The logistical rationality underlying projects like the Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec echoes these historical patterns. It conceives of space as a *terra nullius*, an empty landscape onto which its logic of seamless circulation and production can be projected at any cost. But logistics does not simply reconfigure territories—it dispossesses them. And those who

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[22] *Id.*
[23] Cowen, *The Deadly Life of Logistics.*
[24] *Id.*
[25] *Id.*
[26] Neilson, "Five theses on understanding logistics as power".
[27] Chua et al., "Introduction: Turbolent circulation", p. 619.
[28] Harney and Moten, *The undercommons,* p. 92

resist are left with only one role in this framework: that of an obstacle to be eliminated.

Figure 6: View from the Ferrocarril Transístmico. Photograph by the author, November 23, 2024.

Stop III: Puente Madera – A Present of Dispossession

25/11/2024

Even if the people of Matías Romero hold a faint glimmer of hope for the megaproject, this does not apply to other parts of the Isthmus population. Several communities, mostly in the Oaxacan region, are openly opposed to the initiative. One of them, Puente Madera in the municipality of San Blas Atempa, has been resisting against the imposition of one of the twelve industrial parks planned as part of the Interoceanic Corridor for more than three years. This park is slated to be built on their communal land, known as El Pitayal.

I am on my way to meet David, a community leader from Puente Madera who, in January 2024, received an astonishing 46-

year prison sentence. David is an active member of both the Asamblea Comunitaria de Puente Madera and the Asamblea de los Pueblos Indígenas del Istmo en Defensa de la Tierra y el Territorio (APIIDTT). I have already spoken with a representative of the latter, who explained their critical stance on the megaproject. Their concerns are less about the core infrastructure itself and more focused on the industrial parks, officially called Polos de Desarrollo para el Bienestar. As mentioned before, these parks are no longer seen as external to logistical operations but as an inevitable extension of their logic and functions. The central fear among those opposing the project is that these industrial hubs will perpetuate extractivist dynamics, stripping the land of its resources while providing no tangible benefits to local communities. Even though the megaproject is far from complete, its consequences are already being felt. Indigenous communities such as Santa María Mixtequilla, San Juan Guichicovi, and Puente Madera have seen parts of their lands appropriated by the state for the Corridor without their consent. Their resistance to this dispossession has brought them threats, criminalization, and for some, even death.[29]

"¡*Aquí, aquí*!" I shout to catch the attention of the bus driver. I get off near the entrance to the road leading to Puente Madera. The landscape is distinctly rural—scattered houses line the road on either side, but beyond them, cultivated fields stretch into the distance. Two dogs play in the middle of the road as I walk toward what, according to the coordinates David provided, should be his house. A man, likely in his sixties, says something to me in a language I do not understand. I assume it is Zapotec, as Puente Madera is primarily a Binnizá (Zapotec) community. We exchange a few words in Spanish, and he gestures toward David's home.

[29] Crail, "Defender la tierra, el delito."

Figure 7: View from Puente Madera. Photograph by the author, November 25, 2024.

"Hola, ¿qué tal? Giorgio, ¿verdad?" David greets me. *"¡En carne y hueso!"*[30] I reply, settling into the chair he gestures toward. Before joining me in the shaded, breezy patio outside his house, he steps inside to fetch freshly brewed coffee. Without much small talk, we dive straight into the reason for my visit. David begins by speaking about the communal land known as El Pitayal, a place rich in biodiversity — the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is the most biodiverse region in Mexico. It is where they graze their livestock

[30] "In the flesh!"

and collect wood to make traditional *totopo*.[31] "Those lands are fundamental to our subsistence, and they belong to the entire community," he asserts firmly. David then tells me how it all began, back in 2021. In March of that year, the municipality of San Blas Atempa convened a general assembly of *comuneros* to decide on the possibility of hosting one of the industrial parks planned as part of the Interoceanic Corridor on their communal lands—specifically, those of El Pitayal. According to Article 74 of the Federal Agrarian Law, such lands cannot be commercialized without the consent of the *comuneros*. David explains that, according to the assembly records, around 55% of eligible participants attended—968 people in total. He was one of them. "We immediately realized that this was a rigged assembly. More than half of those present were not *comuneros*. They were people paid by the municipal president, people bussed in, people who owed him favors, people threatened because they worked for the municipality and were told that if they did not bring at least two others with them, they would lose their jobs. And when we tried to question this, they attacked us, and we had to leave." As expected, the assembly approved the project by an overwhelming majority. Some time later, David and his comrades managed to obtain the official records, uncovering—without the slightest surprise—a massive number of forged signatures. "There are signatures of people from our community who left the meeting along with us," he tells me, adding, "This assembly, *ha revivido a los muertos*."[32] He is not speaking metaphorically. Among the signatures, they found two belonging to *comuneros* who had passed away months before.

That was the beginning of a resistance that would last three years. David recounts how he and others endured threats and attacks. At first, he says, they believed the federal government would intervene to resolve the issue, assuming that the problem was limited to corruption within local politics. But soon enough, he and his community realized they were mistaken. The forms of resistance

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[31] The *totopo* is a round corn tortilla, available in different sizes, baked and toasted in an oven typical of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. For many Isthmus communities, this preparation holds not only gastronomic value but also a deep cultural identity.

[32] "Has brought the dead back to life."

adopted by the Binnizá community of Puente Madera against the industrial park were limited to protests and road blockades, David confirms. "But they criminalized us for this, they even fabricated crimes against us. By 2022, 17 of us had arrest warrants issued by federal courts." He recalls the day he himself was detained illegally and taken all the way to the prosecutor's office in Oaxaca de Juárez. Then, in 2023, against all odds, they managed to win an *amparo* (injunction) against the construction of the industrial park. From that moment on, repression and threats intensified even further, culminating in a court ruling against David: 46 years in prison.

By the summer of 2024, after more than three years of resistance, the community could no longer hold out against the Interoceanic Corridor and its objective of transforming the Isthmus of Tehuantepec into a global logistics platform. After years of persecution, the state "pardoned" David and the 16 other criminalized community members—but Puente Madera would no longer be allowed to oppose the project.[33] "Wait, let me show you exactly where they plan to install the industrial park," he says, stepping inside his house. He returns with an enormous map, struggling to spread it out over the table. "*Aquí, ¿ves? En nuestras tierras.*"[34]

[33] For a more comprehensive view of the history of Puente Madera's resistance against the Interoceanic Corridor megaproject, I refer to Marco Antonio Vázquez Vidal's thesis, *"Defender El Pitayal es defender la vida: la disputa por el territorio en la comunidad Binnizá de Puente Madera."*

[34] "Here, you see? On our lands."

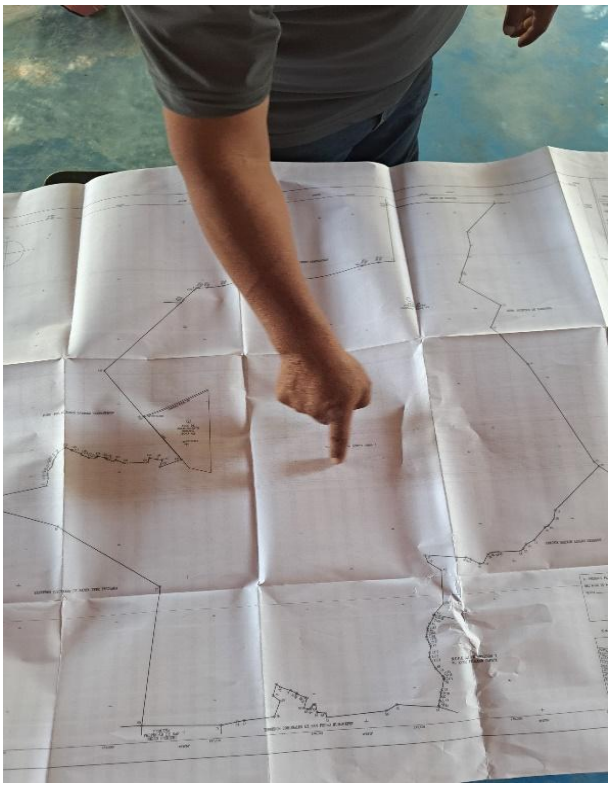

Figure 8: David shows me a map. Photograph by the author, November 25, 2024.

"*Mira*, Giorgio, we can try to understand other people's reasons, but this is not the way. This project is pure imposition. And they are all complicit—municipal authorities, the state of Oaxaca, the Navy and the federal government." I ask him to elaborate on the reasons behind the rejection of the industrial park, though I can already imagine them. "*Ves*, Giorgio, we live off our cattle, off mangoes, bananas, tamarinds. And already, at certain times of the year, they do not let us access irrigation water from the dam because they have to send it to the refinery (in Salina Cruz). What will happen when there are industrial parks everywhere around here? And what will they do with the waste? How much will they pollute our land? This park is an imposition, a land grab, and that is all there is to it."

Conclusion: A Walk Through El Pitayal

David takes me back to the bus stop on his motorcycle. We say goodbye, I wish him good luck, he does the same and ends with a firm *"ten cuidado."*[35] The sun is scorching, but I decide to venture into El Pitayal. The entrance is only a few meters away—after all the conversations about this place, I could not leave without seeing it for myself. I cross the road, the Carretera Panamericana 185, and head in. The entrance is marked by a sign, signed by the Asamblea Comunitaria de Puente Madera, where they assert their claim to these lands and reference the injunction they obtained in 2023—though it has now been revoked. The message is clear: *"¡No a la imposición del parque industrial!"*[36]

Figure 9: Entrance of El Pitayal. Photograph by the author, November 25, 2024.

[35] "Be careful."
[36] "No to the imposition of the industrial park!"

I step into these lands, communal lands. The logic that governs them feels so distant from that of the megaproject. A megaproject that appears to serve a form of capitalism built on inequality—supply chain capitalism—and driven by a logistical rationality that privileges the movement of goods above all else. It is therefore unlikely to bring real prosperity to the inhabitants of the places it traverses. And yet, the hopes of the people of Matías Romero—as well as those of many others across the Isthmus tied to the *Corredor*—are understandable. What appears to me as the most urgent issue surrounding the megaproject, however, is the dispossession experienced by the people of Puente Madera—as well as many other communities, mostly Indigenous, across the Isthmus. This dispossession undeniably reflects a colonial dynamic enacted by the Mexican government and reinforced by the logistical power that sustains and directs the implementation of the Corredor Interoceánico. Those who have dared to oppose the megaproject have faced violence and criminalization, branded as enemies, as obstacles to be removed in the name of the *seamlessness* that defines logistical rationality. A rationality that also manifests in the government's decision to place the project under military supervision, entrusting it to the Navy, and, above all, in the heavy militarization of the region. *In logistics, the boundaries between civil and military domains are exceptionally blurred and often indistinguishable.*

I look around. I see only shrubs, unfamiliar plants, and hear faint rustling in the bushes to my right. I think I catch a glimpse of a lizard's tail. The biodiversity so characteristic of the Isthmus will likely disappear once the project is fully realized. These past weeks, I have moved through an Isthmus marked by a persistent tension—one that flows like a tide, lifting some while drowning others. As the logistics megaproject comes to life, it spells the death of other projects, other ways of being, other lives. For some, it represents a new lifeblood, a force that might revitalize places long excluded and isolated. For others, it is nothing but "*un megaproyecto de muerte*."[37] A hot wind has been rising for a few minutes now. *It is time to go,* I tell myself. I take one last look at an El Pitayal that will soon no

[37] "A megaproject of death."

longer be the same. I squint hard, partly to shield my eyes from the dust relentlessly whipped into the air by the wind, partly to better envision a future that has not yet arrived, but that already reverberates in the present.

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