



Contents

Special issue: Women's Everyday Resistance to the Extractive Industry

Guest editors: Martina Angela Caretta and Sofia Zaragocin

Editorial

Women's resistance against the extractive industry: embodied and water dimensions

3

Martina Angela Caretta and Sofia Zaragocin

Articles

The rights of the Wayúu people and water in the context of mining in La Guajira, Colombia: demands of *relational water justice*

6

Astrid Ulloa

Patriarchy and progressive politics: gendered resistance to mining through everyday social relations of state formation in Intag, Ecuador

16

Emily Billo

Neo-extractivism, the Bolivian state and indigenous peasant women's struggles for water in the Altiplano

27

Gisela V. Rodriguez Fernandez

Negotiating belonging and place: an exploration of *mestiza* women's everyday resistance in Cajamarca, Peru

40

Inge A. M. Boudewijn

Women's organizing against extractivism: towards a decolonial multi-sited analysis

49

Martina Angela Caretta, Sofia Zaragocin, Bethani Turley, and Kamila Torres Orellana

Fried eggs and all-women gangs: the geopolitics of Chinese gold mining in Ghana, bodily vulnerability, and resistance

60

Heidi Hausermann, Janet Adomako, and Maya Robles

Mining and women in northwest Mexico: a feminist political ecology approach to impacts on rural livelihoods

74

América N. Lutz-Ley and Stephanie J. Buechler

Book Reviews

The divided city and the grassroots: the (un)making of ethnic divisions in Mostar

85

Sunčana Laketa

Brave New Worlds: on Gramsci, genetics, and historical geography

88

Charles Travis

Opinions

Don't cry for me, Latin America

91

William I. Robinson

Marx's law of value: a critique of David Harvey

95

Michael Roberts

Announcement

HG's February 2020 Art Contest Results

99

Clayton F. Rosati



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

Women's resistance against the extractive industry: embodied and water dimensions

Human Geography
 2020, Vol. 13(1) 3–5
 © The Author(s) 2020
 Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
 DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910893
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Martina Angela Caretta¹ and Sofia Zaragocin²

Across the globe, extractive industries—through mining, oil drilling, logging, and hydraulic fracking—are responsible for the disruption of rural communities' lives and livelihood. Women and men are impacted differently by natural resources' extraction, creating at times intrahousehold tensions (Jenkins, 2017). On one hand, mining has particular consequences on the livelihoods and lives of *campesinas* and indigenous women in the Andes, given their contentious role as cultural guardians and reproductive figures (Ulloa, 2016). On the other hand, the consequences of mining are contested and remedied by women in Appalachia (Bell, 2013). Forced dispossession of territory, place-based contamination, and an increase in gender-based violence represent just a few of the obstacles women face with medium- and large-scale natural resource extractions (Bermúdez et al., 2011; McHenry, 2017). In this special issue, we build on previous studies by feminist and human geographers and queer ecologists on the extractive industry's effect on women's and indigenous people's lives (e.g., Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Jenkins, 2017; Horowitz et al., 2018; Lu et al., 2017). We advance the discussion by focusing on women's organizing and particularly two triggering elements of it: water and embodiment. In fact, territorial conflicts surrounding conventional and unconventional natural resource extraction are not just land-based but revolve around the aquatic space (Oslander, 2002) and decolonized notions of water territory (Ulloa, 2020; Zaragocin, 2018), as source of life for people and land as well. Consequently, water pollution and/or scarcity results in women's embodied experiences of suffering which motivate their organizing. Papers in this special issue focus on gender and extractive activity, outlining distinct notions of gendered critiques of extractivism.

The first four papers of this special issue focus on the gendered and intersectional resistance to extractive activity in Latin America. Ulloa expands the idea of water justice in relation to feminist political ecologies perspectives, relational ontologies, and environmental justice. The gender-mining–water relationship is highlighted in the work of Ulloa linking environmental impacts of the Cerrejón mine to water and gender for the Wayúu people that live in La Guajira department of Colombia. She concludes that

through organized women's protest in defense of water's rights, new notions of water justice have emerged in the form of a relational water justice.

Billo looks at the gendered critiques of state-led extractivism with regard to governmental and social programs particularly under “progressive” extraction. This author contends that struggles and movements looking at socioecological relationships linked to gender, race, and ethnicity are complicated when extraction is defended from the left. Billo demonstrates how women in Intag, Ecuador, challenge patriarchal relations perpetuated through extractive relationships, resulting in a gendered decolonial analysis of everyday state formation as a site of resistance. In this context, women's everyday embodied experiences illustrate state formation.

Meanwhile, Rodriguez focuses on how neo-extractivism creates gendered forms of accumulation by dispossession in indigenous communities in Oruro, Bolivia, affected by mining contamination. Bringing together social reproduction theory and its connections to water, extractive capitalism represents a gendered form of accumulation by dispossession. Rodriguez demonstrates how social reproduction processes are interlocked with extractive capitalism and how indigenous women challenge them by reproducing alternative systems to capitalism.

Following this, Boudewijn examines the everyday resistance of *mestiza*-identifying women in Cajamarca City, Peru. Through a novel urban focus to the study of women's organizing against mining, Boudewijn explores the making of women's resistance through their belonging and the extractive company's extraneousness. Women in Cajamarca assert their opposition to the companies' presence and action by mobilizing gendered local values and knowledge. They

¹West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, USA

²Universidad de San Francisco, Quito, Ecuador

Corresponding Author:

Martina Angela Caretta, West Virginia University, Morgantown, VA 26506, USA.
 Email: martina.caretta@mail.wvu.edu

do so through habitual and individual resistance that is manifested in their water quality monitoring activities.

Water quality and scarcity are concerns that the majority of the women we present in this special issue share. In the fifth paper of this special issue, Caretta, Zaragocin, Turley, and Orellana bring together two case studies, one from the United States and one from Ecuador, to show how these concerns trigger the same embodied experiences in women, no matter where the extraction is occurring. Whether hydraulic fracturing in West Virginia or gold mining in Cuenca, Ecuador, women voice the same angst around the depletion of water resources which acts as a motivator for their organizing against the perpetrators. Stressing the importance of extending the study of extraction and its causes beyond a single-case study or country, the authors call on geographers to work to disrupt the North–South divide that governs our discipline ontologically and is embedded in its knowledge production mechanisms. Their paper contributes to the ongoing debate on decoloniality in geography (Esson et al., 2017; Halverson, 2018; Jazeel, 2017) by showing how a decolonial, multisited analytical approach can allow us to rethink the scale of effects of extractive industry and to compare and contrast embodied water relations.

As in their piece, Caretta, Zaragocin, Turley, and Orellana explore how extractivism works across scales: the body, the environment, and transnationally. Hausermann, Adomako, and Robles also explore extractivism across scales and employ a geopolitical lens to explore Chinese small-scale gold mining in Ghana. The authors uncover this transnational economic process by examining the scale of the body and showing how this type of extractive endeavor results in teen pregnancies and mercury exposure. Bodily emotions and functions are a central piece of how vulnerability is experienced in Ghana by interviewees who communicate sadness at the sight of polluted and destroyed rivers and by women who are barred from mining sites when menstruating. Women oppose mining by overlooking this ban and contesting foreign extraction by rejecting to sell their land to the Chinese. Therefore, women, in this piece and in all the other articles, should not only be viewed as victims, but rather as an active force organized against extractivism and ready to take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

Such is the case in Sonora, Mexico, as presented in the last paper of this special issue by Lutz-Ley and Buechler. Women here work in large-scale mining which provides them with economic and professional opportunities. However, they cannot break the glass ceiling and access managerial positions. This piece highlights the inherent contradictions of having to work in an industry that one is opposed to because there are no other avenues to make ends meet. Women recognize the ongoing deterioration of water quality and their limited participation in decision making; however, they voice the lack of alternatives to be able to feed their families.

The seven papers included in this special issue all unequivocally speak to the depletion of health and environmental conditions due to extractivism. Even when employment in mining is the only viable source of income, as Lutz-Ley and Buechler show, there is no denying that industries' practices are destructive and harmful to communities living in close proximity, downstream and downwind. Often, these companies are foreign and have no vested interest in the sites that they are exploiting.

Women, however, do. Their embodied experience of water depletion motivates them to organize. Also, their gendered and place-based knowledge gives them the means and ideas to resist and oppose the practices of the industry, often through small, individual, daily actions. While the resistance discussed in these papers is not overt, it is significant nevertheless. Women lack the resources to organize on a big scale and are often opposed even within their own community. However, they keep on going, all across the globe. In fact, we argue, extractivism cannot be understood without taking into account the transnational nature of this enterprise.

Finally, in this special issue we assemble seven pieces covering North America, South America, and West Africa to show that water of, embodiment of, and resistance to extractivism are intertwined and that women are at the forefront of organizing. Notably, for the topical and theoretical advancement of our discipline, geopolitics, feminist political geographical and decolonial perspectives are brought into dialogue with extractive activity, resulting in new ideas of relational justice, state-formation, and accumulation by dispossession.

References

- Bermúdez R, Emilia R, Rodríguez Maldonado R, et al. (2011) *Mujer y Minería. Ámbitos de Análisis e Impactos de la Minería en la Vida de las Mujeres', Enfoque de Derechos y Perspectiva de Género*. Bogotá: Censat-Agua Viva.
- Bell SE (2013) *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed: Appalachian Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice*. UI Press.
- Esson J, Noxolo P, Baxter R, et al. (2017) The 2017 RGS-IBG chair's theme: decolonising geographical knowledges, or reproducing coloniality? *Area* 49(3): 384–388. DOI: 10.1111/area.12371
- Halverson S (2018) Decolonizing Territory: Dialogues with Latin American knowledges and grassroots strategies. *Progress in human geography* 43(5): 790–814.
- Horowitz LS, Keeling A, Lévesque F, et al. (2018) Indigenous peoples' relationships to large-scale mining in post/colonial contexts: toward multidisciplinary comparative perspectives. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 5(3): 404–414. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2018.05.004
- Jazeel T (2017) Mainstreaming geography's decolonial imperative. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 42(3): 334–337. DOI: 10.1111/tran.12200
- Jenkins K (2017) Women anti-mining activists' narratives of everyday resistance in the Andes: staying put and carrying on

- in Peru and Ecuador. *Gender, Place & Culture* 24(10): 1441–1459. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2017.1387102
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2015) The feminisation of mining. *Geography Compass* 9(9): 523–541. DOI: 10.1111/gec3.12229
- Lu F, Valdivia G and Silva NL (2017) *Oil, Revolution, and Indigenous Citizenship in Ecuadorian Amazonia*. Switzerland: Spring Link. Available at: <https://www.palgrave.com/de/book/9781137564627>.
- McHenry KA (2017) Fracking women: a feminist critical analysis of hydraulic fracturing in Pennsylvania. *IJFAB: International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* 10(2): 79–104. DOI: 10.3138/ijfab.10.2.79
- Oslender U (2002) “The logic of the river”: a spatial approach to ethnic-territorial mobilization in the Colombian Pacific Region. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 7(2): 86–117. DOI: 10.1525/jlca.2002.7.2.86
- Ulloa A (2016) Feminismos territoriales en América Latina: Defensas de la vida frente a los extractivismos. *Nomadas* 45(1): 123–139.
- Ulloa A (2020) The rights of the Wayúu people and water in the context of mining in La Guajira, Colombia: demands of relational water justice. *Human Geography* 13(1): 6–15.
- Zaragocin S (2018) Espacios acuáticos desde una descolonialidad hemisférica feminista. *Mulier Sapiens* 10: 6–19.



The rights of the Wayúu people and water in the context of mining in La Guajira, Colombia: demands of relational water justice

Human Geography
2020, Vol. 13(1) 6–15
© The Author(s) 2020
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: [10.1177/1942778620910894](https://doi.org/10.1177/1942778620910894)
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Astrid Ulloa¹

Abstract

This article addresses how water is being represented and positioned by Wayúu people in order to claim and defend water's territorial rights against the expansion of the Cerrejón coal mine, in La Guajira, Colombia. In a semidesertic region in Colombia, Cerrejón (the largest open-pit coal mine in Colombia and Latin America, and the 10th biggest in the world) has created environmental inequalities and control and infrastructure arrangements that transform local water dynamics, affecting Wayúu people in a differentiated way. Cerrejón has intervened the territory technically and environmentally, affecting the river Ranchería and its water streams, which has dispossessed and transformed Wayúu peoples' cultural and daily relationships with water's territories. In response, the organization Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu (FMW) has not only proposed water defense strategies and resistance against mining, but also opened debates about water's territories and water's rights. For the FMW the defense of water's territories (sacred places in which the spirits of water inhabit) implies that Wayúu territories and water are in an embedded relationship which is not possible to fragment or separate either by mining processes or by institutional policies. Their proposals allows us to rethink the notion of water justice, and access to water by humans and nonhumans.

Keywords

Colombia, mining, relational water justice, water's territories, Wayúu people

Los derechos del pueblo Wayúu y del agua en contextos mineros en La Guajira, Colombia: demandas de justicia hídrica relacional

Resumen

Este artículo aborda cómo el agua está siendo representada y posicionada por los wayúu para reclamar y defender los derechos territoriales del agua contra la expansión de la mina de carbón Cerrejón, en La Guajira, Colombia. En una región semidesértica en Colombia, Cerrejón (la mina de carbón a cielo abierto más grande en Colombia y América Latina, y la décima más grande del mundo) ha creado desigualdades ambientales y acuerdos de control e infraestructura que transforman las dinámicas locales del agua, afectando al pueblo wayúu de manera diferenciada. Cerrejón ha intervenido el territorio técnica y ambientalmente, afectando el río Ranchería y diversos arroyos, lo cual ha despojado y transformado las relaciones culturales y cotidianas de los wayúu con los territorios del agua. En respuesta, la organización Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu (FMW) ha propuesto no solo estrategias de defensa del agua y resistencia contra la minería, sino que también ha abierto debates sobre los territorios del agua y los derechos del agua. Para el FMW, la defensa de los territorios del agua (lugares sagrados en los que habitan los espíritus del agua) implica que los territorios wayúu y el agua están en una relación embebida que no es posible fragmentar o separar ni por procesos mineros ni por políticas institucionales. Sus propuestas permiten repensar la noción de justicia hídrica y el acceso al agua por parte de humanos y no humanos.

¹Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia

Corresponding Author:

Astrid Ulloa, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Cra 30 No.45-03, Colombia.
Email: eaulloac@unal.edu.co

Palabras clave

Pueblo Wayúu, Colombia, territorios del agua, minería, justicia hídrica relacional

Introduction

In Latin America, water governance with regard to mining has been criticized due to the impact mining has on water sources, for example, waste from exploitation, pollution, and drying and diversion of streams, which affect local people's availability of and access to water. Many studies on mining and water focus on increasing socioenvironmental conflicts (Bottaro and Sola Álvarez, 2018; Kauffer, 2018; Ulloa and Romero-Toledo, 2018; Yacoub et al., 2015). There are only few analyses that focus on gender and/or feminist perspectives and their link to mining and water control, and on women and their actions against it (Boelens et al., 2015; Caro, 2018a; Salazar, 2017). For this reason, I will focus on how territorial, cultural, environmental impacts of the Cerrejón mine related to water are deeply connected with gender for the Wayúu people that live in La Guajira department of Colombia.

La Guajira is a semidesertic region highly affected by climate change and desertification. Cerrejón (the largest open-pit coal mine in Colombia and Latin America and the 10th biggest in the world) has generated environmental inequalities and global-local controls of water and territories that affect availability and quality and violate *water's territorial rights* to different social actors (afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, peasants, and the dynamics of rural-urban populations). Most affected of all are Wayúu men and women; their daily cultural practices have been altered in a profound and intensive way by the mine. In response, Wayúu women and men have confronted the mine by defending their territory–water relationship as a part of their cultural identity.

The question I raise in this article is how water is being represented and positioned by Wayúu people in order to claim and defend *water's territorial rights* against the exploitation and expansion of the Cerrejón coal mine. I argue that the Wayúu people have opened up new ways of thinking about environmental and water justice in relational terms by proposing the defense of *water's territories* and by including the nonhuman's rights. This process requires recognizing the Wayúu people's cultural perspectives, concepts of ways of living, and their ontology, in which humans and nonhumans (as living beings in their own rights and as political agents) are in permanent interrelation and reciprocity.

In particular, I will focus on the political and environmental actions of the grass-root organization *Sütsüin Jieyuu Wayúu - Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu* (The Wayúu Women Force, hereafter FMW). FMW is the most representative political organization of the Wayúu people, made up of Wayúu women and men. They began their mobilizations in 2006 in order to claim for human rights, to defend their

territory and their ethnic rights, and to confront the effects of the mine in their territories. FMW centers their protest actions on cultural, territorial, and political representations of water. For the FMW, the defense of the *water's territories* (as a sacred place in which the spirits of water inhabit) implies that Wayúu's territories and water are in an embedded relationship, which is not possible to fragment or separate, either by mining processes or by institutional policies. In that context, I will focus on how FMW confronts mining by demanding water justice and the recognition of territorial, water, gender, and ethnic rights.

From a feminist political ecology (FPE) of water (Bossenbroek and Zwarteeveen, 2018; Zaragocin, 2018), I will analyze coal mining in the Guajira as an expression of a capitalist transformation and its effects on the access and control of water among Wayúu men and women, as well as on dispossession, land and water grabbing, and transformations of domestic spaces. I will also apply posthuman perspectives that explain the complex interactions between humans and nonhumans and the ways in which they establish relationships and coproduce each other under relational ontologies (De la Cadena, 2015; Elmhirst, 2015; Escobar, 2015). Such an approach explicates the demand for *relational water justice* and water's territorial rights (Ulloa, 2017).

This research is based on a collaborative methodological approach that has been developed with FMW since 2018. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and analysis of narratives (videos, conferences, and political statements made by FMW). FMW's leaders have their own publications that present their perspectives and their voices. They prefer that nonindigenous researchers use these publications as statements of their perspectives based on their own process of research (confronting the idea that the local expressions are only oral testimonials). Therefore, I use quotes from their publications to substantiate my arguments.

The article is structured as follows. In the first part I present conceptual discussions based on FPE perspectives of water, relational ontologies, and environmental justice. The second part will focus on the territorial, cultural, and environmental transformations of water caused by Cerrejón mine in La Guajira. The third part will focus on FMW's resistances and dynamics of defending their *water's territories* and ways of life. Finally, I will discuss the implications to locate a relational, environmental, and territorial justice perspective that allows the continuity of spirituality and materiality of life and guarantees the humans' and nonhumans' existence.

Water's territorial rights: posthumans and feminist perspectives

Notions of water as an economic good or commodity (Villa, 2012) have underpinned development and extractive projects that generate water conflicts and injustices. Mining in particular produces social inequalities, erases ethnic and local rights, increases water grabbing, and establishes hydro-power (understood as a process of water control and instrumental and infrastructure modification of the rivers, streams, and underground water). Mining hydropower relations affect the access, use, and decision making in relation to water and exclude diverse social actors and their gender differences in the political processes. To address the gender and ethnic differences under water control by mining and water injustices, I will focus on the theoretical approaches of gender, FPEs, relational ontologies, and environmental justice, to guide the analysis of this article.

Gender and feminist political ecologies of water

Studies related to gender, mining, and water (Harris, 2009; Lahiri-Dutt, 2009; Sultana, 2009, 2011) have focused on access of men and women to water as well as the participation on water decisions and gender inequality under neoliberal natures. They also have highlighted the impacts on women's lives, emotions, and bodies due to the lack of access to water. In a similar way, analysis of water from different trends of FPEs has generated particular propositions in their critical analyses of unequal gender relations and, from feminist critiques, on the relationships between gender and water political issues. It has also highlighted processes of resistance around access, control, use, decision making, and rights surrounding water. In this way FPE offers a complex perspective to deal with sociowater relationships and gender inequalities (Buechler and Hanson, 2015; Elmhirst, 2015; Resurrección, 2019). Likewise, a new axis of analysis has focused on extractivist processes and the effects on the local social dynamics and environmental management of water and processes of territorial appropriation.

Within these studies water is highlighted as a new center of analysis. Bossenbroek and Zwarteeven (2018) thus demand "theorizing water dynamics and gender dynamics as intimately linked: materially (through labor and property relations), and symbolically and discursively (through norms, meanings and symbols), with 'gender' and 'water' continuously defining and redefining each other—moving together, as in a perpetual dance." From this perspective, discussions related to structural inequalities and their effects on water-control for women, which prevent them to have access and make decisions in relation to it, have emerged. Zaragocin (2018) argues for a new viewpoint regarding water and gender that brings together water-territory and body-territory, in order to understand how daily practices, quotidian

experiences, and emotions of women are affected by daily water dispossession (Ojeda et al., 2015).

Hence, in order to analyze gender–mining–water relationships it is necessary to start by studying the effects that the scarcity (as a result of uneven appropriation, power relationships, and territorial control) and the politics of water have on women's bodies, considered as the first territory (Colectivo de geografía crítica, 2018; Zaragocin, 2018). Moreover, it is necessary to consider the interrelation between body and *water's territories* as a place of defense to confront the violent everyday dispossessions.

Relational ontologies and nonhumans: water as a political actor

Feminist perspectives look for new analysis around subjectivities and identities (bodies, human, nonhuman), under new and complex assemblies of power related to environmental discussions. These perspectives open the door for gender debates in the direction of the recognition of identities associated with ethnicity, race, and intersectionality and an opening toward viewing nonhumans as political actors. These approaches allow us to focus on natures–cultures and posthumanism (Elmhirst, 2015; Harcourt and Nelson, 2015).

For these reasons, it becomes increasingly important to position different ways of interaction among humans and nonhumans that decentre the predominant anthropocentric approach to water (center on humans' necessities) by claiming other ways of seeing the nonhuman. Here it is important to start with a relational ontologies' perspective, which understands relationships between humans and nonhumans in non-anthropocentric terms.

There are relational ontologies in which "humans and non-humans (the organic, the non-organic, and the supernatural or spiritual) are integral parts of these worlds in their multiples' interrelations" (Escobar, 2015: 98). This implies the recognition that there are other conceptions of rights for nonhumans that include territory and all beings (De la Cadena, 2015; Escobar, 2015). In this sense water as a non-human entity can be considered not only as a part of the relationships between humans and nonhumans, but also as an important part in the coproduction of the humans–water's territories relationships. Water also has its own place that is shared with other living entities; it is a means to guarantee the life of human beings and other beings, and water is a common good that allows social dynamics of use and collective processes linked with cultural perspectives.

Environmental and water justice: water's territories

Environmental justice debates have a long tradition related to the recognition of rights, distribution, participation and capabilities, environmental injustices, environmental conflicts, social movements, and local confrontations (Holifield, 2015; Schlosberg, 2007, 2013). Water justice also addresses

water conflicts and injustices of access, control, decision making and rights under power relationships and the social inequalities of water use, management, and governance under specific politics of water (Boelens et al., 2018; Budds, 2010; Perrault, 2014). Recently, thanks to extractivist processes on indigenous territories, the dialogue has included nonhuman perspectives leading to new notions of environmental justice. According to Ulloa (2017: 179) "Under these perspectives, environmental justice should be understood as an ethical, political, territorial, and reciprocal action with the nonhumans from indigenous territorial and cultural principles." Building on indigenous peoples' identity and political dynamics leads to a notion of *relational indigenous environmental justice* (Ulloa, 2017).

I will propose an approach of environmental and water justice to address water–humans relationship. This approach arises from Wayúu's notion of *water's territories*, which include not only the territories of water (as being) but also other nonhumans and spiritual entities as part of those territories, and locate water as a political actor that is in permanent relationship with humans. Under this perspective the rights of water and nonhumans could be called a *relational water justice*.

The above-mentioned discussions allow me to analyze how the Cerrejón generates cultural, territorial, and environmental impacts that affect not only Wayúu's every day practices, lives, and bodies, but also water and nonhumans' territories. It allows me to analyze how Wayúu people are demanding *relational water justice* to face mining processes

and how they position their defense of their territories and cultural identity.

La Guajira, Cerrejón, and its cultural, territorial, and environmental transformations

The department of La Guajira (Figure 1) is the most unequal in Colombia (Gini 0.553, 2017). It registers a poverty rate of 55.8%, and 25.7% of the population is in extreme poverty (Gobernación de La Guajira, 2017). Although royalties from the mining-energy sector are an important fiscal source, La Guajira has the highest rate of unsatisfied basic needs (NBI) with 44.6%, ranking above the NBI of the Caribbean region (26.9%) and the national average (14.6%; Gobernación de La Guajira, 2017). In sociocultural terms, La Guajira is very diverse; 44.9% of the population belongs to the Wayúu, Kogui, Wiwa, and Arhuaco indigenous peoples, representing 20.2% of the total indigenous population of Colombia. Additionally, 40.3% are mestizo or white, 14.8% Afro-Colombian, and 0.04% Rom people (Gobernación de La Guajira, 2017).

La Guajira is a semidesertic region. Within Colombia, it is one of the areas most affected by climate change and with greater water complications due to intense periods of drought and desertification that affect sources of water (IDEAM, 2018). The most important river in the department of La Guajira is the Ranchería. It begins in the Sierra Nevada de

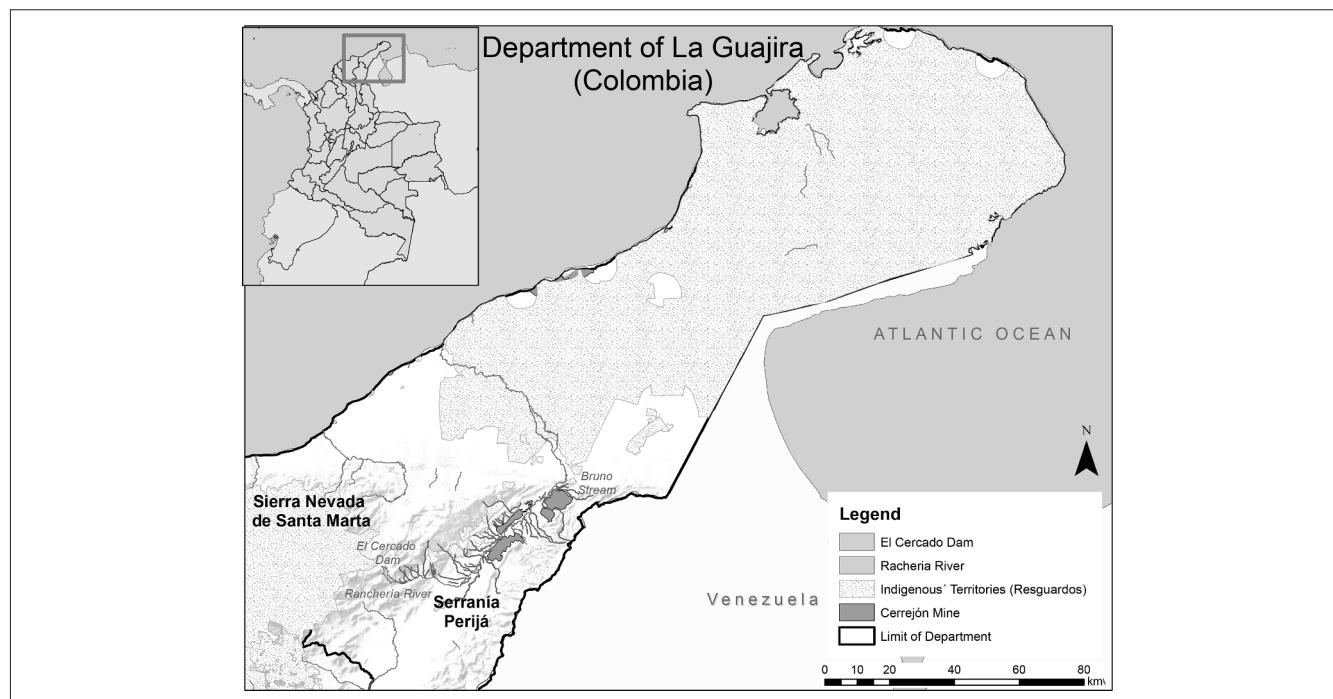


Figure 1. Localization of La Guajira, Colombia.

Santa Marta at an altitude of 3,800 m.a.s.l.; it crosses the region from west to east flowing to the Atlantic Ocean in the city of Riohacha (Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible-MADS, Corpoguajira and Universidad de Antioquia-Udea, 2013). The Ranchería river has been disrupted many times throughout its course. Upstream, the multipurpose dam El Cercado, constructed in 2002 and filled in 2010, has limited water flow. The dam, even though not a megadam, has similar impacts as it deeply affects water and biodiversity cycles and transforms cultural landscapes and ways of living (Boelens et al., 2018). It also affects accessibility of water in the middle of the Ranchería river, due to the use of water for intensive agricultural purposes in the high basin. However, the river stream and the Wayúu people are more affected by the Cerrejón coal mining activities.

Cerrejón's exploitation began in 1983, under the responsibility of the Colombian government in association with Intercor, a subsidiary of EXXON, a US company. Since 2007 the mine is run by a consortium of transnational mining companies called Cerrejón composed of BHP Billiton plc (Australia), Anglo American plc (South Africa), and Glencore plc (Switzerland). Its activities encompass coal mining, a train transportation line, and a maritime port of thermal carbon, all of which affect most of the territory of La Guajira. Cerrejón produces around 30m tons of coal per year and has an operating license that lasts until 2034. Its mining extraction area covers approximately 100 km². Cerrejón contributes to 2% of the national GDP, in the mining and quarrying sector, and generates 44% of the departmental GDP in the same sector (Cerrejón, 2017).

Environmentally, the effects of Cerrejón's mining operation on water are:

violation of the rights to water, food, to a healthy environment and to health, among others; its cumulative effects, such as excessive water consumption (more than 45 million of liters/day in 2015), of the occupation of vast areas of land and ancestral territories (69,393.45 ha) of pollution processes of air and water, of massive deforestation and diversion of sources water (more than eight streams), have contributed, next to the failures of public policies and corruption, to a humanitarian crisis within an entire department. (Fuentes et al., 2018: 27)

Cerrejón directly intervenes in the Ranchería river in the middle of the basin and the Tabaco, Bruno, and Cerrejón streams by dumping waste of the exploitation of coal through 15 dumping ponds that have heavy metals (cadmium, lead, zinc, and manganese) and are thus highly contaminating. Several streams (Aguas Blancas, Manantialito, and Arroyo Bruno, among others) have been deviated in order to continue coal exploit. This is affecting the river flow and decreasing vegetation, agricultural areas, and biodiversity while increasing erosion and water scarcity, which affect the surrounding ecosystems (Fuentes et al., 2018). At the same

time, Wayúu's sociocultural relationships with the river and water dynamics are disrupted (Caro, 2018a, b; Fuentes et al., 2018).

Cultural and territorial transformations

Since the establishment of the mine, several territorial and socioenvironmental conflicts have emerged. These conflicts have affected urban and territorial dynamics of indigenous Wayúu people due to affectations to their territory and territorial rights. The Wayúu people are suffering, due to mining, from environmental impacts, health problems, emission of combustion gases, and vibrations from the use of explosives on the mine. The expansion of the mine required the displacement of different Wayúu communities from their territories; for the Baja Guajira more than 7,000 Wayúu people have been displaced and resettled (Cabrera and Fierro, 2013) since the 1980s. This dislocation affects important territorial dynamics related to places of housing and cemeteries, neighborhoods construction based on clan relationships and access to water, among others.

The coal exploitation in the Cerrejón mine has affected both women and men. Specifically, it brought changes in their territorial dynamics and relations with nonhumans, and access to water due to resettlement for the expansion of the mine. Women have been greatly affected by the relocation of their ancestral territories, which has implied new cultural and spiritual relationships. They use water on a daily basis for washing, cooking, and taking care of humans and nonhumans and are the ones who have to travel to greater distances in search of new water sources (Ortiz et al., 2018). Territorial resettlement leads to intangible damage and new relationships with places, which cannot be measured in economic or material terms since they involve emotional effects.

Women, for example, lost places on the river and the streams, for collective and cultural activities of washing, cooking, bathing, talking, and sharing with other women.

The water level was permanent, but not now, and that has affected women. They have to go find the water to distant places and wells, and when they can't go, they send the girls and boys. Girls are exposed to many problems. There are girls who get pregnant, because while they come and go, they are alone in many places. They have to go because they can't buy water from tank trucks. (Angelica Ortiz, 2018, personal communication)

The cultural relationships of Wayúu men and women have been transformed, specifically the daily dynamics of spiritual relationships with the water. Water as a nonhuman being is sacred, and the *water's territories* are sacred places. Women go to water places in order to perform rituals, clean bad energy or ask the mother of water for protection. For them water is life and is alive. But since it is alive it can also be harmed. The Aguas Blancas stream has been dried up by

the mine, and the *Pulowi* (female water spirit) lost her territories. The water disappeared and with it animals and plants, directly harming Wayúu women. For them, there has been daily dispossession.

At this time, we cannot travel through the stream. The company has put restrictions in our mobility. We can no longer meet in the wells, because there is no water, and its territories are disappearing. The *Pulowi* is not there and we cannot do our rituals. We have no water for life, the water is dying, as well as plants and animals. (Yaneth Ortiz, 2019, personal communication)

Cerrejón is exerting a hydropower that deeply affects the daily practices of women and men and the economic, food, and symbolic processes associated with water, especially among the Wayúu men and women. These hydropower processes have led to the politicization of water. Monetary compensation for environmental damage, environmental mitigation measures and promotion of “local development” of communities, and the idea of “public good” have been ways of territorial fragmentation, exclusion, and generation of inequalities among Wayúu people. Under mining processes, water has also been affected by physical transformations related to changes in its flows, drainages, and ecosystem dynamics. For Wayúu people, this commodification of water and new power relationships lead to symbolic transformations that decontextualize their cultural dynamics and relationships among humans and water. In this sense, water’s struggles become a political space and as a way of representing unequal power relationships.

Wayúu people’s resistances and dynamics of water’s territorial defenses: Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu

The Wayúu people are a binational community (Colombia and Venezuela). In Colombia they live in La Guajira, and they are approximately 270,000 people, 42.2% of the entire population of the department. They have legal rights over 28 collective territories (called *resguardos*), approximately 1,084,027 has (Archila, 2015).

The worldview and the practices of the Wayúu are embedded in their territory. (It has different scales: horizontal and vertical). They consider water (*winkat*) and its manifestation rain (*juyaá-mobile*) as alive beings. The rain moistens the earth (*Mna-immobile*) and life germinates and gives birth to the Wayúu. The earth and water are a vital couple; they are the basic principle of their sociocultural territorial organization that interrelates two places of life (Caro, 2018a, b; Vásquez and Correa, 1993). Dreams are also sacred to Wayúu people; they are ways of communicating with spirits of dead people, who give advice or prevent dangers or

environmental problems, such as those related to water (Vásquez and Correa, 1993). Robles Chávez (2018) states:

Through dreams, the Wayúu believe that the spirits reveal the ideal location to dig for groundwater. Requests made by the spirit once the source has been found must be carried out; a *yonna* (ritual dance), cooked meat and liquor are some of the offerings that people give in gratitude for such a prodigious donation.

For Wayúu people, the places of birth of water are sacred and protected by a feminine spirit of water (*Pulowi*), who allows access to water to humans and nonhumans. Wayúu respect these places and don’t live near them because they are water’s territories; they are the spirit’s home and should have its own intimacy. Thinking about water’s territories implies thinking of water as a political agent that has its own places and territorial dynamics. These notions are related to cultural notions of gender, specifically regarding women, since water and women are seen as givers of life. Women also perform all the rituals related to water and lead the processes of use and decision making about it.

Since the beginning of the mine’s exploitation activities in 1983, the Wayúu people have opposed coal mining in their territories due to its environmental and cultural impacts and everyday dispossessions, and have demanded socioenvironmental justice. Coal exploitation has led to sociospatial segregation, destruction, grabbing of common goods, environmental suffering, and lack of autonomy and self-determination for the Wayúu people (Archila et al., 2015; Ortiz et al., 2018).

FMW builds upon this historic opposition; currently its main objectives are to visualize the violations of human and ethnic rights and showcase the environmental, social, and cultural impacts of Cerrejón in national and international scales.

FMW has also opened a discussion on how the Cerrejón mine affects women more than men. Wayúu women state that since mining started, the relationship to Mother Earth has been one of pain, as their leaders state: “we feel it because we are children of the earth, and our elders say it; it is as if all this looting, the fact that they are looting her coal, is like removing a piece of flesh from your child or one’s self” (Romero and Barón, 2013: 28). For FMW, water is a political agent with its own places and territorial rights. However, water seen as a commodity generates inequalities and creates new ways of use, control, and access by humans and nonhumans.

The Wayúu people lead resistances, proposals, and alternative forms of relationships with the nonhumans in their territories. They defend the life and the right to be and to live in their territories. For them, water has been a victim of the mining process. FMW has led different territorial defenses; however, the defense of the *water’s territories* is an imbedded relationship that is not possible to fragment by mining

processes or separate by institutional policies. FMW has generated a repertoire of actions ranging from local protests and national legal actions, to the construction of transnational networks with other actors in defense of their *water's territories*. As Romero (2015a), a Wayúu leader, states:

While "for them" (the extractivists) is an economic resource, for us it is an ancestral and sacred public good. We are not women who seek "resources", but the uprising of our people to confront these multinationals that are destroying our territory, and just as we are givers of lives, they should learn from our example and be responsible for generating lives. Without this we cannot talk about environmental policies or sustainable development.

FMW's political actions have also supported the defense of the Ranchería river. The governmental construction of the El Cercado dam (in 2010) affected the availability, accessibility, and quality of water, for the Wayúu people, increasing the ongoing conflict with mining. After that, Cerrejón (in 2011) presented an expansion project of the mine, which implied a deviation of the Ranchería river; FMW created alliances with other social movements (such as Comité Cívico de La Guajira en Defensa del Río Ranchería, el Manantial de Cañaverales y las Regalías, and NGO) and on 1 August 2012, they called for a regional mobilization in Riohacha against mining. During August 16–20, 2012, they made an expedition along the Ranchería river calling attention to the implications of its deviation. These actions had regional, national, and international impacts. Cerrejón stopped the project, even though they argued economic reasons. Since then, FMW has had different political strategies and international presence in order to protect the *water's territories* and to denounce the sociocultural, territorial, and environmental effects of Cerrejón's activities.

In December 2017, the Wayúu indigenous communities of Paradero and La Gran Parada in La Guajira asked the Constitutional Court for protection of the Arroyo Bruno (a stream) and its ecosystem against the risk of the mining expansion into its channel. This expansion would change the water cycle, violating the right to water, and impacting territorial, environmental, and cultural practices. However, it was still deviated. In a 2015 declaration on the issue, Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu (2015: 1) stated:

Based on a suffering that is interpreted as one of the worst historical tragedies due to the permanent mistreatment that has been generated by the transnational company Cerrejón and the impacts of open pit mining, which in fact is interpreted as a constant destruction of *Wounmainkat*, our Mother Earth; we bring this message: This project is part of a perverse strategy of the company [...] and its shareholders, who only seek to generate profits for their own pockets and maintain control over our territory and its natural assets under the protection of consumerist countries and their economic power.

A power that only translates into money and that has been for the Wayúu indigenous people, the cause of their worst tragedies, has brought serious sociocultural implications and the rupture of the social network of an entire community that has historically remained in their ancestral territory.

FMW confronting mining impositions and defending water's rights

Coal mining in the Guajira and the presence of the Cerrejón mine are a reproduction of colonial power relations of exploitation that have reproduced gender inequalities and that exacerbate territorialized exclusions based on gender and ethnicity. In this way, the transnational owners of the mine are exerting a water control in ways that deeply affect the daily practices of Wayúu women and men, especially those associated to water. Wayúu notions of human–nonhuman relationships are not considered or included, generating an epistemic violence against them. At the same time, there is violence against the nonhumans and their lives. Mining economics misrecognize legal, environmental, and cultural rights previously recognized by national and international policies. This misrecognition allows international economic actors the appropriation of, symbolic and de facto, indigenous territories.

FMW's political actions seek to position their cultural perspectives while denouncing the impacts of the Cerrejón mine. As the Wayúu leader Romero (2015b) states:

Territory for us, is a living being and represents the Wayúu women. *Mna* is a woman, she is the earth. *Juyaá* is the one who fecundates, and he is part of everything that has to do with water, rain, water sources, rivers, streams, etc. Our relationship with the Bruno stream means mainly the veins, it is the veins of the earth, the veins of *Woumainkat* (our territory-mother earth); therefore, for us to cut a vein means death. So, it has a high degree of spiritual representation for us, because from the Bruno stream all the dreams arise. We made spiritual practices in our Bruno stream, for this reason, it has a symbolic meaning. This is not a stream that only matters to La Guajira, it matters to the nation, it matters to the whole world because everything is connected.

The economic processes related to mining bring about result in economic transformations and articulations that oppose local dynamics. These processes allow us to show how a mining project has wider impacts beyond one specific site or community, and it affects an entire territory, culture, and their practices. A mining process affects the bodies of humans and the nonhumans and the places where they encounter each other.

Wayúu people's relational perspective in which territory and water are living entities allows the critiques of economic development projects such mining and disrupts/decolonizes

the idea of nature and water as commodities. It proposes the notion of water as a nonhuman with rights and as a political actor, which enrich the currents debates of water justice.

The Wayúu people demand the recognition of their autonomy and self-determination and their conceptions about the continuity of life in which men and women are defenders of life. They also claim for the defense of *water's territories* since they belong to water spirits and because these sacred places connect diverse nonhumans at different scales. Wayúu people also demand the recognition and respect of their ancestral rights and legal rights over their territories. They are transforming notions of water and demanding the recognition of their ontology—epistemology and relations with water as a center of the reproduction of life.

For these reasons, FMW provides a new language for defense of life itself in contexts of extractivisms. In fact, FMW demands for the defense of Ranchería river and Bruno stream (and other streams) as vital nonhumans that have the right to be and feel in their territories. This implies that those nonhumans (rivers) are part of humans, because they have always been connected. They consider that relationships between humans and nonhumans are based on reciprocity between different beings that act in the vertical and horizontal places of their territory. Under this vision, humans and nonhumans have agency and capacity for action, related to specific places, and have political power to make decisions on them. The Wayúu people in general, and FMW in specific want this claim to be recognized; they want water to be seen and defended as a place of encounters and interactions.

I consider that the Wayúu people's demands claim for another perspective of environmental and water justice, as *relational indigenous environmental justice* (Ulloa, 2017). But we can modify this concept and, for the Wayúu's context, see it as a *relational water justice*, in which *water's territories* are seen as living entities, in order to be recognized as a political actor with rights to be and to exist. It also allows to demand water justice, and availability and access not only as a right for humans, but also for all species that need water to exist. It allows the continuity of spiritual and material life and guarantees the humans' and nonhumans' existence.

In particular, the defense of FMW and *water's territories* and resistance to mining process have allowed opening debates about territories and territoriality of humans and nonhumans, water's rights and nonhumans' rights, and access to water not only by humans, but also by nonhumans, that allows to rethink the notion of commons and water justice. In this way they are expanding our notion of environmental and water justice debates, specially in the context of water-scarce scenarios like La Guajira.

Wayúu people's perspective, from a situated knowledge, demands the recognition of their identities linked to territories—water. Their perspectives contribute to recent trends of FPEs that broaden their focus on natures—cultures, posthumanism, and indigenous activism movements around structural and daily inequalities related to environmental issues.

Wayúu's actions against extractivisms evidence a new way of doing environmental politics, which has the potential to position other notions of nature and rights and question socioenvironmental inequalities. Their resistances revolve around the search for alternatives not only to mining but also to everyday capitalist dispossession.

The political actions that I mentioned before allow us to understand how FMW has constructed local–national–transnational networks in search of the defense of their ancestral territory. These networks are constituted by environmental NGOs (national NGOs such as Censat-Agua viva, CINEP, and CCajar), human rights NGOs, universities, scholars, and national and international networks of environmental and water justice, among others.

However, FMW's political actions have come at a high cost; these activists are now in danger. Most of the members of FMW are protected by the national government, because they have been threatened by paramilitary forces, which consider that Wayúu people are against development and progress. Despite the threats, they are still defending their territory and *water's territories*.

Conclusion

In this article, I have focused on the protest actions of FMW in defense of water's rights and against the effects of mining on their territories. I have shown that through their struggle FMW has presented new notions of water justice. Cerrejón has developed technical and environmental interventions over the territory and the Ranchería river and its water streams that have led to dispossessions and transformations on gender and Wayúu peoples' cultural and daily relationships with their territories—water. Cerrejón interventions on water have been on the river through waste from coal exploitation, pollution, drying, and diversion of streams, among others. These interventions are located on La Guajira, a semidesertic region and the most affected by climate change and processes of desertification in Colombia, increasing more the disavailability and access to water of indigenous people.

However, Wayúu people and in particular FMW have resisted and positioned *water's territories* and *territorial rights* against the expansion of the Cerrejón. They are demanding the recognition of their relational ontology, which is based on the continuity of life. Under this cultural perspective indigenous women are defenders of life due to their belonging to a place and their connection to *water's territories*.

In this way, Wayúu are proposing a *relational water justice*, which locates water as a living being and as political actor with rights. This perspective allows to demand water justice that includes rights of water to its territory, and at the same time availability and access to water not only as a right for humans, but also as a right for all species, which need the

water in order to be, feel, and exist. This notion also entails new concepts of ways of living.

Wayúu's demands can relate and contribute to new critical perspectives around water analysis against the processes of appropriation, exclusion, and dispossession not only of their territories but of their daily practices. In the same way, FMW's political and territorial defense actions confront the globalized and capitalist vision of water as a commodity. These political and conceptual perspectives also contribute to the current debates of feminist political ecologies of water and highlight a posthuman turn, in which nonhumans are beings and political actors. The FMW's demands for *relational water justice* contribute to the contemporary discussions on relational ontologies. This implies rethinking and, in fact, decolonizing the category of "water" and the way in which knowledge related to water is produced. It also allows to rethink the human–territories–water relationship from a plural and diverse perspective. In this sense, FMW's political dynamics are an example of new ways of doing territorial–water politics.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu, especially Angélica Ortiz, Yaneth Ortiz and Jakeline Romero for sharing their knowledge with me. I also want to thank Naira Bonilla, Catalina Quiroga and the evaluators for their comments and contributions.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research is part of the Project: *¿Cómo mejorar la disponibilidad y equidad en el acceso de agua? Recomendaciones para mejorar la gobernanza hídrica en territorios andinos con extracción minera a gran escala*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia-GRADE, financed by Ford Fundación 2018–2020.

References

- Archila M (2015) Introducción. In: Archila M, Arboleda Z and Coronado S (eds) *"Hasta Cuando Soñemos" Extractivismo e Interculturalidad en el Sur de La Guajira*. Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular/Programa por la Paz, 25–43.
- Archila M, Arboleda Z, Coronado S, et al. (2015) *"Hasta Cuando Soñemos" Extractivismo e Interculturalidad en el Sur de La Guajira*. Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular/Programa por la Paz.
- Boelens R, Damonte G, Seemann M, et al. (2015) Despojo del agua en Latinoamérica: introducción a la ecología política del agua en Los agronegocios, La minería Y LAS hidroeléctricas. In: Yacoub C, Duarte B and Boelens R (eds) *Agua y Ecología Política. El Extractivismo en la Agroexportación, la Minería y Las Hidroeléctricas en Latinoamérica*. Quito: Abya-Yala, Justicia Hídrica, 11–29.
- Boelens R, Vos J and Perreault T (2018) Introduction: the multiple challenges and layers of water justice struggles. In: Boelens R, Perreault T and Vos J (eds) *Water Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–32.
- Bossenbroek L and Zwarteeveen M (2018) New spaces for water justice? Groundwater extraction and changing gendered subjectivities in morocco's saiss region. In: Boelens R, Perreault T and Vos J (eds) *Water Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 330–345.
- Bottaro L and Sola Álvarez M (2018) *Agua y Megaproyectos Mineros en América Latina*. Los Polvorines: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento.
- Budds J (2010) Las relaciones sociales de poder y la producción de paisajes hídricos. In: Vélez Galeano H, Budds J and Colmenares R (eds) *Justicia Hídrica*. Cali: Censat agua viva- Amigos de la Tierra Colombia, 32–44.
- Buechler S and Hanson AM (eds) (2015) *Political Ecology of Women, Water and Global Environmental Change*. London, Routledge.
- Cabrera M and Fierro J (2013) Implicaciones ambientales y sociales del modelo extractivista en Colombia. In: Garay Salamanca LJ (ed.) *Minería en Colombia. Derechos, Políticas Públicas y Gobernanza*. Bogotá: Contraloría General de la República, 89–123.
- Caro C (2018a) *La Urdimbre del Agua y del Carbon. Tramas de la Resistencia en el sur de La Guajira*. Bogotá: Censat-Agua viva.
- Caro C (2018b) Las venas de la tierra, la sangre de la vida: significados y conflictos por el agua en la zona carbonífera del sus de La Guajira, Colombia. In: Ulloa A and Romero-Toledo H (eds) *Agua y Disputas Territoriales en Chile y Colombia*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 85–121.
- Cerrejón (2017) *Informe de Sostenibilidad 2017*. Colombia: TRiiBU Estudio.
- Colectivo de geografía crítica (2018) *Geografiando Para la Resistencia. Los Feminismos Como Práctica Especial. Cartilla III*. Quito: Colectivo de geografía crítica.
- De la Cadena M (2015) *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Elmhirst R (2015) Feminist political ecology. In: Perreault T, Bridge G and McCarthy J (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*. London: Routledge, 519–530.
- Escobar A (2015) Territorios de diferencia: la ontología política de los "derechos al territorio". *Desenvolvimento e Meio Ambiente* 35: 89–100. DOI: 10.5380/dma.v35i0.43540
- Fuentes G, Olivero Verbel J, Valdelamar Villegas JC, et al. (2018) *Si el Río Suena, Piedras Lleva. Sobre Los Derechos al Agua y a Un Ambiente Sano en la Zona Minera de La Guajira*. Bogotá: Indepaz.
- Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu (2015) *El arroyo Bruno somos todos. ¡No a la desviación del Arroyo Bruno! Manuscrip*.
- Gobernación de La Guajira (2017) Plan de desarrollo para la guajira. Un nuevo tiempo 2017–2019. Available at: www.laguajira.gov.co/web/attachments/article/4221/Plan%20de%20desarrollo%20para%20la%20Guajira%202017-2019.pdf

- 20Desarrollo%202017-2019.pdf (accessed 30 November 2018).
- Harcourt W and Nelson IL (eds) (2015) *Practicing Feminist Political Ecologies: Moving Beyond the “Green Economy”*. London: Zed.
- Harris LM (2009) Gender and emergent water governance: comparative overview of neoliberalized natures and gender dimensions of privatization, devolution and marketization. *Gender, Place & Culture* 16(4): 387–408. DOI: 10.1080/09663690903003918
- Holifield R (2015) Environmental justice and political ecology. In: Perreault T, Bridge G and McCarthy J (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*. London: Routledge, 585–597.
- IDEAM (2018) *Reporte de Avance del Estudio Nacional del Agua ENA*. Bogotá: IDEAM.
- Kauffer EF (2018) Pensar el extractivismo en relación con el agua en América Latina: hacia la definición de un fenómeno sociopolítico contemporáneo multiforme. *Sociedad y Ambiente* 6(16): 33–57.
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2009) Water, women and rights. In: Iyer R (ed.) *Water and the Laws in India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications India, 275–308.
- Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible-MADS, Corpoguajira and Universidad de Antioquia-Udea (2013) *Plan de Manejo Ambiental de Acuífero-PMAA-Cuenca del río Ranchería. Informe Final Convenio Interadministrativo 143 de 2013*. Bogotá: Manuscript.
- Objeda D, Petzl J, Quiroga C, et al. (2015) Paisajes del despojo cotidiano: Acaparamiento de tierra y agua en Montes de María, Colombia. *Revista de Estudios Sociales* 54: 107–119. DOI: 10.7440/res54.2015.08
- Ortiz Y, Pelaez C and Pareja N (2018) *Agua y Mujer. Historias, Cuentos y Más Sobre Nosotras, la Pülooí y Kasouolü en el Resguardo Wayúu Lomamato*. Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular-CINEP: Bogotá.
- Perreault T (2014) What kind of governance for what kind of equity? Towards a theorization of justice in water governance. *Water International* 39(2): 233–245. DOI: 10.1080/02508060.2014.886843
- Resurrección B (2019) Water insecurity in disaster and climate change contexts: a feminist political ecology view. In: Reyes Mason L and Rigg J (eds) *People and Climate Change: Vulnerability, Adaptation and Social Justice*. Oxford University Press: New York, 51–67.
- Robles Chávez D (2018) El significado del agua Y SU gobernanza en territorio wayuu, La guajira, Colombia. In: *Aproximaciones Diversas Hacia el Ordenamiento del Territorio Costero y Marino en el Departamento de La Guajira*. Riohacha: Universidad de la Guajira, 61–81.
- Romero J (2015a) La Revolución de las Wayúu. Pikara online magazine. Available at: <https://www.pikaramagazine.com/2015/12/la-revolucion-de-las-wayuu/> (accessed 8 July 2019).
- Romero J (2015b) ¿Qué pasaría si se desvía el arroyo Bruno? Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jDDOaaOPCU> (accessed 8 July 2019).
- Romero J and Barón D (2013) *Impacto de la Explotación Minera en las Mujeres Rurales: Afectaciones al Derecho a la Tierra en el Sur de La Guajira, Colombia*. Bogotá: Sütüin Jieyuu Wayúu-Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu/Equipo de Tierras y Derecho al Territorio del Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular-Cinep/PPP.
- Salazar H (2017) El extractivismo desde el enfoque de género: una contribución en las estrategias para la defensa del territorio. *Sociedad Y Ambiente* 5(13): 35–57.
- Schlosberg D (2007) *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements and Nature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schlosberg D (2013) Theorising environmental justice: The expanding sphere of a discourse. *Environmental Politics* 22(1): 37–55. DOI: 10.1080/09644016.2013.755387
- Sultana F (2009) Fluid lives: subjectivities, gender and water in rural Bangladesh. *Gender, Place & Culture* 16(4): 427–444. DOI: 10.1080/09663690903003942
- Sultana F (2011) Suffering for water, suffering from water: emotional geographies of resource access, control and conflict. *Geoforum* 42(2): 163–172. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.12.002
- Ulloa A (2017) Perspectives of environmental justice from Indigenous peoples of Latin America: A relational Indigenous environmental justice. *Environmental Justice* 10(6): 175–180. DOI: 10.1089/env.2017.0017
- Ulloa A and Romero-Toledo H (2018) *Agua y Disputas Territoriales en Chile y Colombia*. Bogota: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.
- Vásquez S and Correa HD (1993) Los wayuu. In:ed) *Geografía Humana de Colombia. Tomo II*. Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispanica: Bogotá, 215–292.
- Villa G (2012) A propósito de la gestión del agua en el mundo contemporáneo. Un enfoque biopolítico. *Análisis Político* 74: 109–133.
- Yacoub C, Duarte B and Boelens R (eds) (2015) *Agua y Ecología Política. El Extractivismo en la Agroexportación la Minería y Las Hidroeléctricas en Latinoamérica*. Quito: Abya-Yala, Justicia Hídrica.
- Zaragocin S (2018) Espacios acuáticos desde una descolonialidad hemisférica feminista. *Mulier Sapiens* V(10): 6–19.

Author Biography

Astrid Ulloa is an anthropologist and professor in the Department of Geography at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia.



Patriarchy and progressive politics: gendered resistance to mining through everyday social relations of state formation in Intag, Ecuador

Human Geography
2020, Vol. 13(1) 16–26
© The Author(s) 2020
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910895
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Emily Billo¹

Abstract

Over the last decade, the Ecuadorian government, following regional trends, called for social and environmental progress through state-controlled resource extraction. Scholars have demonstrated that this neo-extractive model warranted further investigation regarding its progressive aims. Specifically, this paper examines gendered critiques of state-led extractivism linked to expanding governmental and social programs. Even as women asserted their political recognition and rights in state politics, they still confronted patriarchal relations in their everyday lives. Drawing on eight months of ethnographic research over 6 years in *campesino* communities of Junín and Chalguayacu Alto, I argue that women in Intag challenged patriarchal state relations of extractive capitalism. This paper offers a novel contribution to literature on neo-extractivism and gendered forms of resistance. Women held the state accountable for its promises of social welfare and infrastructural development through which it generated public support for controversial mineral projects. These symbols of state paternalism revealed expanded patriarchal structures that underpinned their daily lives, with significance for a gendered politics of resistance.

Keywords

Ecuador, gendered resistance, neo-extraction, patriarchy, social reproduction

Patriarcado y política progresista: resistencia de género a la minería a través de las relaciones sociales cotidianas de formación del estado en Intag, Ecuador

Resumen

Durante la última década, el gobierno ecuatoriano, siguiendo las tendencias regionales, pidió progreso social y ambiental a través de la extracción de recursos controlada por el estado. Los académicos han demostrado que este modelo neo-extractivo justificaba una mayor investigación sobre sus objetivos progresivos. Específicamente, este artículo examina las críticas de género del extractivismo dirigido por el estado y vinculado a la expansión de los programas gubernamentales y sociales. Aun cuando las mujeres afirmaron su reconocimiento político y sus derechos en la política estatal, siguieron confrontando las relaciones patriarcales en sus vidas cotidianas. Basándome en ocho meses de investigación etnográfica durante seis años en comunidades campesinas de Junín y Chalguayacu Alto, sostengo que las mujeres en Intag desafían las relaciones estatales patriarcales del capitalismo extractivo. Este artículo ofrece una novedosa contribución a la literatura sobre neo-extractivismo y formas de resistencia de género. Las mujeres responsabilizaron al estado por sus promesas de bienestar social y desarrollo de infraestructura a través de las cuales generó apoyo público para proyectos minerales controvertidos. Estos símbolos del paternalismo estatal revelaron estructuras patriarcales expandidas que apuntalaron sus vidas cotidianas, con importancia para una política de resistencia de género.

¹Center for Geographies of Justice, Goucher College, Baltimore, MD, USA

Corresponding Author:

Emily Billo, Center for Geographies of Justice, Goucher College, 1021 Dulaney Valley Road, Baltimore, MD 21204, USA.
Email: Emily.Billo@GOUCHER.EDU

Palabras clave

Resistencia de género, patriarcado, reproducción social, neoextracción, Ecuador

Introduction

In July 2018, I attended a presentation of results of 3 years of community water monitoring by the municipal government of Cotacachi in Intag, Ecuador. Located in the western most part of the province of Imbabura in Ecuador, the Intag Valley is remote and relatively unknown to Ecuadorians and foreigners alike. Yet, the region is well known by antimining collectives and those who participate in antiextractivism activity inside and outside of Ecuador.

Campesinos from the communities of Junín and Chalguayacu Alto, with support of the municipal government and foreign researchers, had gathered bimonthly water samples in the communities' once-protected ecoreserve. Water monitoring documented the impacts of exploratory copper and molybdenum mining conducted by the state mining company, *Empresa Nacional de Minería* (ENAMI), together with the Chilean state company, Corporación Nacional de Cobre (CODELCO). The companies operate the concession known as Llurimagua that encompasses the ecoreserve. Change in coloration of rocks below a waterfall, a destination for community-led tourism, fueled fears of water contamination. The results presented in the meeting established a baseline as mining exploration moved forward in the reserve. Preliminary testing illustrated increased acidity levels (pH); an increase in heavy metals; and an increase in water conductivity, a test of solid waste in the water.

Communities from the valley of Intag were invited to this meeting, where they listened to the presentation and glanced through a brochure that summarized the results. Following the presentation community members stood to voice their concern for mining—not just in the Llurimagua concession, but the risks of impacts from pending operations in concessions that now encompass the whole valley. Several residents wanted to organize and oppose the expansion of mining as they had done in the 1990s (D'Amico, 2012; Davidov, 2013, 2014). Others highlighted how former Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa's (2007–2017) public infrastructure projects—schools, roads, hospitals—were merely designed to convince people of the benefits of resource extraction (Gudynas, 2011).

In the midst of this antimining discourse, one long-standing promining resident stood and asked: "What can we do to resist when the company is already there? At the beginning, prior to the company's arrival, resistance was possible, but afterward, how?" These questions highlighted the bifurcation of left-leaning discourses in Ecuador (Fabricant and Gustafson, 2014). Many in the region were convinced by the offer of work with mining companies, informed by elite state discourses that suggested extractivism was linked to anti-imperialism and modernization. At the same time, several residents voiced their disagreement to these comments, arguing that "the protest

against mining is now 20-years-old—we came protesting the mine." Others pointed out that the work offered by the company would not last long. Still others added, "remember that ENAMI arrived through a process of persecution of people, and if mining were beneficial, why is there such persecution? In Canada the Ecuadorian government is promoting Llurimagua! We've been resisting mining for 20 years!"

These exchanges illustrated the conundrum of sustaining an antimining movement in Intag in the context of state-led neo-extractivism. As Fabricant and Gustafson (2014) argued, for those on the right, promining discourse simply calls for increased extraction, but for those on the left who claim an antiextractivist position, the discourse is more complicated. Some might advocate for short-term economic gains of extraction and redistributive policies, just as others who make up the left pointed to the long-term social and environmental impacts of extraction. Specifically, the polarity of antimining debates obscured more complex arguments about shifting socioecological relationships that result from extraction. Therefore, Fabricant and Gustafson (2014) argued that we need to more clearly understand the "political economic transformations spurred by extractivism." State-led, "progressive" extraction has complicated struggles and movements focused on socioecological relationships linked to gender, as well as race and ethnicity.

In this paper, I focus on women's voices to demonstrate how patriarchal relations are perpetuated through extractive relationships in Intag, Ecuador. I argue that through their embodied presences that confront paternalism in state spaces, women challenged patriarchal constructions of state-led, neo-extractivism in Intag. Even as women asserted their political recognition and rights in state politics, they still confronted patriarchal relations in their everyday lives. This paper offers a novel contribution to literature on neo-extractivism and gendered forms of resistance. It develops a gendered, decolonial analysis of everyday state formation as a site of resistance. First, women in Intag highlighted the paternalism associated with state-led extraction as a symbolic form of the patriarchal state. Second, women in Intag held the state accountable for infrastructural and social welfare programs designed to generate public support for extractivism. In doing so, they confronted discourses of progress and modernization linked to extraction. Women demonstrated that gendered social reproduction revealed patriarchal relationships, with significance for a politics of resistance.

Gender, patriarchy, and everyday resistance to state-led extractive capitalism

A growing body of scholarship focused on gender and resistance in extractive industries illustrates that women and men

are impacted differently in resource struggles. These gendered assessments tend to begin with the crucial role women play in households, families, livelihoods, and as protectors of the environment. Gendered roles attuned women to the environmental and human health impacts of extractive development (Bell, 2013; Jenkins, 2015, 2017; Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; Li, 2009). Women are guardians of the environment, and they illustrate a desire to protect the environment for future generations (Bell, 2013; Jenkins, 2015, 2017). They use their bodies on the frontlines, confronting exploitation in extractive industries, and in turn recognizing gendered inequities in their own societies (Deonandan and Tatham, 2016). Women have formed women-only antimining organizations, such as the *Frente de Mujeres Defensoras de la Pachamama* in Ecuador, a space where women created their own gendered narratives and critiques of extraction (Velásquez, 2017).

These studies demonstrated that gender must remain a focus of struggle within extractive industries. Women are empowered by asserting their political recognition and representation, yet these outcomes risk “romanticizing” their role, overlooking the realities of women’s everyday lives (Deonandan and Tatham, 2016: 276). Even as women are attuned to and protest the impacts of extractivism, they still confront patriarchal relations, racialization, and poverty in their daily lives (Deonandan and Tatham, 2016). Therefore, gendered resistance to extraction must also grapple with these intersectional structures and systems that situate women differently in the environmental sphere.

Scholars have illustrated how women are calling attention to neo-colonial relationships of extractive capitalism in Latin America. These studies highlighted how capital intersects with patriarchy and other oppressive forces to marginalize women (Muñoz and Villarreal, 2019; Schild, 2019). Scholars have focused on intersectional practices, theories of decolonial resistance, and social reproduction, to illustrate how women articulate the racialized, gendered work of neoliberal extractivism (Hernández Reyes, 2019; Mason-Deese, 2016; Motta, 2013; Motta and Seppälä, 2016; Velásquez, 2017).

Scholarship has demonstrated that women have proposed alternative development models outside of capitalist, patriarchal relations (Beltrán, 2017; Fernandes, 2018) drawing on women’s knowledge and roles as environmental protectors (Sempértegui, 2019; Svampa, 2015; Ulloa, 2016). Specifically, women activists have used the concept of “body as territory” rooted in the individual and collective knowledges of women situated in territories in the Global South (Cabral, 2012; Zaragocin et al., 2018).

Building on critical, gendered critiques of extractivism, I illustrate how *campesinas* in Intag have confronted patriarchal state relationships in Ecuador. In doing so, they challenged extractive logics of capital configured through everyday state spaces. This paper contributes an ethnographic analysis that examines the state as a social and political institution through which human–nature relations are

shaped, producing gendered inequality and patterns of production and consumption (see Vallejo et al., 2019). Pearson and Crane (2017) have argued for feminist political geographical analyses of the Latin American state that emphasize everyday struggles over social reproduction. In the current political context, the collapse of progressive or left-leaning governments in Latin America illustrates what some have called an “end of cycle” (Modonesi, 2015; Zibechi, 2016: 23). Yet, analyses of everyday spaces of social reproduction revealed sites through which to understand the “fragile, contingent geography of state power” (Pearson and Crane, 2017: 188). Therefore, this paper draws on decolonial feminist scholarship (Hernández Reyes, 2019; Motta, 2013; Motta and Seppälä, 2016) to foreground *campesina* voices as subjects of resistance, rather than objects of study, where women’s everyday, embodied experiences illustrate state formation. Women challenged elite, paternalistic state discourses that linked extraction to social reproduction. They understood their own embodied social reproduction in relation to state authority, which also informed their ability to protest patriarchal systems that underpinned their everyday lives.

Methods

Designed as an institutional ethnography of the Ecuadorian state, this project focused on everyday social relations that constituted state formation (Billo and Mountz, 2016; Smith, 1987). I began field research in Intag in 2013 and conducted 8 months of research in the region over the last 6 years. This paper draws primarily on research conducted from 2016 to 2018. Rather than interviewing elites who occupied state offices (where accessing state officials was difficult, if not impossible), I relied on participant observation and interviews in communities to focus on people’s everyday lives in spaces of extraction. I traveled by bus through the valley of Intag to attend meetings with community members. I also completed 13 semistructured interviews with community activists in Intag. In Quito, I interviewed a lawyer representing antimining communities in Intag and members of the *Defensoría del Pueblo*, the government ombudsman office.

During periods of field research, I lived with residents in Junín and Chalguayacu Alto who self-identified as *ecologistas* (ecologists). Over the last decade, Intag has had a foreign human rights observer volunteering and living in the region. I collaborated closely with this individual during my field research. This volunteer coordinated community water monitoring, attended community meetings, and facilitated communication of photos and reports between community members, antimining municipal government officials, and non-governmental organizations (NGO). I also participated in meetings and workshops with NGOs, including *Acción Ecológica* and *Defensa y Conservación Ecológica de Intag* (DECOIN) in their offices in Quito or in Intag, respectively.

While conducting semistructured interviews with women, I was sometimes invited into private spaces of their homes. In these conversations I learned to listen to ways women recounted their gendered roles in their families, while we cooked together, shared meals, and generally cared for each other. Building on decolonial feminist scholarship (Mason-Deese, 2016; Motta and Seppälä, 2016), I suggest that listening was also a form of social reproduction. In these conversations I became more attuned to the ways in which women at once refused to participate in masculine, patriarchal state constructions premised on extraction, while also illustrating how their own gendered, everyday lives upheld and recirculated categories through which the state is given form (Billo and Mountz, 2016; Pearson and Crane, 2017). I listened to women's stories of their families through which I came to understand intergenerational, gendered social reproduction that disrupted masculine, patriarchal state relationships. Women constructed spaces where they engaged with and cared for each other, linking lived experiences with collective liberation.

Gender, resistance, and environmentalism in Intag

From its inception, opposition to extraction in Intag was built through transnational alliances, what Davidov (2013): 294) argued "led to a state-oppositional environmentality." Intag's history of resistance to mining was built around protection of the environment and an ecologist identity. In 2002, supported by the municipal government, the county of Cotacachi that encompasses Intag was declared an ecological county, banning mining (Davidov, 2014; Kuecker, 2007). Economic development would be built on several ecological cooperatives, including coffee and ecotourism. Junín, together with DECOIN, developed a community-managed ecoreserve and lodge. The latter is maintained and managed by women who have refused employment with the mines. In the 1990s and early 2000s, residents of Junín and Chalguayacu Alto successfully resisted two private, foreign mining firms, Bishi Metals and Ascendant Copper (now Copper Mesa). The latter company's arrival in Intag was accompanied by paramilitaries. Following residents' dismantling of the mining camp and holding paramilitaries in Junín's church, the Ecuadorian government ended the concession agreement with the Canadian company. The specific territories, social relationships, materialities, and temporalities of Intag informed state formation (Davidov, 2013, Davidov, 2014).

When President Correa was elected in 2007, he referred to environmental activists in Ecuador as "infantile ecologists" linking environmentalism to colonialism and imperialism. He argued that "outsiders" influenced local communities, intent on infusing them with anti-mining politics. State power and authority was asserted through the criminalization of residents linked to transnational movements and environmentalism more broadly (Billo and Zukowski, 2015; Kuecker, 2007; Moore and Velásquez, 2012; Svampa, 2015).

In Intag, relationships of production and social reproduction are gendered and intergenerational. Women are not just working in home spaces. They participate in social networks of environmental resistance, developing knowledge of environmental impacts from mining. Doña Rosario, president of the ecotourism network, participated in the environmental movement from its inception. Her husband was killed in 1992 in an altercation over land seizures tied to the arrival of Ascendant Copper. More recently, her son, Javier Ramírez, spent 10 months in jail on charges that he threw a rock at an ENAMI truck. Another son had an arrest warrant in his name, also on charges of protesting ENAMI. Only recently was the warrant lifted by the national government. Doña Rosario told me in a conversation in 2018: "We have to continue to fight. It's not good just for us (our family), but for all." She emphasized: "We're always here, protesting."

Conversations with women illustrated how they built relationships with each other through forms of resistance. Doña Rosario commented that during the time of Ascendant Copper and Bishi Metals, community members would communicate to let each other know when the company was arriving along the road to Junín, running to set up roadblocks. Now, though, she said ENAMI attempted to engage in processes of "socialization," going house to house to convince people of the mine, intervening in communities' shared histories and state-oppositional knowledges.

In 2017 in Chalguayacu Alto, I interviewed Marcia Ramírez, a long-standing leader in the resistance movement. Her parents, as well as her aunt, Doña Rosario, participated in early antimining efforts. She learned from them about the potential impacts of the mine and how to defend the communities against private companies. As a child, she participated in meetings and workshops with her parents. Initially, men worked for the mining company, seeking opportunities for wage labor. Yet, when the company further exploited their labor, asking men to work longer hours, while cutting their wages, they began to question the benefits of mining. Around the same time, in 1995, DECOIN was formed, and together with Acción Ecológica, people began learning more about the impacts of mining. At this point, Marcia was 12 years old, and as she stated, "a majority of people in the community opposed mining."

Marcia began her professional life working with a state agency on issues of family planning, traveling to communities in the region, sometimes providing emergency medical support. Eventually, she worked with DECOIN as a community organizer. She shared information about the impacts of mining, learned in part on a trip with Doña Rosario to Peru and Chile to see firsthand the impacts of extraction. When funding ran out for this organizer position, coinciding with state pressure to reduce support for and criminalize environmental organizations, Marcia had to seek out other work. She runs a small dry goods store out of her home.

During my field research, I had the opportunity to live in Marcia's house, listening as she recounted stories about

resistance and everyday life. Our conversations would often shift to other aspects of her personal life. Marcia married later than many women in the community and has one daughter. She commented on this gendered difference, suggesting that marriage and family were never a priority for her. In fact, one boyfriend, she eventually learned, was interested in sharing secrets of resistance efforts to miners, which promptly ended the relationship. Happy in her current relationship, Marcia also lamented the gendered division of labor in household tasks, including cooking, washing clothes, and childcare. This work kept her much closer to home, while also adding a triple burden of labor, as she ran her dry goods store and also kept up on the politics of mining. Marcia's attention to gendered forms of social reproduction also extended into her work as a community organizer. She still participated in organizing meetings when possible, sometimes traveling to Quito to meet with state officials, as well as talking to student groups who traveled to the region to learn about resistance, and participating in water monitoring in the community ecoreserve (see below). Marcia, like Doña Rosario, said, "we're not standing around with our arms crossed, and yes, we're protesting everything."

Women were engaged in the daily work of understanding and constructing the sociospatial relationships that underpin their lives, demonstrating that "state/non-state distinctions" are "constructed" (see Pearson and Crane, 2017: 188). The everyday work of women in Intag tells stories of their intimate knowledge of what is needed to sustain their own and their families' lives in the space of their community. Access to food, education, and health care were all necessities that structured their daily lives. Specifically, women were attuned to the paternalism of social welfare that both supported their gendered social reproduction and brought them outside the home into spaces of resistance. They engaged in social reproduction that confronted their gendered roles as mothers and wives, while also illustrating how resistance restructured these roles.

Gendered spaces of extraction

Rural communities are often seen as "obstacles" to the national gains from extraction (Fabricant and Gustafson, 2014). The community ecoreserve was legally accessed by national decree; Intag had been designated a national mining zone. Confronted with community-organized roadblocks in 2014, ENAMI entered with the support of police, criminalizing protestors, including former community president Javier Ramírez (Billo and Zukowski, 2015). The place of the ecoreserve and Intag, constructed through social relationships linked to land and environmental protection, was disrupted through discourses of development and progress tied to copper deposits (Davidov, 2014). Marcia said that now residents who resisted seemed to find themselves "two steps behind the state, rather than one step ahead." The community was responding to the state's agenda, rather than

setting the agenda as they had in earlier decades. Communities were now faced with paternalistic, exclusionary tactics of the neo-extractive state. Marcia told me: "We (communities) want development, just not what they (ENAMI/CODELCO) think is development." The space of Intag came to represent particular topographies of extraction. The ecoreserve was restructured and trails were no longer for tourists, but for the expanding industry. Residents now had to ask permission to enter the reserve, and on my latest research trip in 2018, the company had constructed a fence and locked gate (Figure 1), requiring that all visitors sign in before gaining access.

In Intag, wage labor has illustrated the complexity associated with a bifurcation of left-leaning antiextraction movements in Ecuador (see Fabricant and Gustafson, 2014). Opposition to extraction had to contend with those convinced by employment and its links to national state discourse of sovereignty, modernization, and progress (Moore and Velásquez, 2012). ENAMI operated the concession in name, and CODELCO conducted the day-to-day work. Ostensibly, "the state," embodied by ENAMI, oversaw all daily operations. In 2018, CODELCO employed 205 residents in manual labor jobs. Work with CODELCO attuned residents to capital accumulation and consumerism as wage laborers with access to more cash than they might have had when their livelihoods were tied to agricultural production. Young men earned up to \$800/month working for the company. Employees, however, had to pay for their own motorbike transportation into the concession, as well as food. Some residents employed by the company talked about saving money for their children to go to school outside the community; other younger men told me they immediately spent the money. Employment worked to strengthen and affirm state-based extraction by linking citizenship to consumption, facilitating the community's dispossession of land and territory.

Every couple of weeks, residents who still resisted the mine, conducted water monitoring in the community ecoreserve, now the area of the concession above the community. Supported by the antimining municipal government, I would often join the hikes in the reserve. Intag is a region where mining is not supposed to take place according to Ecuador's 2008 constitution. It's a source of water and includes species that are at risk of extinction, as well as primary forest (Davidov, 2014). Miners and mules dominated trails that were designed for tourists to gain access to the community-protected waterfalls. All mining employees traveled up to the region by motorbike, and what had once been the community's *mirador* or viewpoint across the valley was now a parking lot for motorbikes (Figure 2). Twelve men were needed to carry the drilling motors up the hillside to drilling platforms. We often had to move aside on the trail for mule trains hauling equipment for miners. Rather than the silence of an ecoreserve filled with birds and other wildlife, a slow, steady hum of motors permeated the space. These



Figure 1. Registering with the company to access the community ecoreserve via a locked gate.

motors marked different drilling sites, as the company engaged in its expanding exploratory operations.

Employees knew very little about the larger vision or impacts of company operations. Residents employed by the



Figure 2. Community ecoreserve and *mirador*, now a parking lot for company employees' motorbikes.

company could not tell me much in my interactions in the mining office in Junín or in other informal interactions. Instead, they deferred to their superiors, those from different regions of Ecuador, some trained as sociologists. When I was able to talk to these elite officials who would drop into the community on occasion, I was given little detail about company operations. For example, when I asked if I could attend a meeting with a women's clothes washing organization, I was told that the women would be too shy to speak if I was there. This comment seemed to suggest that my presence as a researcher was intimidating, but also alluded to a gendered, paternalistic claim that women would be unable to voice their own opinions. In a few interactions with company-employed residents, they often referenced discourses linked to modernization and progress, stating that their work was contributing to Ecuador's development. Just as the Amazon region had contributed oil to state development, now it was Intag's turn to contribute its resources. This discourse coincided with that of elite state officials in Quito who argued that extractivism was socially and environmentally progressive, developing local economies and educational opportunities, putting Ecuador on a path to a postextraction 21st-century socialism (see Fabricant and Gustafson, 2014, Fabricant and Gustafson, 2015).

Following Doshi (2016) women and men were offered basic employment, often in dangerous working conditions, on the basis of social class and gender, naturalizing uneven resource distribution. Even as work with the company promised opportunity, unskilled labor premised on increased precarity constructed residents' everyday reality. In 2018, company officials were waiting on results of soil sampling to determine if the mine would move into the extractive phase. One elite state official told me that only a few residents might be invited to participate in training for these higher skilled jobs. Opportunities for work with the company created the space where some residents were willing to exploit their neighbors for the promise of modernization and progress through extractivism. Junín and Chalguayacu Alto would have to be relocated should the open-pit copper mine be constructed. The short-term and flexible labor of the exploration phase facilitated the company's presence in the region, but also demonstrated how CODELCO and ENAMI deepened sociospatial inequality. Fabricant and Gustafson (2015).

Those opposed to extraction in Junín said that while their livelihoods had not changed much since the arrival of ENAMI, interpersonal interactions had shifted. While these residents continued to work in agriculture, growing and selling cattle, in ecotourism, and making *panela* from sugar cane, new everyday fears permeated their lives. There was increased risk of water contamination from exploratory operations. The three antimining families in Junín, who only left their houses to buy something at the local store, illustrated a decline in standard of living. Social interactions in Junín were impossible for antimining families and the community was a quiet shell during the day as most residents left

to work in the concession. Moreover, one antimining resident told me that she would not let her 14-year-old daughter walk alone into the community—now there were strangers who had come from other areas of Ecuador to work with the company, and she feared for her daughter's safety. These observations suggested that the presence of the mining company embedded and reinforced social vulnerabilities, including gendered vulnerabilities, rather than overcoming them (see McHenry-Sorber, 2016).

Gender and socioecological contradictions of extraction

Women who refused to work for the company were confronted with masculinist, paternalistic tendencies of state-led neo-extractivism. Meetings were set up with state officials in the Ministry of Environment in Quito to discuss company violations of environmental regulations established in the concession's environmental impact statement. Marcia recounted how she and a representative from DECOIN were dismissed from this office, with an order to "go home and take care of your kids, and leave environmental protection to the government."

A community meeting I attended in June 2017 in Chalguayacu Alto emphasized the complexities of a powerful state affect, as state discourse could not contain residents' lived realities. The meeting was convened to discuss support for improving the road into the region. The community had asked for the meeting with representatives from ENAMI and CODELCO, the provincial government, and the *junta parroquial* (parish council government). All but the provincial government were in attendance. Company officials and the representative from the *junta parroquial* quickly established that the road fell under the provincial government's purview, and thus pushed responsibility for failed improvement onto this level of government.

Arguably, this conclusion in the meeting was a political tactic. The proextraction *junta parroquial* government was quick to remove blame from its office for lack of improvements, placing them on the absent, antiextraction provincial government. Opposing political parties occupied local, municipal, provincial, and national levels of government, and as a result no one agreed to move forward on the road improvements. Through conversations with residents in Intag, I was told that the provincial government argued that fixing the road would only facilitate the entrance of mining vehicles. As residents stood up to contest the lack of promised road improvements, state officials scrolled through their smart phones.

Juana Enríquez, the community secretary, stood to challenge the state's lack of action. Juana was the only person in this meeting who confronted state officials and the only woman to speak during the meeting. She argued that all of the promised infrastructure, a school, hospital, and road, all examples of social investment that would underpin local

social reproduction, had not been constructed. As Motta (2013) has argued, health, education, and housing are all central to social reproduction, with particular gendered impacts. They enable women to “break out of the social isolation” of labor in the home, building up solidarities and freeing time for struggle (Motta, 2013: 39).

At the same time, Juana’s embodied presence in the meeting seemed to suggest that she was acting outside of appropriate class and gender roles. Juana was interrupted by dismissive comments made by the *junta parroquial* representative: “I thought we were here to discuss the road” and “I never promised any of that other infrastructure.” The local state official refused to acknowledge the promised terms of extraction linked to responsibility for residents’ social welfare and reproduction. The dismissive attitude of government and company officials toward Juana and the community illustrated that “in structural terms, extractive economies exacerbate gendered inequalities” (Fabricant and Gustafson, 2015). Juana, following an intervention by the antimining male community president who wanted to diffuse the tension, eventually sat.

In an interview with Juana the next day, she was still fuming. She told me:

[The government and company representatives] make us feel so small—we’re not important...[The representative of the *junta*] wanted to humble me, but I didn’t feel humble...she tried my patience. I said, you’re the authority, come and underestimate me, treat me like a liar! I’m not a liar!

Juana had confronted the state’s central, paternalistic, affective contradictions associated with neo-extractivism: extraction should also lead to infrastructural development. The state promised education and health care, which also suggested a fundamental shift in forms of gendered social reproduction. Yet, when extractivism was unable to deliver on these promises, this revealed space of contradiction and room to challenge the state’s progressive agenda. The contradiction Juana pointed to also illustrated state expectations of becoming a good citizen-consumer, linked to patriarchal/capital expansion (Svampa, 2015). Similar to the dismissive comment made by state officials to Marcia, Juana was also accused of lacking knowledge and ability to confront state authority, and that her embodied, gendered presence in state spaces was out of place in this meeting.

Juana’s comments attempted to open a wider conversation about the structural limits of state power tied to extraction. She pointed to the gap between state and capital, where Intenos continued to bear the burden of the state’s lack of investment, despite paternalistic claims by state officials that suggested otherwise. Juana said

I’m ready to disobey (my male colleague) even if that’s not my intention. The government came to solve the problem of the road, but more so they came to make a bigger problem. I

say, “with the government they only come to look for problems, no?”

Juana refused to let the state off the hook for its failures of responsibility in terms of social reproduction.

Juana told me that she felt emboldened to speak up in the meeting because it was her first time as a *dirigente* or leader of the community. Even as more organized mobilization around biodiversity of the region has dwindled, Juana’s firm antimining stance is still tied to her formation as an ecologist. She said: “Being an ecologist is more than just a name. It’s a fight for our rights.” Juana elaborated, “We’re defending life, our lives, because we have to defend our children, because if the mine comes, it’s like killing ourselves...” She told me that because her mother resisted the mining companies historically, she did as well. (More recently, Juana’s mother decided to work for the company, citing economic opportunity.) Juana said, “Maybe that infused something in me, no? As angry as I am, I am able to see [what needs to be done].” Moreover, she watched videos and saw photos of the negative impacts of mining, and this was like “drinking a glass of poison, when you drink a glass of water.”

Neo-extraction has reconfigured relationships between territory, nation, citizenship, and resources, revealed through social reproduction. In particular, Juana was most concerned about the environment, saying, “I’m a *campesina*, I need the land, it’s our mother and gives us food.” Juana made a distinction between rural and urban life, arguing that life was different in Intag, because one could just go to the land and find *yucca* or bananas, for example. She explained that water in the region was used for cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, and now everyone was afraid to use it due to fears of contamination. Juana confronted a powerful state discourse that linked environmentalism to imperialism as a foundation for state sovereignty and nation-building via extraction. She demonstrated that everyday life and social reproduction were essential to state formation. In the meeting with state officials, she understood her own necessities in relation to state authority, “making normative claims about how political life should be” (Pearson and Crane, 2017: 190).

Marcia also engaged the state on the terms of infrastructure linked to extractivism. Her resistance, though, was not tied to confrontation, but instead to direct action. She exhibited self-determination and self-reliance to construct relationships outside of neo-extractive spaces premised on control over collective decision making. Indeed, Marcia (along with Rosario) no longer attended meetings at the community level with state and company officials. She refused to engage in spaces of gendered dismissal. Instead, she highlighted how environmentalism and disruption of commodification of nature linked to copper could produce different outcomes for citizens and the state.

She stated:

We (residents of Intag) have always fought to move ahead, to improve, and moreover, it's our right, because we pay taxes. We, as Intag, have brought many products to market. It's our right to improve the road. Therefore, an *escuela del milenio*, that Correa promised, even if it's very beneficial, it's still a right for us. Education is a right that we have because we have much that's guaranteed us (as citizens). We don't need to wait, as the approximately 16,000 residents of the Intag valley, we don't need to wait for a mining project to cover necessities.

The state became a site through which particular logics of capital expand, where promised infrastructure, including schools and roads was tied to extraction. Yet, Marcia points out that Intenos' labor was also a constitutive force in state formation, and it was through this work that the state emerged. She highlighted how the state was engaged in (re)forming capitalist relations of production and reproduction through extraction, even as residents of Intag had already contributed their fair share of economic production and reproduction in state formation. Marcia and Juana held the state accountable on the terms of the consumer-citizen model of extractivism. They demonstrated failures in this state model, arguing that less exploitative relationships to nature could be possible.

Marcia's comment went further, however, to highlight a distinction between infrastructure as production and education as social reproduction. By pointing to a separation of production and social reproduction in state efforts, Marcia argued the state should hire more teachers in the existing schools or build a computer center. Thus, the model of production linked to neo-extraction puts commodities into circulation, producing a powerful state affect through infrastructural improvements. But Marcia demonstrated that extraction has not actually produced infrastructure or additional teachers, disrupting state affect and citizenship. Moreover, the lack of teachers illustrated that the neo-extractive state model did not necessarily alter residents' own social reproduction. Instead, this model reinforced a gendered division of labor premised on expanding patriarchal capitalism and degraded environments. Capital exploits women's bodies, while failing to overcome systemic forms of gendered exclusion.

For Marcia, resistance hinged on state responsibilities for education and health care, all of which are linked to gendered social reproduction. These are state institutions that can enable women to leave the home, inviting them to contest state-led patriarchal capitalism (Motta, 2013). The state's failures on terms of social welfare suggested ongoing patriarchal relationships. This state-led contradiction of neo-extraction has particular significance for the politics of gendered resistance. Women like Marcia, Juana, and Rosario continued to demonstrate the gendered, socioecological contradictions associated with state-led extractivism. They argued that state failures to invest in their social reproduction impacted their ability to mobilize and organize themselves. Resistance in Intag was constructed through intergenerational social imaginaries that revolved

around gendered claims to production and social reproduction. Women demonstrated that the neo-extractive state model reinforced paternalism through which the patriarchal state expanded. The voices of women highlighted here demonstrated that confrontation, self-determination, and self-reliance continued to inform gendered resistance to mining in Intag, constructing "the state" outside of patriarchal, extractive threats to lives and livelihoods.

Conclusions

State-sponsored extractivism in Latin America has only exacerbated the commodification of nature. Neoliberal capitalism led to extraction premised on dispossession by private industry and supported by the state. State-led extraction has done little to reverse these "historical dependencies" (Hernández Reyes, 2019: 223). This paper highlighted how gender and environmentalism overlap in specific histories and geographies, through which we can recenter our focus on everyday sites of state formation as resistance. State-led extraction worked to determine what counts as/in the environment, building a paternalistic state that offered labor opportunities and infrastructural improvement linked to extraction.

This paper offers a novel contribution to literature on gendered resistance. Women in Intag have subverted a conversation about progress in neo-extractive state spaces. They demonstrated that extraction is linked to paternalistic discourses of infrastructural improvements and social welfare. Women highlighted that education and hospitals are important sites of gendered social reproduction, and often the very same institutions that allow women to contest gendered, patriarchal structures that confine them to home spaces (see Motta, 2013). State failures to develop these programs demonstrated the gendered limitations of extractive capital, while also interfering in women's ability to resist patriarchal structures that inform their everyday lives. The work of women in Intag called attention to the significance of social reproduction for politics of gendered resistance in state spaces. Gendered, everyday constructions of the neo-extractive Ecuadorian state confronted and intervened in social and ecological transformations in Intag, disrupting progressive links to extractivism.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank residents of Junín and Chalguayacu Alto for their time and support of this research. I appreciate the helpful comments on earlier drafts from the editors of the special issue and journal, as well as two anonymous reviewers.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Research in Ecuador was supported by funding from Goucher College.

References

- Bell SE (2013) *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed: Appalachian Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Beltrán EP (2017) Power and Patriarchy: reflections on social change from Bolivia. In: Buxton N and Eade D (eds) *State of Power*. Transnational Institute.
- Billo E and Zukowski I (2015) Criminals or citizens: mining and citizen protest in Correa's Ecuador, *NACLA*. Available at: <https://nacla.org/news/2015/11/02/criminals-or-citizens-mining-and-citizen-protest-correa%E2%80%99s-ecuador> (accessed 30 December 2019).
- Cabnal L (2012) Agenda feminista y agenda indígena: Puentes y desafíos. In: Mujer Coordinadora de la (ed) *Mujeres en Diálogo: Avanzando Hacia la Despatriarcalización en Bolivia*. La Paz: Editora Presencia SRL, 53–61.
- Billo E and Mountz A (2016) For institutional ethnography: geographical approaches to institutions and the everyday. *Progress in Human Geography* 40(2): 199–220.
- Davidov V (2013) Mining versus oil extraction: divergent and differentiated environmental subjectivities in “post-neoliberal” Ecuador. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 18(3): 485–504. DOI: 10.1111/jlca.12043
- Davidov V (2014) Land, copper, flora: dominant materialities and the making of ecuadorian resource environments. *Anthropological Quarterly* 87(1): 31–58. DOI: 10.1353/anq.2014.0010
- Deonandan K and Tatham R (2016) The role of women and international non-governmental organisations in the resistance to the new extraction in Latin America: the unexplored dimensions. In: Deonandan K and Dougherty ML (eds) *Mining in Latin America: Critical Approaches to the New Extraction*. London: Routledge, 273–283.
- Doshi S (2016) Embodied urban political ecology: five propositions. *AREA* 49(1): 125–128.
- D'Amico L (2012) Environmentalism and gender in Intag Ecuador. In: Cruz-Torres ML and McElwee P (eds) *Gender and Sustainability: Lessons from Asia and Latin America*. Tucson: University of Arizona, 25–49.
- Fabricant N and Gustafson B (2014) Moving beyond the extractivism debate, imagining new social economies. *NACLA Report on the Americas* 47(4): 40–45. DOI: 10.1080/10714839.2014.11721813
- Fabricant N and Gustafson B (2015) Revolutionary extractivism in Bolivia: imagining alternative world orders from the ground up. *North American Congress on Latin America*. Available at: <https://nacla.org/news/2015/03/02/revolutionary-extractivism-bolivia>
- Fernandes M (2018) Feminist alternatives to predatory extractivism: contributions and experiences from Latin America. *Feminist Dialogue Series* 7: 1–7.
- Gudynas E (2011) Alcances y contenidos de las transiciones al post-extractivismo. *Revista Ecuador Debate* 82: 61–79.
- Hernández Reyes CE (2019) Black women's struggles against extractivism, land dispossession, and marginalization in Colombia. *Latin American Perspectives* 46(2): 217–234. DOI: 10.1177/0094582X19828758
- Jenkins K (2015) Unearthing women's anti-mining activism in the Andes: Pachamama and the “mad old women”. *Antipode* 47(2): 442–460. DOI: 10.1111/anti.12126
- Jenkins K (2017) Women anti-mining activists' narratives of everyday resistance in the Andes: staying put and carrying on in Peru and Ecuador. *Gender, Place & Culture* 24(10): 1441–1459. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2017.1387102
- Kuecker G (2007) Fighting for the forests: grassroots resistance to mining in northern Ecuador. *Latin American Perspectives* 153(34): 94–107.
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2012) Digging women: towards a new agenda for feminist critiques of mining. *Gender, Place & Culture* 19(2): 193–212. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2011.572433
- Li F (2009) Negotiating livelihoods: women, mining, and water resources in Peru. *Canadian Women Studies* 27(1): 97–102.
- Mason-Deese L (2016) Unemployed workers' movements and the territory of social reproduction. *Journal of Resistance Studies* 2(2): 65–99.
- McHenry-Sorber E (2016) The masculinized work of energy development: unequal opportunities and risks for women in Pennsylvania shale gas boomtown communities. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences* 31(1): 1–23.
- Modonesi M (2015) The end of progressive hegemony and the regressive turn in Latin America: the end of a cycle? *Viewpoint Magazine*, 21 December.
- Moore J and Velásquez T (2012) Sovereignty negotiatated: anti-mining movements, the state and multinational mining companies under Correa's 21st century socialism. In: Bebbington A (ed) *Social Conflict, Economic Development and Extractive Industry: Evidence from South America*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Motta SC (2013) We are the ones we have been waiting for: the feminization of resistance in Venezuela. *Latin American Perspectives* 40(4): 35–54.
- Motta SC and Seppälä T (2016) Editorial: feminized resistances. *Journal of Resistance Studies* 40(2): 5–32.
- Muñoz EE and Villarreal M (2019) Women's struggles against extractivism in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Contexto Internacional* 41(2): 303–325. DOI: 10.1590/s0102-8529.2019410200004
- Pearson Z and Crane NJ (2017) The challenge of feminist political geography to state-centrism in Latin American geography. *Journal of Latin American Geography* 16(1): 185–193. DOI: 10.1353/lag.2017.0011
- Schild V (2019) Feminisms, the environment, and capitalism: on the necessary ecological dimension of a critical Latin American

- feminism. *Journal of International Women's Studies* 20(6): 23–43.
- Sempértegui A (2019) Indigenous women's activism, ecofeminism, and extractivism: partial connections in the Ecuadorian Amazon. *Politics & Gender* 15: 1–28. DOI: 10.1017/S1743923X19000023
- Smith D (1987) *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Svampa M (2015) Commodities consensus: neoextractivism and enclosure of the commons in Latin America. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 114(1): 65–82. DOI: 10.1215/00382876-2831290
- Ulloa A (2016) Feminismos territoriales en América Latina: Defense a la vida frente a los extractivismos. *Nómadas* 45: 123–139.
- Vallejo I, Cielo C and García F (2019) Ethnicity, gender, and oil: comparative dynamics in the Ecuadorian Amazon. *Latin American Perspectives* 46(2): 182–198. DOI: 10.1177/0094582X18820296
- Velásquez TA (2017) Enacting refusals: Mestiza women's anti-mining activism in Andean Ecuador. *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 12(3): 250–272. DOI: 10.1080/17442222.2017.1344263
- Zaragocin S, Moreano M and Soledad A (2018) Geografías críticas en América Latina. *Iconos* 22(2): 11–32.
- Zibechi R (2016) Progressive fatigue? *NACLA Report on the Americas* 48(1): 22–27. DOI: 10.1080/10714839.2016.1170298

Author Biography

Emily Billo is associate professor of Environmental Studies. Her research interests include resource governance and development and feminist methodologies.

Neo-extractivism, the Bolivian state, and indigenous peasant women's struggles for water in the Altiplano

Human Geography
 2020, Vol. 13(1) 27–39
 © The Author(s) 2020
 Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
 DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910896
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Gisela V. Rodriguez Fernandez¹

Abstract

In pursuing progress and economic growth, the Bolivian state led by President Evo Morales replicated the colonial division of labor through a development model known as neo-extractivism. Rooted tensions between indigenous communities and the state emerged due to the latter's zealous economic bond with the extractivist sector. While the political economy of neo-extractivism has been considerably studied, how such tensions affect socio-political relations at the intersections of class, race, and gender remains underexplored and undertheorized. To address this research gap, this qualitative study posed the following research questions: How does neo-extractivism create gendered forms of accumulation by dispossession? And what forms of resistance emerge to challenge the impact of neo-extractivism among indigenous communities? By analyzing processes of social reproduction in Oruro, Bolivia, this study shows that neo-extractivism leads to the dispossession of indigenous lands and indigenous ways of life mainly through the contamination of water. Because indigenous peasant women are subsistence producers and social reproducers whose activities are water centric, the dispossession of water has a direr and gendered effect on them. Indigenous women and their communities, however, are not idle. Resistances against neo-extractivism have emerged. In parallel, the daily responsibilities of social reproduction within the context of subsistence agriculture, which are embedded in Andean epistemes of reciprocity, have allowed indigenous peasant women to build solidarity networks that keep the social fabric within and between communities alive. These solidarity networks provide important socio-political resources that are sites of everyday resistances that represent an ongoing threat and an alternative to capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal mandates.

Keywords

extractivism, Bolivia, indigenous women, resistance

Neo-extractivismo, el estado boliviano y las luchas de las mujeres campesinas indígenas por el agua en el Altiplano

Resumen

Al perseguir el progreso y el crecimiento económico, el estado boliviano liderado por el presidente Evo Morales reprodujo la división colonial del trabajo a través de un modelo de desarrollo conocido como neo-extractivismo. Las tensiones arraigadas entre las comunidades indígenas y el estado surgieron debido al fuerte vínculo económico de este último con el sector extractivista. Si bien la economía política del neo-extractivismo ha estudiado considerablemente, la forma en que tales tensiones afectan las relaciones sociopolíticas en las intersecciones de clase, raza y género no se ha explorado y ni teorizado mucho. Para abordar esta brecha de investigación, este estudio cualitativo planteó las siguientes preguntas de investigación: ¿Cómo crea el neo-extractivismo formas inequitativas de género de acumulación por desposesión? ¿Y qué formas de resistencia surgen para desafiar el impacto del neo-extractivismo entre las comunidades indígenas? Al analizar los procesos de reproducción social en Oruro, Bolivia, este estudio muestra que el neo-extractivismo conduce al despojo de tierras indígenas y formas de vida indígenas

¹Portland State University, Oregon, USA

Corresponding Author:

Gisela V. Rodriguez Fernandez, Portland State University, Portland, OR 97201, USA.
 Emails: rgisela@pdx.edu; rodrigue.gisela@gmail.com

principalmente a través de la contaminación del agua. Debido a que las mujeres campesinas indígenas son productoras de subsistencia y reproductoras sociales cuyas actividades se centran en el agua, el despojo del agua tiene un efecto más grave y de género en ellas. Sin embargo, las mujeres indígenas y sus comunidades no están ociosas. Han surgido resistencias contra el neo-extractivismo. Paralelamente, las responsabilidades cotidianas de la reproducción social en el contexto de la agricultura de subsistencia, que están integradas en los epistemas andinos de reciprocidad, han permitido a las mujeres campesinas indígenas construir redes de solidaridad que mantienen vivo el tejido social dentro y entre las comunidades. Estas redes de solidaridad proporcionan importantes recursos sociopolíticos que son sitios de resistencias cotidianas que representan una amenaza continua y una alternativa a los mandatos capitalistas, coloniales y patriarcales.

Palabras clave

extractivismo, bolivia, mujeres indígenas, resistencia

Introduction

The radical social movements that consolidated Bolivia into an anti-neoliberal vortex at the beginning of the 21st century were galvanized around the notion of water as a common good and not as a commodity, therefore challenging the neo-liberal premises of privatization and commodification (Spronk, 2006). These movements also paved the road for the election of Bolivia's first indigenous president, Evo Morales in 2005. As part of the "pink tide," a regional shift in Latin America toward progressive socioeconomic policies, Morales came to power with an anticolonial and anti-capitalist rhetoric and revolutionary project to transform Bolivia into a just and fair society. In practice however, Morales reinstated an extractivist model of development known as neo-extractivism (Gudynas, 2011). "Neo" because unlike previous extractivist models, the state plays a more prominent role via nationalization, and/or increases in rents and taxes, which allow the state to implement social and redistributive policies (Fabricant, 2015; Gudynas, 2011).

Morales supporters refer to this development model as social extractivism. According to former Vice President Garcia Linera, the contradictions produced by the Bolivian state and its cozy relationship with the extractivist sector must be understood as creative tensions that produce short- and long-term benefits: immediate rents for the state to implement redistributive policies and a revolutionary path to eventually overcome capitalism (Garcia Linera, 2013; Webber, 2017). Critics, however, have demonstrated that although neo-extractivism generates rents that the state might use for progressive programs, it still benefits the private sector, and it continues the colonial division of labor, maintaining Bolivia's role as a peripheral country that exports its natural resource wealth to core countries (Cusicanqui, 2014; Gudynas, 2011). What's more, the core of neo-extractivism—the commodification of nature and its detrimental socio-environmental effects—remains unchanged (Fabricant, 2015; Gudynas, 2011; Svampa, 2012).

While the contradictions between neo-extractivism and progressive regimes such as the Morales government have been extensively explored, there is scant research on how

such global, structural, and economic changes have affected the lives of women in rural Latin America in the last 15 years (Radcliffe, 2014). In other words, an intersectional and contextualized lens that includes race, class, and gender dynamics as well as its interaction with macro processes is absent. Yet, such a lens has the potential to show the ways in which capitalism intrinsically expands beyond economic relations to heavily produce, and simultaneously be coproduced by, racist, class-based, and patriarchal hierarchies (Cusicanqui, 2010, 2014; Mohanty, 2003).

Addressing these lacunas, existing works such as Van Hoecke (2006) and Deonandan and Dougherty (2016) analyze the gendered division of labor within mining industries and the increased feminization of the mining labor force within the region. The work of Jenkins (2014, 2015) addresses the increased violence against women due to male immigrants' arrival to work in mines and an increase in domestic violence and alcohol consumption. In parallel, research on indigenous women and neo-extractivism in Latin America tends to focus exclusively on oppression, while giving little to no attention to how women exercise their own agency (Deonandan and Dougherty, 2016, Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; O'Faircheallaigh, 2013a, 2013b). This omission is explained in part by Chandra Mohanty's criticism of feminist writings and the characterization of Third World women as singular, monolithic subjects and passive victims of global processes (2003).

Tackling this issue, Jenkins (2015) shows how politically active Ecuadorian women use a narrative of a broad connection with *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) to justify their anti-mining activism. Although this narrative represents an essentialist conception of femininity (caring, nurturing, and life-giving), women use it to perform a strategic role in anti-mining struggles that helps them legitimize their involvement (Jenkins, 2015). In Guatemala, women have a central presence in anti-mining struggles either in numbers (high presence of women) or in their roles, by being at the frontline of protests and by leading road blockades (Deonandan and Dougherty, 2016).

These important works, however, have a blind spot in that they do not explore the particular experiences of indigenous women and how the micro politics of everyday life might

also challenge macro processes. To develop an analysis on these underexplored and undertheorized issues, I performed a qualitative study where I posed the following research questions: How does neo-extractivism create gendered forms of dispossessions that lead to accumulation? And what forms of resistance emerge to challenge the impact of neo-extractivism among indigenous communities? To answer these questions, I carried out an ethnographic work in four indigenous peasant communities in Oruro, Bolivia, an area heavily influenced by and affected by mining contamination. Unlike other studies that explore these dynamics within or near production sites (such as within mines or around mining towns), this study focuses on communities that are located far away from mines, but are still affected by their activities. Moreover, unlike Peru and Ecuador where anti-mining movements have intensified, in Bolivia these have not (Perreault, 2014). Nevertheless, anti-mining struggles are expressed through everyday resistances.

Through an analysis of social reproduction theory (SRT) and its connections to water, this study shows how extractive capitalism represents a gendered form of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003, 2005). In this case study, accumulation by dispossession is covert and indirect, yet it leads to the same outcome: the dispossession of indigenous lands and ways of life via the contamination of waters, which has a dire and gendered effect on indigenous women. This study also examines the everyday sociocultural practices of cooperation and reciprocity of indigenous peasant women within their communities to show that resistance is reproduced every day in these subjugated spaces, representing both a threat and an alternative to the hegemonic necessities of capitalism. By connecting SRT and accumulation by dispossession, I imbricate between production and reproduction processes through an empirical case study to argue that oppression and exploitation are intertwined in covert ways. I also offer an empirical case study from the Global South, specifically Bolivia, of everyday resistances that show how the micro politics of everyday life challenge extractive capitalism and the state.

Conceptualizing extraction and dispossession in Bolivia

This study draws on and integrates three theoretical and conceptual frameworks: the structural mechanisms of the state (Block, 1987), accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003), and SRT (Bhattacharya, 2017). Using the latter as a bridge connecting macro and micro dynamics, this study shows the gendered effects of accumulation by dispossession and offers an explanation on how and why indigenous women resist against state power and extractive industries.

The structural mechanisms of the capitalist state (Block, 1987), such as business confidence, force the state to lean toward capitalists' interests. At the same time, the state is

also conditioned by the appearance of neutrality that it must show to the working class (Block, 1987). Exemplary works by Gudynas (2011), Veltmeyer (2012, 2013), Burchardt and Dietz (2014), Svampa (2015), Acosta (2013, 2015), and Sankey and Munck (2016), among many others, offer a comprehensive and critical analysis of the political economy of neo-extractivism and its relationship to the state. This new wave of extractivist activities were expressed as national development strategies based on economic, social, and political policies adopted by left and left-centered governments in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela) known as the pink tide over the last decade and a half (Sankey and Munck, 2016). Neo-extractivism relies principally on foreign direct investment and it changes contractual arrangements with transnational investors, raising the royalties and/or taxes payable to the state (Burchardt and Dietz, 2014; Veltmeyer, 2012, 2013).

Nonetheless, independent of political orientation, all Latin American governments have relied on the expansion of the extractivist frontier as a mechanism for development and economic growth, which marks "the commodities consensus," the beginning of a new economic and political era supported by the international demand for raw materials (Lopez and Vertiz, 2015; Svampa, 2012). In the Bolivian case, neo-extractivism does not support orthodox neoliberal policies. Natural gas and to a lesser extent mining are public-led economic activities. Neo-extractivism also portrays the Bolivian state as a neutral actor that best represents the interests of indigenous communities. In reality, Bolivia represents a case of coincidental economic interests where capital receives profits and the state receives rents (Veltmeyer, 2012, 2013). While Bolivia "has reduced its dependence on foreign direct investment ... it is still at a high level" (Higginbottom, 2013: 194). Moreover, in Bolivia (as well as Venezuela and Ecuador), primary products for export during 2010 represented 90% or more of each country's total exports (Gudynas, 2011).

Progressive and liberal regimes such as the Morales government have allowed extractive capitalism to transform indigenous territories formerly considered unproductive into new terrains for capital accumulation (Lopez Florez, 2013). Harvey (2003) calls these transformations accumulation by dispossession, where primitive accumulation and the violent alienation between labor and land are not the original sins of capitalism, but rather ongoing processes within capitalism at any stage (Harvey, 2003, 2005; Perreault, 2013).

Accumulation by dispossession has been applied in myriad ways in Latin America and elsewhere to show how privatization, financialization, and state redistribution aim to create capital surplus. A considerable number of laws and decrees regarding the distribution of rights over natural resources created in the last decade show that Latin American states, independently of regime type (left, right, center), perpetuate an asymmetrical power relation between the capitalist sector and local communities (Burchardt and Dietz,

2014). In Argentina, the nationalization of YPF ("Fiscal Oilfields" in English) in 2012 was accompanied by a policy to increase the extraction of non-conventional gas and oil reserves (oil shales; Seoane, 2012). In 2009, Ecuadorian progressive President Rafael Correa approved a new mining law that gives international companies more and better access to conduct extraction activities. This same law violates the constitutional right of indigenous people to prior and free consultation that is stipulated by the International Labor Organization Convention (Safransky et al., 2011). In 2015, the Bolivian government issued a series of decrees that opened national parks and other protected areas where many indigenous communities reside and made these lands available for oil and gas exploration (Stirling, 2015). These policies have led to accumulation by dispossession and an increase of foreign direct investment in the region, where "U.S. and European capital today own three times more of Latin America than they did just 15 years ago" (Higginbottom, 2013: 200).

SRT connects these macro and national-level processes of the structural limitations of the state and accumulation by dispossession with the micro politics of everyday life. Social reproduction as a concept refers to the beliefs, attitudes, activities, behaviors, emotions, and relationships that are "directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily basis, and intergenerationally" (Bhattacharya, 2017: 6). This broad conceptualization captures the various kinds of social, mental, physical, and emotional work necessary to provide the historical, social, and biological means for maintaining and reproducing populations. Social reproduction therefore is a multiplicity of generational activities to provide food, clothes, and shelter for the worker, as well as socialization for children and care for elders (Bhattacharya, 2017).

As a theory, social reproduction examines and criticizes the dichotomous analyses that often study sex and economic class separately, either as social relations of production or social relations of reproduction, but rarely both, therefore obscuring the dialectical relationship between these two oppressive structures (Bhattacharya, 2017; Eisenstein, 1999). Moreover, political economy studies often present labor as if it "has no actual body — no home that actually creates it" (Eisenstein, 2014: n.p.).

SRT states that the capitalist system is not just relationships between workers and owners, but involves wider social processes that support the drive of accumulation. In other words, capitalism depends on activities external to it, which are nevertheless deeply connected to production processes. SRT therefore stresses the relational link between market and nonmarket relations rather than just pointing to their differences (Bhattacharya, 2017). Second, SRT argues that along with the capacity for labor, workers also have the capacity and need to reproduce life as a whole because, "we are not just reproducers of labor power, we are also reproducers of life" (Bhattacharya, 2017: 130).

SRT has re-emerged as a theoretical and empirical framework to explain various global political economic processes. Bakker and Gill (2003) offer a comprehensive framework of SRT applications as well as methodological implications and gendered migratory processes with case studies from Japan, Argentina, and Brazil. McMichael and Schneider (2011) use SRT to explain power relations behind food security ideals and practices and the role of corporate globalization in undermining national provisions. Analogously, Bhattacharya's book on SRT is not a critique of, but a critical and indispensable extension of, Marxist theory on social reproduction, offering important analytical tools and case studies that reveal the extent to which capitalism relies on extra-economic relations (2017).

These essential works, however, exclusively examine social reproduction processes within urban settings and/or advanced capitalist societies while ignoring social reproduction processes outside the core of the global North. The lack of attention to capitalistic processes in rural areas in the global South implies the assumed perception of the eventual decline of the peasantry and the takeover of capitalism (Bhattacharya, 2017). In this study, I offer a case study on how social reproduction processes are interlocked to extractive capitalism and how indigenous women challenge them by reproducing alternative systems to capitalism.

An ethnography of neo-extractivism

As part of this study I carried out a multi-sited ethnography between October 2017 and June 2018 in four communities in the department of Oruro, Bolivia, located on the Bolivian Altiplano, an elevated, semi-arid plain between the towering mountains of the Eastern and Western Cordilleras of the Central Andes (Gareca, 2009).

The circular plaza that serves as a welcoming entrance to the department's capital city of Oruro has an emblematic, 20-ft-diameter miner's helmet made of tin and burnished metal. In a city full of legends, traditions, and myths, this monument attests to the deep and intricate economic and sociocultural relationship between mining and *Orureños* (people from Oruro) that has persisted for millennia, before and after the arrival of European colonizers nearly 500 years ago. Oruro's economy became aggressively mining centric with the discovery of tin in the early 20th century, allowing Bolivian Simon Patiño, *the varon del estaño* (the baron of tin), to become one of the wealthiest persons in the world (Gareca, 2009). Oruro's economic dependency on mining, however, has not translated into economic benefits for the majority who live there. While the departments of Oruro and Potosí are Bolivia's major producers and exporters of minerals, they are also the poorest and have the lowest life expectancies within Bolivia (Gruberg and Andreucci, 2015; Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2013).

The Huanuni mine located in Oruro department is the principal tin mine in Bolivia, and it is among the top five tin producers worldwide (Cantoral, 2017). Increased production since the 1980s and a general lack of concern for environment regulations, particularly the lack of tailings dams to process mining acidic waters, have transformed the Huanuni mine into a major contamination source of waters and soils, including heavy metals (lead, arsenic, cadmium, iron, and zinc), chemical waste, and other acid runoff known as *copajira* (highly acidic, contaminated water; Perreault, 2014). These harsh realities have resulted in the creation of the Desaguadero River, Uru and Poopó Lakes Defense Coordinator (CORIDUP), a grassroots organization that represents more than 80 communities from the Poopó basin. CORIDUP was created in August 2006, and it made national and international news in October 2009 when it mobilized a rally to Bolivia's capital city of La Paz to demand the approval of Supreme Decree 0335 (SD 0335), which declares the Huanuni sub-basin to be in a state of environmental emergency and mandates environmental remediation projects (Horowitz and Watts, 2016). In spite of all the promises behind its enactment, the impact of SD 0335 has been minimal at best (as of October 2019, the construction of Huanuni's tailings dam, the main demand of SD 0335, is still incomplete).

The four communities for this ethnographic study are all involved with CORIDUP as they are each heavily affected by mining contamination. It is important to highlight that none of these communities are in close proximity to the Huanuni mine, which is located over 40 km away, at least an hour and a half by private transportation. The characteristics of these communities are shown in Table 1. The "population" category includes all the families from each community, including those who live there permanently and those families who migrated to nearby cities but keep some connection to their communities: such as owing a parcel of land

or holding leadership positions. The "number (#) of families" category lists the number of families who live permanently in each community. None of the participants have access to clean water in their communities or access to public transportation. One must walk to these communities (1–2 hours) from the nearby towns or have some private transportation arrangement.

Data collection for this qualitative study came from three main resources: (1) 27 semi-structured interviews with community women leaders, key CORIDUP and community actors, representatives of CEPA (a local environmental NGO) and government officials; (2) participant observation; and (3) focus groups with Wasi Pacha and Las Ramonas, two environmental and feminist urban collectives. Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants: the majority are women (63%) between 25 and 65 years of age. All of the participants from the communities self-identified as indigenous, peasants, and/or indigenous peasants. The concept of "indigenous peasants" used in this study refers to participants' ethnicity and class: indigenous because all participants were predominantly Quechua and peasants in reference to their social economic class (Perreault, 2014).

Continuities, disruptions, and connections

"Before I used to support Evo, I thought 'wow, *un campesino como nosotros va a hacer cambios*' [a peasant like us is going to make changes] but nothing, nothing [changed] for me or my community" expressed doña Victoria,¹ 49, from Quellia, Poopó. Similarly, doña Elena, 68, CORIDUP leader from the Sorachico *Ayllu* (indigenous political, territorial, and organizational structure), expressed:

Since the very first moment he [Evo] allowed the miners to work, and now there is no tailings dam ... he says

Table 1. Characteristics of the communities in this study.

	Puñaka	Quellia	Alantañita	Kochi Piacala
Population (# of families)	140	80–120	140–160	120
# of families in community	6–8	6–8	8–10	4–5
Ethnicity	Indigenous-peasant	Indigenous-peasant	Indigenous-peasant	Indigenous-peasant
Language	Quechua and Spanish	Quechua and Spanish	Quechua and Spanish	Quechua and Spanish
Activity	Agriculture + mining	Agriculture + mining	Agriculture, some mining	Agriculture
Water provision	Varies	Varies	None, must go to Machacamarca	None, must go to Machacamarca
Women leaders	Yes, local and regional (CORIDUP)	Yes, local and regional (CORIDUP)	Yes, only local	Some, only local

Source: Data collected by the author based on interviews with different actors as well as content analysis of various documents.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of participants.

Variable		Machacamarca	Poopó	Other	Total	%
		n	n	n	N	
Gender	Women	7	6	4	17	63
	Men	1	3	6	10	37
	Total	8	9	10	27	100
Age	25–45	2	2	2	6	22
	46–65	5	5	6	16	60
	66–more	3	1	1	5	18
Indigenous	Yes	8	9	5	22	89
	No	0	0	5	5	11
Religion	Catholic	6	4	9	19	70
	Evangelic	2	5	1	8	30
Lives in community	Yes	5	0	2	7	26
	No	3	9	8	20	74
Land in community	Yes	7	9	4	20	74
	No	1	0	6	7	26
For women leaders only (16)*						
Marital status	Married/union	4	4	1	9	56
	Single	2	1	1	4	25
	Other	1	1	1	3	19
Education	Primary	6	2	1	9	56
	Secondary	1	3	1	5	31
	Higher	0	1	1	2	12
Works	Yes	7	5	2	14	88
	No	0	1	1	2	12
Where	Agriculture	3	1	1	4	25
	Informal sector	3	2	2	7	44
	Other	1	3	1	5	29
Access to water	Yes	0	0	1	1	6
	No	7	6	2	15	94
By group	Women leaders	7	6	3	16	52
	Key actors	1	3	1	5	19
	NGO (CEPA)	-	-	-	3	11
	Government	-	-	-	3	11

The total number of interviews with women was 17, from them, 16 are or were community leaders. That's why the number in this section is 16, and not 17.

Source: Data collected by the author based on interviews with different actors as well as content analysis of various documents.

nothing about it, but he also says we have to take care of *Pachamama*, but I question that. How can we take care of her [*Pachamama*] with all those mining contaminants? It is impossible ... all is the same thing.

The narratives of doña Victoria and doña Elena point to the continuities of neoliberal policies by the Morales government in relation to extractive capitalism. Their perspectives also interconnect with participants' views that groups that produce for the state, such as miners, received preferential treatment, while they (peasants) are excluded: "One time we

directly asked the president [Morales] to support us, and he told us, 'mining contributes to the state, it pay rents, you don't' ... Can you believe he told us that? That means whoever contributes [economically] has rights, and we don't,' denounced don Miguel, 67, former CORIDUP vice president.

Although progressive governments such as Morales' claim that neo-extractivism has improved the material conditions of indigenous communities, in reality it produces the same, or worse, socio-environmental effects as classical

extractivism (Gudynas, 2011; Webber, 2017). These effects, however covert and indirect, lead to the same outcome: a) the dispossession of indigenous lands and ways of life, which is expressed through urban migration and the inability to revitalize rural livelihoods; b) the contamination of waters, which is at the epicenter of these dispossessions and it has worse and gendered effects on indigenous peasant women, as it affects their social reproductive activities. Consequentially, although the Bolivian highlands have not experienced major anti-mining social movements like in Peru and Ecuador, indigenous peasant women constantly engage in everyday resistances, both personal and collective. The following section describes these findings in detail.

Dispossession of lands and indigenous ways of life

Doña Carmen, 73, from the Kochi Piacala community located downstream and far away from the Huanuni mine, stated that mining contamination, “has taken everything away from us, it has affected our lands … before, we used to have seven types of grasses, now nothing.” Comparably, doña Jacinta, 57, from the Alantañita community explained:

Before contamination how did we survive? Only from our crops, sheep and cows, with their milk and cheese, their meat and also their wool, we would have 500 sheep and more than 50 cows, now we only have 50–60 sheep … we can no longer survive. Before everything would be produced here, even the clothes would be from the sheep, now not anymore.

Mining-induced displacement and resettlement (the processes where entire communities are removed to free their lands for mining activities) is often mentioned as the principal way that large-scale mining dispossesses indigenous communities of their territories (Jenkins, 2014). Nevertheless, such direct and overt dispossessions by or near production sites (mines) ignore the spatial scope of extractivism and its footprint (Perreault, 2013). The above testimonies from doña Carmen and doña Jacinta, however, allude to indirect, often invisible, yet parallel forms of dispossessions of indigenous lands and indigenous ways of life.

Moreover, most indigenous peasants in this region have migrated to urban cities in Bolivia and Argentina and participants such as doña Elena, 68, from the Sorachico *Ayllu*, argued that, “*la contaminación es siempre el mayor motivo para irnos* [contamination is always the main reason for us to leave].” Urban migration, however, is a pattern common in many, if not most, communities in the Bolivian Andes, not just contaminated ones. The decomposition of subsistence agrarian economies in the Altiplano started in the 1970s, reaching its greatest disintegration between 1982 and 1984, and irregular climate processes such as *El Niño* affected migratory patterns in the Bolivian Andes (Gruberg and Andreucci, 2015; Webber, 2017). Socio-political decisions from the state since the 1950s that have favored agribusiness

capitalists via subsidies, while creating biases against peasant economies, have also intensified urban migration (Colque et al., 2015).

While recognizing these macro effects on subsistence agrarian economies across the Altiplano, participants offered the quinoa boom as an exemplar to support their argument of contamination as the main cause for their migration. Doña Mariana, 58, from Alantañita, Machacamarca, shared:

I used to grow quinoa and potatoes … recently I have tried to even grow crops using a tractor, but nothing came out … it is the contamination. They [crops] do not grow completely; the potatoes have growth like little *cachinitas* [tiny rocks] and all contaminated.

The Altiplano is the traditional and leading quinoa producer of the world: between 2005 and 2013 quinoa production experienced a boom in demand from global North nations, with an increase of 600% in its price (McDonell, 2018). An ignored effect of the quinoa boom is that it created the circumstances for many indigenous peasants to return to their communities, leading to a repopulation and revitalization of indigenous peasant life (Tschoopp, 2018). The participants in this study were also traditionally quinoa producers, “here [in Puñaka] we used to grow quinoa … because it is close to the river, we would bring quinoa in trucks” (doña Patricia, 43, Puñaka, Poopó). However, they did not benefit from the quinoa boom and community revitalization because their lands are contaminated and sterile.

In the context of the Bolivian Altiplano, lands are not expropriated for investment capital to take advantage of it as accumulation by dispossession presumes (Perreault, 2013). Instead, they are indirectly expropriated to be wasting sites of the mines. “*Somos el dique de cola de Huanuni* [we are Huanuni’s mine tailings dam]” was a very common phrase that participants expressed during interviews and meetings. Nevertheless, these passive and covert expropriations still lead to dispossession of lands and indigenous ways of life which are necessary for extractive capitalism to function because its spatial reach (particularly through water flows) demands such dispossessions (Perreault, 2013). This process is not an externality; it is part of a central (although not directly profitable) invisible mechanism for neo-extractivism to function. In other words, not all dispossessions are directly connected to the need for accumulation, although they are part of it.

Water is social life

“*Sin agua no hay vida* [without water there is no life] … it is really hard to take care of my children, to cook, to wash dishes and my cows suffer a lot too,” stated doña Teresa, 38, from Alantañita, Machacamarca. The Huanuni mine does not have a tailings dam, therefore acidic runoff goes straight to the San Juan de Sora Sora, Santa Fe, and Huanuni rivers,

producing constant contamination of surface and underground water (Perreault, 2013). The four communities in this study are located near these rivers and their agricultural lands are, therefore, locations of ongoing accumulation of mining waste, heavy metals, and mining sediments, generating environmental liabilities through increase in toxicity and acidity of the waters (CEPA, 2009; Perreault, 2013). While these effects are widespread, access to clean water, or the lack of it, has a direct, dire and gendered effect on the lives of indigenous peasant women:

It is obvious that we women have the worst part in this contamination because we are the ones who have to find new ways to obtain water to give to our children ... we [women] have to be aware of this, that this [contamination] disfavors women; it put us in trouble because we have to face the reality we are living in ... We carry water in buckets, and we tell our kids not to wash their faces, we are always on alert (doña Victoria, 49, Quellia, Poopó).

Lack of access to clean water has a twofold effect on indigenous peasant women because they are also subsistence producers. For instance, doña Paula, 69, from the Kochi Piacala community usually wakes up around 5:00 am and her first activity is to bring (contaminated) water from a nearby waterhole (20 min walking distance) that she uses to wash dishes. The clean water she buys from the town of Machacamarca (2-hour walking distance from her house) is for cooking, drinking, and some minor hygiene activities (washing hands and face). She claims, "10 years ago I could still get my animals to drink water from a river there [near her house, about 15 minutes walking]." Now she has to walk approximately 2 or 3 hours in search of less-contaminated water for her animals.

These circumstances represent gendered forms of accumulation by dispossession that a fixation on production often makes invisible. Studies about gender and mining industries, or gender and development, often focus their research on women working within these industries, or on the gendered effects of mines in communities that are in close proximity to them (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; Owen and Kemp, 2015). Yet, the experiences of indigenous peasant women in this study, seemingly disconnected to mining activities, show an interlocked but inverted link between production and social reproduction. Social reproductive activities such as cooking, grazing animals, and washing clothes among indigenous peasant communities do not create relevant labor power because extractive capitalism is not labor intensive; it is resource intensive. Surplus value does not come from the exploitation of labor (although it still needs workers—miners—to operate) but principally from the exploitation of resources. In the context of these communities, extractive capitalism creates and depends on the absence of their social reproduction: "the well [in my community] is completely salty and bitter, undrinkable, it smells like rotten minerals, so

our only option is to migrate to the city, or to another country. If this region was productive, I think people would stay, but it is not" (doña Laura, 52, Caravi community). In other words, through water contamination, extractive capitalism halts all the productive and social reproductive activities of indigenous peasant communities, which further serves to expropriate their territories.

An analysis of water as the epicenter of these issues also elucidates how oppression and accumulation by dispossession are deeply interwoven. Examining hydrosocial relations in the Andes, Perreault (2013) argues that accumulation by dispossession and the collective rights and access to water are too narrowly framed within processes of the market and privatization. Hydrosocial relations in the Bolivian Altiplano are deeply conditioned by mining activities, not by privatization, which produce a codependent and antagonistic relationship between indigenous peasant communities and mining companies. Codependent because both economic activities are water centered and antagonistic because mining must extract the rights of access to water from communities in order to maintain its operations. The Huanuni mine consumes around 28 million liters of water per day (Perreault, 2013). On the other hand, as shown in Table 2, none of the participants in this study has access to clean water in their communities.

In 2014, the Morales government approved the Mining and Metallurgic Law 535 (MML 535), which grants rights and access to water to the mining sector while simultaneously stripping these rights from indigenous peasant communities (Perreault, 2013). This therefore creates an uneven socioecological relation, where water is deeply politicized and transformed:

With the mining law [535], politics have worsened. They [the miners] control all access to the water, they monopolize the rivers, and do not even look at the communities. What has Evo done? Nothing, he has done nothing to protect the peasants. At the same time he flirts with the miners (doña Tamara, 38, Alantañita, Machacamarca).

In this manner, hydrosocial relationships within processes of accumulation by dispossession and in a context of extractive capitalism are racialized, making the indigenous peasants' ways of life unproductive and irrelevant.

Water and hydrosocial relations also reveal the gendered and patriarchal features of extractive capitalism. It might seem obvious that water is central to all the domestic activities that reproduce life, such as washing clothes, cooking, raising children, and taking care of the elderly. Yet, this taken-for-granted approach obscures the sexual division of labor, which is based on the biological distinction between male and female to create a sexed and gendered hierarchy where roles, activities, and labor are "determined sexually ... [it is the] basic mechanism of control for patriarchal

culture" (Eisenstein, 1999: 202). Within this hierarchy the determining relations are those of reproduction, not production.

Indigenous peasant communities in the Bolivian Andes are not exempted from the sexual division of labor. Although their cultural philosophies support gender-balanced and egalitarian notions (exemplified in *chacha-warmi* [male-female], a concept described in detail below) the socio-political organization within rural communities still relies on patriarchal hierarchies. "Men are always *machistas*, they want women to just take care of children, of the livestock, to be at home while they go to the meetings," stated dona Laura, 52, from the Caravi community. It should not be surprising then that indigenous peasant women are the main caretakers within social reproductive activities. As doña Victoria, 49, from Quellia, Poopó, explained:

We have to be aware of this, that this [contamination] disfavors women. I was talking with my husband and we concluded that women always take the worst part. We carry water in buckets, and we tell our kids not to wash their faces, we are always on alert, because contamination is visible.

Therefore, while neo-extractivism might seem racial and gender neutral, indigenous peasant women are the hardest hit by the erosion of the socio-environmental conditions in their communities.

Everyday resistance

The Bolivian Altiplano has historically harnessed indigenous rebellions and struggles such as those of CORIDUP. These struggles, however, are often expressed not through massive social movements, but rather, through *everyday resistances*, which Scott (1986) defines as those unexciting but ongoing struggles of the peasantry against those seeking to oppress and exploit them Scott, 1986.

Expanding on Scott's definition, Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) define everyday resistance as an intersectional and contextual praxis that is historically intertwined to the heterogeneous powers it confronts. Everyday resistance is available to all subalterns, but it is not tied to them as subjects. It is constant and ongoing negotiations that are not whole, some power relations are challenged while others are not, and therefore it is not trapped in a single power relation (Vinthagen and Johansson, 2013). Everyday resistance often emerges within the realms of established power hierarchies, therefore it is both "subordinate and rebellious at the same time" (2013: 37).

In this study, indigenous peasant women engage in everyday resistances through community leadership. From the 16 women I interviewed, 15 held at least one community leadership role in the last 5 years. Doña Ximena, 29, CORIDUP secretary from the Sorachico community, explained:

While we were preparing the food [for the CORIDUP meetings], doña Francisca [a former CORIDUP leader] would also talk to us, she would tell us that we don't have to be shy and that we have to speak in the meetings about our experiences ... she would say "*hermanas* [sisters], these are our lands, we have to do this thinking about our children, our communities, not just about us" ... she would also tell us that we needed to participate in the rallies, that our *hermanos* [brothers] needed our support.

One of the reasons for a high participation of indigenous women as leaders is the Andean concept and practice of *chacha-warmi* (male-female), which is based on the notions of duality and complementarity. For leadership positions, *chacha-warmi* means that communities must have both female and male indigenous leaders. While the extent to which *chacha-warmi* facilitates gender inclusion is open to question, it has created important, although unequal, spaces for indigenous peasant women to challenge authority and patriarchal power. Doña Patricia, 43, the water monitor from Puñaka, Poopó, shared:

It did not take long before I started arguing with them ... with [the] authorities, even the *licenciados* [the ones with college degrees] ... I would argue with them because they think we know nothing, but we do. We have to deal with this [contamination] every day. We also received workshops so we understand better. Before I was not paying attention, I did not think it was that serious, but as a leader I realized it was ... I started demanding things, and they were mad that we were not quiet.

Indigenous peasant women were also aware of how intersectionalities of gender, class, and ethnicity placed them at a disadvantage in these struggles. Yet, they asserted their own agency and power:

The first time I went to the Ministry of the Interior, I was scared, I thought "a humble woman like myself here? soy *campesina*" [I am a peasant], I could not even speak! ... [but] then I started learning. ... I learned that a good leader has to push, has to demand things. A good leader has to go to the government and has to speak about the harsh life in our communities. I learn to be a good leader and make demands every day (doña Jacinta, 57, finance secretary of the Alantañita community).

The vivid experience of contamination, combined with knowledge acquired from leadership positions, has allowed indigenous peasant women to exercise everyday resistances through unsubordinated actions, both personal and collective. Whereas experts describe issues in reference to technical understandings, indigenous peasant women such as doña Patricia and doña Jacinta speak from their own experiences, asserting their voices as equally valid. They confront the

presumption that only technical knowledge is legitimate, and they defy colonial practices that grant unequal powers to some subjects, particularly males representing the state, to dominate others. By doing this, indigenous peasant women challenge patriarchal and colonial norms that portray their social reproductive and productive spheres as socially and politically irrelevant. As doña Ximena, 29, CORIDUP secretary from the Sorachico community, claimed in a CORIDUP meeting with government officials:

Hermanos y hermanas [brothers and sisters] ... I want to share what is happening in our communities, because although I do not have any education, I can declare that contamination is affecting our lives, we can no longer survive, we produce nothing and we are still very poor. How is it possible that you, with all your studies, do not realize this?

Although often perceived as unimportant and oppressive, the gendered spaces of the house, the kitchen, and the markets where women are in charge are also spaces of cooking together, eating together, spaces of sharing stories, and spaces where indigenous peasant women have built solidarity networks that are central in strengthening relationships and the social fabric within and between communities:

Women in general arrange such support networks ... it is not a big deal because we are just helping each other ... when my mom was alive, her neighbors would come to help her grow potatoes, and then she would help them as well ... *comunarios* [peasants] are like that, we know it is in our own benefit to help others (doña Silvia, 51, Major of Puñaka, Poopó).

Andean socio-cultural practices like *Ayni*, a socioeconomic system based on the notions of reciprocity, complementarity, and kinship (Ayni Bolivia, 2018; Ravindran, 2015), foster the construction of these solidarity networks. As doña Asunta, the spokesperson for Puñaka, Poopó, states, "we try to live like that, that's the way we do things ... that is *Ayni*, you know, today for you, tomorrow for me."

These solidarity networks also provide important socio-political resources and sites for community-based resistance. Meetings are held in the nearby towns of Machacamarca and Poopó, many times occurring late at night to find a location and a time accessible to the majority, including those living in and outside their communities. This means that people must find a place to stay and food to eat, and women from these communities are the ones in charge of helping people with these needs. As doña Silvia, 51, from Puñaka, Poopó, explains, "we [women] always try to help others because we know how hard it is to travel, and especially to make time for the meetings and sometimes to find the money [to travel]."

These practices of solidarity within the realms of social reproduction and indigenous cosmovisions such as *Ayni* have a fundamental role in the labor of community reproduction and resistance that is often disregarded and taken for

granted. Yet, these practices represent everyday resistances. Although they emerge within the realms of established patriarchal and colonial hierarchies, they are also insubordinate. These solidarity networks and *Ayni* practices exemplify epistemes antagonistic to these established orders and therefore represent a direct threat to, and an alternative to, the hegemonic necessities of capitalism.

Conclusions

This study refocuses attention onto assumed mundane activities such as washing clothes, cooking, and grazing animals—activities where indigenous peasant women play a central role—to show how social reproduction is intrinsically intertwined with production processes. In this case study, a twisted version emerges where production leads to the un-reproduction of indigenous ways of life. Extractive capitalism depends on the commodification of territories and resources, not the commodification of labor. Indigenous communities therefore are expelled and dispossessed from their lands and ways of life by extractivist forces and the unabashed support of the Bolivian state for the mining sector. This, therefore, is an empirical case study that shows how neo-extractivism, even under a progressive government like Morales, still leads to accumulation by dispossession, specifically, the dispossession of indigenous lands and indigenous ways of life.

At the epicenter of these issues is control over access to water, which connects all of these conflicts. Water is social life—it is central in the reproduction of communities and societies. Water therefore is social and political, and as such, the character of hydrosocial relations and its effects both depend on, and reflect, the power relations behind it. MML 535, where the state grants rights and access to water to the mining sector while simultaneously stripping these rights from indigenous peasant communities, exemplifies the unequal powers in this conflict.

Water also reveals the gendered and patriarchal features of extractive capitalism. Indigenous peasant women are both producers and social reproducers within their communities, and they rely primordially on water-centric activities. Unlike some well-intentioned yet essentialist connections between indigenous women and nature, this study focuses on the socio-material conditions of indigenous peasant women to show that this case study represents a gendered form of accumulation by dispossession. By connecting SRT and accumulation by dispossession, I make an imbrication between production and reproduction processes to show that extractive capitalism is not just about production, exploitation, and the commodification of nature; it is also about reproduction, oppression, and the continuity and exacerbation of colonial and patriarchal mandates that have historically placed indigenous peasant women at the bottom of the hierarchies these mandates create.

Amidst all of the power imbalances that this study addresses, indigenous peasant women and their communities are not idle. They continue organizing against the political and economic forces that oppress them. The individual and collective efforts of indigenous peasant women and CORIDUP are not extraordinary events; they are part of ongoing and historical resistances that have been taking place in the Andes and are part of an emerging wave of eco-social movements referred to as the “eco-territorial turn of social struggles” (Svampa, 2015, quoted from Cusicanqui, 2016: 65). The direction and potential of these movements are yet to be defined, but resistance is present and ongoing.

Furthermore, the daily duties of indigenous peasant women in production and social reproduction are embedded in the Andean episteme of Ayni, which includes reciprocity, duality, and complementarity, and have allowed indigenous peasant women to build solidarity networks that keep the social fabric within and between communities alive, providing important socio-political resources and sites for everyday resistance. For indigenous peasant women, the personal is political and their unsubordinated actions within their personal and leadership experiences are political efforts to challenge capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal orders. Their unsubordinated actions, however small or mundane, are existing alternatives to these hierarchical, oppressive, and exploitative mandates.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Note

1. This study uses pseudonyms for all participants as well as “Don” and “Doña,” Spanish words for Mr and Ms/Mrs to denote respect for older adults.

References

- Acosta A (2013) Extractivism and neo-extractivism: two sides of the same curse. In: Lang M and Mokrani D (eds) *Beyond Development: Alternative Visions from Latin America*. Quito, Ecuador: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, 61–86.
- Acosta C (2015) ‘Decolonizing the nation-state’: indigenous autonomy, extractivism, and consultation in contemporary Bolivia. *B.A. Dissertation*, York University.
- Gudynas E (2011) El nuevo extractivismo progresista en América del sur. Tesis sobre un viejo problema bajo nuevas expresiones. In: Acosta A (ed) *Colonialismo del siglo XXI. Negocios extractivos y defensa del territorio en América*. España: Icaria, 75–92.
- Ayni Bolivia (2018) Reciprocidad y complementariedad andina [online]. *Ayni Bolivia*. Available at: <http://aynibolivia.com/shop/blog/ayni-bolivia/> (accessed 14 June 2019).
- Bakker I and Gill S (2003) *Power, Production, and Social Reproduction: Human In/Security in the Global Political Economy*. Toronto, Canada: York University.
- Bhattacharya T (2017) *Social Reproduction Theory Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*. London: Pluto Press.
- Block F (1987) The ruling class does not rule: notes on the Marxist theory of the state. In: F Block(ed) *Revising State Theory: Essays in Politics and Postindustrialism*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 51–68. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14btcpb.
- Burchardt H-J and Dietz K (2014) (Neo-)extractivism – a new challenge for development theory from Latin America. *Third World Quarterly* 35(3): 468–486. DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2014.893488
- Cantoral L (2017) Huanuni: La mina que se socava a si misma [online]. *Conectas*. Available at: <https://www.connectas.org/especiales/huanuni-mina/> (accessed 02 August 2018).
- CEPA (2009) Declaratoria zona de emergencia ambiental. Serie: Cuadernos de trabajo [online]. CEPA. Available at: <https://cepaoruro.org/decreto-supremo-0335-declara-zona-de-emergencia-ambiental-06-11-09/> (accessed 23 February 2017).
- Colque G, Urioste M and Eyzaguirre J (2015) *Marginalizacion de la Agricultura Campesina e Indigena: Dinamicas locales, Seguridad y Soberania Alimentaria. Dinámicas Locales, Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentaria*. La Paz: TIERRA.
- Cusicanqui SR (2010) Mujeres Y estructuras de poder en Los Andes. In: Plural (ed) *Violencias (Re) Encubiertas*. Piedra Rota: Bolivia, 175–194.
- Cusicanqui SR (2014) *Mito y Desarrollo en Bolivia: El Giro Colonial del Gobierno del MAS*. Bolivia: Piedra Rota.
- Cusicanqui SR (2016) Etnicidad estratégica, nación y (Neo) colonialismo en América Latina. *Alternativa Revista de Estudios Sociales* 3(5): 65–87.
- Deonandan K and Dougherty M (2016) *Mining in Latin America: Critical Approaches to the New Extraction*. NY: Routledge.
- Eisenstein Z (1999) Constructing a theory of capitalist Patriarchy and socialist feminism. *Critical Sociology* 25(2-3): 196–217. DOI: 10.1177/08969205990250020901
- Einsestein Z (2014) An alert: Capital is intersectional; radicalizing piketty’s inequality. *The Feminist Wire* [online]. Available at: <https://thefeministwire.com/2014/05/alert-capital-intersectional-radicalizing-pikettys-inequality/> (accessed 22 February 2017).
- Fabricant N (2015) Review: The topsy-turvy path to twenty-first-century socialism: the limitations of the new. *Latin American Perspectives* 42(4): 113–116.
- Garcia Linera A (2013) *Geopolitica de la Amazonia: Poder Hacendal-Patrimonial y Acumulacion Capitalista*. La Paz, Bolivia: Vicepresidencia del Estado Plurinacional.
- Gareca J (2009) Breve historia de huanuni [online]. *El Makipura*. Available at: <http://makipura.blogspot.com/2009/01/huanuni.html> (accessed 02 June 2018).

- Gruberg H and Andreucci D (2015) *Evaluacion de la Gestión Socio-Ambiental del sector en Bolivia. El Caso de la Cuenca del Lago Poopó*. Cochabamba, Bolivia: Estudio MAU.
- Harvey D (2003) *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Harvey D (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Higginbottom A (2013) The political economy of foreign investment in Latin America: dependency revisited. *Latin American Perspectives* 40(3): 184–206.
- Horowitz L and Watts M (2016) *Grassroots Environmental Governance: Community engagements with Industry*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2013) *Principales Resultados del Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2012* [census report]. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia. Available at: <http://ibce.org.bo/images/publicaciones/Resultados-Censo-2012.pdf> (accessed 6 October 2017).
- Jenkins K (2014) Women, mining and development: an emerging research agenda. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 1(2): 329–339. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2014.08.004
- Jenkins K (2015) Unearthing women's anti-mining activism in the andes: pachamama and the "mad old women.". *Antipode* 47(2): 442–460. DOI: 10.1111/anti.12126
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2012) Digging women: towards a new agenda for feminist critiques of mining. *Gender, Place & Culture* 19(2): 193–212. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2011.572433
- Lopez E and Vertiz F (2015) Extractivism, transnational capital, and Subaltern struggles in Latin America. *Latin American Perspectives. [online]* 42(5): 152–168[Viewed 13 March 2017].
- Lopez Florez P (2013) Disputa por la autonomía indígena y la plurinacionalidad en Bolivia: (Resistencias comunitarias al neo-extractivismo Y al estado-nación). In: Lopez P and Guerreiro L (eds) *Pueblos Originarios en la Lucha Por Las Autonomías: Experiencias y Desafíos en América Latina*. Buenos Aires: Editorial el Colectivo, 113–138.
- McDonell E (2018) *The Quinoa Boom Goes Bust in the Andes*. New York: NACLA. <https://nacla.org/print/11527>.
- McMichael P and Schneider M (2011) Food security politics and the millennium development goals. *Third World Quarterly* 32(1): 119–139. DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2011.543818
- Mohanty C (2003) "Under western eyes" revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles. In: Mohanty C (ed.) *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. London: Duke U. Press, 17–42.
- Owen JR and Kemp D (2015) Mining-induced displacement and resettlement: aAa critical appraisal. *Journal of cleaner production* (87): 478–488. DOI: 10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.09.087
- O'Faircheallaigh C (2013a) Women's absence, women's power: indigenous women and negotiations with mining companies in Australia and Canada. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36(11): 1789–1807. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2012.655752
- O'Faircheallaigh C (2013b) Extractive industries and Indigenous peoples: changing dynamic? *Journal of Rural Studies* 30: 20–30. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2012.11.003
- Perreault T (2013) Dispossession by accumulation? Mining, water and the nature of enclosure on the Bolivian altiplano. *Antipode* 45(5): 1050–1069.
- Perreault T (2014) *Minería, Agua y Justicia Social en los Andes: Experiencias Comparativas de Perú y Bolivia*. La Paz, Bolivia: Fundación PIEB.
- Radcliffe S (2014) El género Y La etnicidad como barreras para El desarrollo: Mujeres indígenas, acceso a recursos en Ecuador en perspectiva latinoamericana. *Eutopia. Revista De Desarrollo Económico Territorial* 5: 11–34. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17141/eutopia.5.2014.1486>
- Ravindran T (2015) Beyond the pure and the authentic: Indigenous modernity in Andean Bolivia. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 11(4): 321–333. DOI: 10.1177/117718011501100401
- Safransky S, Wolford W, Safransky S and Wolford W (2011) Contemporary land grabs and their alternatives in the America. In: *International conference on global land grabbing*, UK: University of Sussex, 6-8 April 2011. Available at: https://www.future-agricultures.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf-archive/Safransky_Wolford.pdf
- Sankey K and Munck R (2016) Rethinking development in Latin America: the search for alternative paths in the twenty-first century. *Journal of Developing Societies* 32(4): 334–361. DOI: 10.1177/0169796X16670296
- Scott J (1986) Everyday forms of peasant resistance. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 13(2): 5–35. DOI: 10.1080/03066158608438289
- Seoane J (2012) Neoliberalismo y ofensiva extractivista. Actualidad de la acumulación por despojo, desafíos de Nuestra América. *Theomai* 26, n.p.
- Spronk S (2006) Cochabamba water war in Bolivia by Oscar Olivera and Tom Lewis. *Labour/Le Travail* 57: 237–239.
- Stirling T (2015) Guarani people turn to the law to fight latest battle with Bolivian authorities. *The Guardian*, 6 October. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/oct/06/guarani-people-turn-to-the-law-fight-latest-battle-bolivia-authorities> (accessed 17 October 2017).
- Svampa M (2012) Consenso de Los commodities, Giro Ecoterritorial Y Pensamiento crítico en América Latina Maristella. *OSAL Observatorio Social de América Latina* 32: 15–38.
- Svampa M (2015) The 'commodities consensus' and valuation languages in Latin America. *Alternautas* 2(1): 45–59.
- Tschopp M (2018) The quinoa boom and the commoditisation debate: critical reflections on the re-emergence of a peasantry in the southern Altiplano. *Alternautas* 5(1): 64–81.
- Van Hoecke E (2006) The invisible work of women in the small mines of Bolivia. In: Lahiri Dutt K and McIntyre M (eds) *Women Miners in Developing Countries: Pit Women and Others*. NY: Ashgate Publishing, 265–284.
- Veltmeyer H (2012) The natural resource dynamics of postneoliberalism in Latin America. *Studies in Political Economy* 90(1): 57–85.
- Veltmeyer H (2013) The political economy of natural resource extraction: a new model or extractive imperialism? *Canadian*



- Journal of Development Studies/Revue Canadienne D'études Du Développement* 34(1): 79–95. DOI: 10.1080/02255189.2013.764850
- Vinthalen S and Johansson A (2013) "Everyday Resistance": exploration of a concept and its theories. *Resistance Studies Magazine* 1(1-46): 1–46.
- Webber J (2017) *The Last Day of Oppression, and the First Day of the Same: The Politics and Economics of the New Latin American Left*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

Author Biography

Gisela V. Rodriguez Fernandez is an Instructor at Portland State University, in Portland, Oregon. She earned a PhD in Sociology and Social Inequality from Portland State

University. At the University of Southern Mississippi, she earned a Masters in Public Health and two Bachelor degrees in Anthropology and Music. She is from Bolivia and has previously worked as a research consultant and research fellow for various organizations, including Global Health Corps, and the Inter-American Development Bank. Her research focuses on race and ethnicity, social inequality, intersectionality, political economy, and social change. Her recent and ongoing scholarship aims to change the academic conversations surrounding marginalized communities that reproduce ideologies of victimhood and idleness while ignoring the ongoing struggles for self-determination, agency, and social change among these communities, both in Bolivia and the US Pacific Northwest.





Negotiating belonging and place: an exploration of *mestiza* women's everyday resistance in Cajamarca, Peru

Human Geography
2020, Vol. 13(1) 40–48
© The Author(s) 2020
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910897
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Inge A. M. Boudewijn¹

Abstract

Since 1993, the Cajamarca region of Peru has been home to the Yanacocha gold mine, associated with environmental degradation, negative health impacts, and socio-economic consequences. In 2012, large-scale protests broke out across the region over the newly proposed Conga mine. Increasingly, scholarship is devoted to recognizing socio-environmental struggles outside of mass-mobilization and public protests, at the local, household and everyday level, often performed over much longer timescales. In this context, I critically explore the everyday resistance of *mestiza*-identifying women in Cajamarca city. Through a discussion of how their on-going resistance critically constructs who/what belongs in place and who/what is 'other'/'stranger', I analyse how they mobilize gendered local values and knowledge to continue opposing large-scale mining in the aftermath of the Conga conflict.

Keywords

women, extractive industries, Andes, everyday resistance, mining

Negociando pertenencia y lugar: una exploración de la resistencia cotidiana de las mujeres mestizas en Cajamarca, Perú

Resumen

Desde 1993, la región de Cajamarca en Perú ha sido el hogar de la mina de oro Yanacocha, asociada con la degradación ambiental, los impactos negativos en la salud y las consecuencias socioeconómicas. Loayza (2012), estallaron protestas a gran escala en toda la región por la propuesta de la nueva mina Conga. Cada vez más, la investigación académica se dedica a reconocer las luchas socioambientales fuera de la movilización masiva y las protestas públicas; a nivel local, doméstico y cotidiano, a menudo realizado en escalas de tiempo mucho más largas. En este contexto, exploro críticamente la resistencia cotidiana de las mujeres que se identifican como mestizas en la ciudad de Cajamarca. A través de una discusión sobre cómo su resistencia en curso construye críticamente quién / qué pertenece en el lugar y quién / qué es 'otro' / 'extraño', analizo cómo movilizan los valores y conocimientos locales de género para continuar oponiéndose a la minería a gran escala en las secuelas del conflicto de la Conga.

Palabras clave

mujeres, industrias extractivas, Andes, resistencia cotidiana, minería

Introduction

Since 1993, the Cajamarca region in the northern Peruvian Andes has been home to the Yanacocha goldmine. In 2012, the region gained international attention when *Minera Yanacocha*'s plans to open the Conga mine led to large-scale protests. The case became emblematic for the various

¹Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Corresponding Author:

Inge A. M. Boudewijn, Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences, Squires Building, Northumbria University, NE1 8ST Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK.
Email: inge.a.m.boudewijn@northumbria.ac.uk

socio-environmental struggles in Peru, where the scale and intensity of resource extraction has rapidly increased under successive neoliberal governments since the 1990s (Veltmeyer and Petras, 2014). This article contributes to academic exploration of everyday resistance in the aftermath of such socio-environmental struggle, focusing on *mestiza*-identifying women's mobilizations of belonging in place. This group of women constitutes a relatively under-explored group in existing academic literature on socio-environmental movements and everyday resistance. The analysis in this article is based on qualitative data collected through interviews and participant observation in the region of Cajamarca in 2016–2017. The article is structured as follows: in the following section, I briefly outline the setting of the article and the methods used; in the subsequent section, I highlight the theoretical context to which it contributes. The following three sections contain my empirical discussion, outlining, in turn, how during mining resistance, *mestiza*-identifying women reconfigured who 'belongs'; how they continue to practise place and belonging in gendered ways in the aftermath of this resistance; and how, even in the aftermath of conflict, they consider their belonging threatened by 'strangers' with different customs and demands, further imbuing their everyday, private lives with gendered constructions of everyday resistance. Taken together, in the last section, I conclude that these *mestiza* women emphasize their everyday lives as meaningfully altered by a variety of 'masculine'-coded others. By mobilizing gendered notions of 'belonging' in place, then, they draw upon methods of everyday resistance both evident and meaningful to them.

Contextualizing resistance

The Yanacocha mine is operated by *Minera Yanacocha S.R.L.* (MYSRL), currently comprising the US-based Newmont mining corporation (51%), the Peruvian Buenaventura (44%) and the Japanese company Sumitomo (5%). The mine is located 35 km northwest of Cajamarca city (Bury, 2005). Initially, there was little opposition to the company's presence, but a sense of discontent steadily grew under the local population as only few local people found employment in the mine, and promised economic growth remained limited. Simultaneously, people began noticing negative impacts of the mine: pollution, displacement, dying fish stocks, as well as the continuous growth of Cajamarca city, and along with it, an increase in social ills (Bury, 2005; Li, 2013). In 2004, discontent with a proposed expansion of the Yanacocha mine into the Cerro Quilish area led to widespread rural and urban opposition (Li, 2013). In 2011, after the company announced its plans to open a new mine, Conga, mass mobilizations occurred in both urban and rural areas. These reached their peak in 2012, when five people lost their lives during involvement in anti-mining movements, and many more suffered violence and threats at the hands of

military and police (Loayza, 2012; Paredes Peñafiel and Li, 2019). The interest from international NGOs and journalists increased the external validity of the protests; ultimately, the opening of the Conga mine was indefinitely halted in 2016 (Newmont Mining Corporation, 2016).

In the remainder of this article, I draw on qualitative data collected during seven months of fieldwork in 2016–2017. My fieldwork involved extensive participant observation with several grassroots environmental and women's organizations in Cajamarca city and the towns of Celendín and Bambamarca, all located in the impact zones of the Yanacocha and/or Conga mines. Contact with women in these organizations was facilitated through the NGOs CATAPA, where I had previously worked, and LAMMP¹. Being referred through these organizations facilitated the acceptance of my presence and my ability to make further contacts in the field. In Cajamarca city, I worked with two different women's organizations, both with a long history of social mobilizations during the time of heavy protest in 2011–2012, when they mobilized in the streets, conducted fund-raising, attended public events and marches, and cooked for other activists. One of these groups continued meeting regularly in the present day, the other met sporadically.

I conducted twenty oral history interviews, with both *campesina*- (10) and *mestiza*- (10) identifying women, aged 27–66. *Campesina/o* literally means 'peasant'; however, it is in effect a descriptor of an ethnic group, associated with rural areas and lower classes in urban areas. *Mestiza/o* is a racial classifier originally referring to those of both indigenous and European descent; in practice, it is associated with urban middle and upper classes (De la Cadena, 2005; Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993). The interviews lasted between forty minutes and two hours. Nineteen interviewees opposed the Conga mine; one supported it. Eighteen had at some point been involved in anti-mining social movements; sixteen, to various extents, were still active in social movements. While my work did not focus exclusively on activists, in this article I use anonymized quotes from *mestiza*-identifying women who took part in public forms of resistance against the Conga mine. My aim is to acknowledge women's voices and experiences in the aftermath of the intense conflict. Therefore, similar to Jenkins (2014), I do not employ comparison to men, but value these women's stories in their own right.

Conceptualizing resistance

What is often highlighted in particular in relation to women's resistance is the notion that the personal is political and that in our everyday lives we create and re-create culture with all its implied meaning, power relations and struggles (Conger Lind, 1992; Escobar, 1992). Various scholars have explored how Andean women 'legitimize' participation in public activism with narratives of their tasks and responsibilities in

the everyday private sphere, notably including motherhood, protecting life and gendered connections to nature (Jenkins, 2015; Laurie, 2011; Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993). The everyday thus has obvious linkages to women's gendered forms of activism. Furthermore, Zanotti (2013) argues that 'place' is an important stage of the contestation of globalization through acts of everyday resistance. Understanding how local notions of belonging in place are mobilized in women's actions and narratives, then, can provide a useful avenue for further exploring their everyday resistance.

Places are about more than their physical attributes: through the meanings assigned to them, they are a reminder of the past, including of people, places and values, not just through nostalgia, but in on-going processes of meaning-making with historical continuity (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013). Such emotional connection to places, formed through repeatedly experiencing them, often translate to the feeling of 'belonging' in place (Gustafson, 2001; Scannell and Gifford, 2010; Thwaites and Simkins, 2007). When a group of people is identified as 'belonging' in place, automatically, a group of people is demarcated as 'not belonging' (Ahmed, 2000; Mee and Wright, 2009). Ahmed (2000) discusses how imagined communities at the national level are reliant on producing a 'boundary' to define who does and does not belong. This boundary could be constructed at regional or local levels as well; what is important here is how such boundaries serve to contrast what is inside with what is outside – the 'other', the stranger. However, Ahmed (2000) argues, the stranger is not restricted to the outside sphere, and is in fact considered especially threatening when existing within the constructed community boundary, demanding a seat at the table. Thereby, the stranger either takes the place of someone who was there before or demands the number of seats to be expanded.

The *campesina/o* has long been constructed as an 'other' to '*mestiza/o*' urban dwellers in Andean contexts, where the countryside is often imagined in two ways: on the one hand, associated with the traditional and the authentic; on the other, with connotations of backwardness (De la Cadena, 2005; Rowe and Schelling, 1991; Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993). However, academic work on Cajamarca, including much work quoted in this article (e.g. Li, 2009; Paredes Peñafiel and Li, 2019; Bebbington et al., 2008; Bury, 2005; Franco, 2016; Li, 2013), tends to focus on *campesino* resistance and rural areas, with less emphasis on exploring how local politics of belonging in the urban sphere, or between the urban and the rural, are interpreted in activism and post-activism contexts. This is not surprising, as in contrast to much of the rest of the country, Cajamarca is a predominantly rural region², where agriculture has long been the dominant income-generating activity (Franco, 2016).

Years before large-scale struggles over mining expansion erupted in Cajamarca, Starn (1991) already discussed the region's *campesino* movements, arguing they developed struggle through slow, continuous actions and activities

chipping away at notions of authority. He linked this in with the notion of everyday resistance, which has become widely recognized in academic literature exploring how social, political and environmental struggles do not simply take place through public protests movements, but occur at the local, household and everyday level. Such everyday resistance may go hand in hand with, pre-date and/or post-date more open, intense conflict of the sort we traditionally consider 'resistance' (Bebbington et al., 2008; Jenkins, 2017; Scott, 1986; van der Ploeg, 2009; Vinthagen and Johansson, 2013; Zanotti, 2013).

Academic work on Cajamarca and on everyday resistance, both, then, have a long history of being linked to the peasantry. However, Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) argue that the notion of everyday resistance should not be restricted to peasants, but exists in various subaltern groups of people. This article contributes to these literatures by considering the various ways in which Cajamarcan *mestiza*-identifying women who have opposed the expansion of large-scale mining in the region employ a narrative of belonging in their on-going strategies of everyday resistance.

Belonging in place

After the Conga project was put on hold, heavy activism in Cajamarca largely died down. However, similar to Castillo and Brereton (2018)'s finding that, in terms of migration, even non-existing mining projects can permanently alter meaning-making regarding place, I argue here that local relationships between the urban and the rural may also be permanently altered through a shift in local meaning-making, in this case, as it occurred in the context of the non-realized Conga project.

Some *mestiza* women explained that before the anti-Conga protests broke out, people from Cajamarca city sometimes looked down on the people from the countryside. Marisol (45, civil servant) said:

The people from the city used to say 'oh, those *indios*³ from there [the countryside]'

Dunn (2001) discusses how the 'us' and 'them' groups are created through narratives and storytelling, in which the delineation of the community members is captured, and thereby, who is an 'other', and why, becomes defined. As mentioned, the rural is often constructed as 'other' to the urban in the Andean context (De la Cadena, 2005; Rowe and Schelling, 1991). However, rural areas were also key in communicating some of the direct impacts of the mine, such as water pollution and displacement (e.g. Bebbington et al., 2008). In the context of anti-mining movements, then, *mestiza* women have started mobilizing Cajamarca region's rural inhabitants not as 'other', but as part of 'us'. For example, Alejandra (41, legal professional) explained:

We have the most rural inhabitants of the country, this makes us different, and makes that other people don't understand us.

The high number of people living in rural areas becomes a key aspect in defining the boundaries of Cajamarca region for Alejandra, even though she herself identifies as *mestiza* and does not generate an income from agriculture. Furthermore, when Clara (58, vendor) told me how much she loved Cajamarca city, I asked her:

Inge: *What is it you like most about Cajamarca?*

Clara: *Well, in Cajamarca there are many [good] things, for example, its climate, its... its people. Its friendly people, we're very dependable, right? And also, for example, its agriculture, its cattle raising, which we have a lot of.*

While urban agriculture exists (but is not practised by the women quoted in this article), cattle raising in particular is associated solely with rural areas. While we had been speaking about Cajamarca city when I asked Clara this question, her answer linked back to the region's rural identity. Urban dwellers, then, construct large-scale mining as a disruption of the integrity of the 'authentic rural', and thereby, of historical place-based practice and locally appropriate way of life. Evidently, these urban, *mestiza* activists, too, feel affected by the mine's impact on rural areas, which have come to represent regional identity. Thereby, even though the Conga mine never opened, it has had a lasting effect on their interpretations of social relationships in Cajamarca region, resulting in increased solidarity and resistance-linkages between urban activists and the countryside. As evidenced by Clara and Alejandra's quotes, their boundary of inclusion/'us' (Ahmed, 2000) is pushed beyond including only the city, to including the region as a whole. However, the differences between urban and rural Cajamarca are not negated or overcome; instead, they have been re-imagined by the *mestiza* activists quoted here, as their description of those in the countryside has transformed from derogatory talk of '*indios*' to recognition and respect of *campesinos* and their way of life, their struggles and their bravery in times of heavy conflict. As the *campesino* movements become constructed as protectors of the environment and old customs and values, they become aligned with the positive connotations of the rural (Rowe and Schelling, 1991), instead of the negatives, as they were before.

Naturally, constituting an 'us' requires a 'them' (Ahmed, 2000; Mee and Wright, 2009). This reconfiguration of local belonging is therefore directly linked to the constitution of new 'others' – the mine and the people associated with it, as I explore below.

Practicing place

In addition to these reconfigurations of the practical understanding of who/what 'belongs' in place, *mestiza* women

may also turn to actively practicing their construction of place to reinforce their on-going, organized forms of gendered resistance. In this regard, it is notable how Valeria (42, teacher) and Mariana (50, vendor) argue small forms of resistance are at least as important as large-scale mobilizations:

History has shown that changes, the consciousness of the people, do not come in a massive wave. It comes from committed groups like this, who conserve a little flame, and if in some moment it is necessary, it becomes a big fire. (Valeria)

[for now] we have looked for other forms of protest. [...] we weren't going to live solely of the protests. This was for a bit, and nothing more. (Mariana)

Valeria and Mariana, then, do not consider heavy, open activism to be the most important form of resistance against mining, but rather one possible aspect of it. While Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) note some academic work is struggling to highlight the validity and intention of everyday resistance, these women implicitly communicate their forms of resistance outside of open protest as valid, necessary and intentional. They serve the purpose of keeping the door open to re-igniting larger scale protest, but, as I will explore now, serve other purposes as well, including practicing and reinforcing belonging in place.

For example, the group of women in Cajamarca city that continued to meet regularly was involved in learning techniques to process local produce such as traditional plants and wool, to make soaps and create handicrafts to sell. These activities are notably gendered, as traditional plants, knitting and weaving have long historical links to women's everyday responsibilities in the Peruvian Andes (Forstner, 2013). Many of the women in this group articulated that apart from the opportunity to learn or improve their skills and generate more income, they considered this initiative a form of resistance to mining: by developing small-scale economic alternatives, they were proving that women can find ways to live well without needing mining in the area. Thereby, *mestiza* women imbue gendered tasks and activities with political meaning, further recognizing that resistance can be practiced and expressed in everyday life (Jenkins, 2017). As previously mentioned, women's participation in activism is often linked to such narratives of gendered everyday responsibilities. Another example is found in the case of water. This women's group was also involved in learning to monitor water quality in rural rivers and streams, to back up their claims that mining led to water pollution. Water, however, also has a long history in the Andes of being linked to women and 'the feminine' (Laurie, 2011; Li, 2009; Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993). Both gendered and place-based knowledge, then, become of central importance in this women's group's continued resistance, broadly aligning with Zanotti (2013)'s notion of communal everyday resistance, especially

concerning resistance through less visible actions that are nevertheless interpreted as political.

However, working with water in rural areas, on top of the particular practices of working with traditional and medicinal plants and wool, also notably link these practices of resistance to the rural and *campesina*, rather than to the urban and *mestiza*. This raises questions of how the rural and traditional may not be simply re-valued, but actively appropriated in the urban context. Social movements may see the benefits of focusing on traditional and rural work as a tool to widen the cleavage between the traditional/local on the one hand and the practices of the mine on the other. However, before making assumptions about any urban–rural appropriation, it is important to note two things.

First is the fact that urban *mestiza* women are in some ways similarly affected by mining as rural women, which is an underexplored area of research. For example, Valeria (42, teacher) explained:

Water scarcity is related directly with the presence of the mine [...] What [*do people in the*] the city do? Men go to work. Who has to worry about making meals, washing clothes, basic needs? Women. She has to bear it, she suffers for the water. And because women oversee the family economy, for example, she suffers because she has to buy water, she has to carry the water. [...] Always the women, it seems. It impacts women more than men. In details like that. But quality of life is made in details like that. It is not the big things, look, the market, the stock exchange, this doesn't matter to us, they're not our everyday life.

Valeria notably highlights that in the urban context, too, it is ‘always the women’ that seem to have to bear more than their share of the burden, considering their everyday struggles and responsibilities are increased by the impacts of the mine on water availability. Valeria links this to a decreasing quality of life for women, emphasizing that quality of life is constructed in the everyday.

Second, similar to the notion of ‘the rural’ I explored in the section ‘Belonging in place’, women’s gendered identities are also more likely to be linked to the ‘traditional’ in Andean societies (De la Cadena, 1991; Forstner, 2013). On the other hand, ‘the stock exchange’ and the international mining companies, their heavy machinery and large-scale methods are imbued with connotations of the global and masculine (Marchand, 2003). Aguinaga et al. (2013) suggest women recognize the patriarchal tendencies inherent in large-scale mining projects, which will ultimately harm themselves, their families and nature. For the *mestiza* women of Cajamarca, then, practices associated with the rural may not simply be the tools that are most readily available for them when communicating place-based resistance. Considering how women’s gendered identities are constructed, these forms of everyday resistance give them the ability to use local, gendered identities to demarcate the mine

as ‘other’/‘not belonging’ in their place, while placing themselves as crucially belonging through a way of life that is increasingly under threat. I will further explore this now.

Belonging under threat

As the countryside is re-imagined by *mestiza*-activists to become part of the familiar, so is the city itself reconfigured as becoming increasingly strange, notably in terms of everyday life. All the women I quoted in this article, to some degree, associated life in the city before the mine came with a simpler time, described in relation to values such as reciprocity, community and hospitality, sharing with neighbours, strangers and friends. While such values are often associated with life in the countryside (Gudynas, 2013; van der Ploeg, 2009), many urban women I spoke to described them as important and increasingly lost. Again, this highlights that values and practices, described elsewhere as meaningfully altered and affected in the countryside, play a role in urban place-based resistance as well. For example, Isabel (62, civil servant) said:

We lived in harmony, right? [Our parents] gave us this example [...] if [strangers] come to my house while I am having lunch, I make them come in and I give them a plate of food, right? And that is my... our custom, right? They can't take that from us. And, well... while we can, we have to do it.

Isabel and other urban women consider local way of life, part of place-based continuity (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013), threatened by both existing and planned mining projects. Upholding customs, then, can become an act of resistance especially when taking into consideration Vinthagen and Johansson (2013)’s note that everyday resistance may be ‘*typically habitual or semi-conscious*’ (p. 37). Isabel continued:

I would like it if... my grandchildren, my children, continue conserving like that, right? Growing on their land, conserving their culture, this... communicate with the people, serve the people, right? And that they don't just be served by the community, but that the community is served by them as people, as individuals, as professionals.

While Isabel considers upholding her customs increasingly difficult, she – like other women – also voices a clear resilience; in continuing to uphold certain values, raising their children in a certain way, they are able to preserve locally rooted customs, thereby turning everyday resistance generational. In this link to motherhood and future generations (Jenkins, 2015; Laurie, 2011; Westwood and Radcliffe, 1993), combined with the mobilization of customs and values that belong in place, further gendered forms of everyday resistance strongly come forward. In this space, resistance

can be voiced in the realm of Scott (1986)'s characterization of everyday resistance as based on everyday, individual actions challenging authority. Continuing, in the face of rapidly changing values, to live her life and teach her children as she sees fit becomes a way for Isabel to communicate her opposition to the way of thinking imported from the outside since the opening of the Yanacocha mine. Notions of femininity are, again, mobilized, here, in relation to (urban) local customs that belong in place, as opposed to those existing outside these constructed boundaries (Ahmed, 2000). As Mariana (50, vendor) explains:

the problem is with... with the coming of Yanacocha, prostitution has come, robberies, they have come from other cities [...] in Cajamarca there aren't a lot of pickpockets; where they have pickpockets is... eh... elsewhere, Chiclayo, Trujillo,... they come from there.

Mariana contrasts Cajamarca city with Chiclayo and Trujillo, cities she associated with higher crime levels and social ills. Mariana worries Cajamarca will follow the same trend as it becomes home to projects and ways of life that are not historically 'Cajamarcan' nor driven by a demand from the Cajamarcan people, but that are rather imposed by strangers that move to the city. Recall how Ahmed (2000) argues that strangers do not just pose a danger when they are 'outside', but notably, when they are present and take up space, threatening to force 'the local' out. This was a particular worry for many women I interviewed, who associate the city's population growth with increased alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling, prostitution and crimes, resulting from the lifestyles and demands of the newcomers. In this way, they consider their own belonging within their meaningful day-to-day environment threatened. There are, after all, notably gendered aspects to these women's concerns of urban change. The 'stranger' that drives the changes in local values, demands and social ills, the miner, is heavily coded as masculine (Lahiri-Dutt, 2012; Mercier and Gier, 2007). Furthermore, in the context of Cajamarca, the definition of 'miner' may include politicians, police, migrants looking for work and others that support the coming of the mine (Li, 2013), increasing the presence and ambiguity of this stranger. Some women argued that increased prostitution had changed the way women were perceived, leading to an increase in gendered slurs and a change in sexual attitudes towards women overall. Furthermore, several women reported a heightened sense of fear over increasing reports of sexual violence in the city. Holding on to more traditional local values, then, also recalls a time that women associate with higher levels and feelings of everyday safety, for women and girls in particular.

Notably, during my fieldwork, various women were still receiving threatening phone-calls, often threatening sexual violence or violence to their children. Many activists over the years have become targets of criminalization and

intimidation tactics (Paredes Peñafiel and Li, 2019). Understandably, the combination of the difficulties the mine is seen to bring – its disruptive force on nature and local ways of life – combined with the on-going difficulties of being visible in the public, political sphere was described by some women as mentally exhausting. They reported feeling burned out at times due to the on-going threats they receive, and told me about their occasional desire to pack up and leave. Clara (58, vendor) and Marisol (45, civil servant) explained:

Cajamarca is beautiful, it's lovely, and that's why we've decided to stay here. In spite of so many difficulties and problems, that we always face, right? But... we decided to stay here, close to my mother, and we're in a little house, where I've lived since I was born. (Clara)

[The doctor] asked: '*Why don't you leave?*' I said, '*because, well, my life is there, my work – everything. It's a whole life.*' (Marisol)

For both women, personal and wider histories keep them bound to place in times of adversity. Their sense of belonging in place, expressed in their affinity for the life they have built there, features highly in their reasons for remaining in Cajamarca. To appreciate these *mestiza* women's agency in the aftermath of socio-environmental conflict, then, we must recognize that everyday resistance strategies are consciously undertaken and consciously negotiated in the sphere of the gendered and the local. Continuing to live in Cajamarca can become communicated as an ultimate political act in itself. While habitual, staying put is no longer a semi-conscious habit. It is here that critical place-based politics of belonging are negotiated and centrally communicated in everyday resistance.

Conclusions

While the history of academic consideration of everyday resistance in the *campesino* population of Cajamarca predates the Yanacocha mine (e.g. Starn (1991)), the beliefs and actions of the *mestiza/o*-identifying population of the urban middle class have not received the same level of academic attention. In this article, I have identified how place and belonging are negotiated and renegotiated in the narratives of *mestiza* women of Cajamarca city who have opposed expansion of large-scale mining in the region, enhancing academic understanding of women's continued everyday resistance in the aftermath of intense socio-environmental conflict. As the Yanacocha mine's long-term impacts on place remain a significant negative reality for these women, they employ narratives of place-based continuity and belonging to communicate how mining has meaningfully altered their everyday lives.

While place is central in their accounts of on-going modes of resistance, I have shown it is also fluid, redefined in the anti-mining conflicts, where relationships between the rural and the urban were reformulated and given new meaning. The work of the Yanacocha mine and the resistance movements against the Conga mine in particular have highlighted that '*mestiza*', urban Cajamarcan women are nevertheless geographically and politically marginalized at the national level, leading them to rethink their definition of their local boundaries and who they consider part of 'us'. In this way, for the urban women quoted in this article, everyday resistance comes to be imbued with *mestiza-campesina* solidarity rather than an association with '*mestiza*' cities and centres in other parts of Peru.

Furthermore, I have shown how *mestiza*-identifying women often employ the local/traditional in their actions and accounts of everyday resistance, both communally and individually. Through memories, links with historical customs, values and continuity, belonging becomes an essential part of everyday resistance. Urban groups of women may draw upon women's traditional tasks to inform their on-going activities in the aftermath of intense conflict, including tasks that are generally associated with rural areas. Rather than considering this an appropriation of rural practice and *campesino* lifestyles, however, I have argued that as both 'the rural' and 'the feminine' are associated with traditional customs and values, the *mestiza* women mentioned here are building on those paths traditionally available to women to continue their resistance. In the process, they communicate how they consider their everyday lives as disrupted by a variety of 'masculine others' – the mine and 'miners'. In this context, these women mobilize their own 'belonging' as locally appropriate and in historical continuity with place-based and gendered values, but threatened. I have shown how their personal acts of everyday resistance, then, are informed by gendered memories, knowledge, fear and expectations, where belonging again is a notion of central importance, and relatively simple acts, such as continuing to live life a certain way and remaining in place, can become imbued with a gendered language of resistance.

The on-going everyday resistance of the *mestiza* women explored here, then, is sometimes habitual and individual (e.g. remaining in place), and sometimes communal and planned (e.g. enhancing women's skills, linking them to women's local histories, knowledge and practices), but always thought-out, creative and intentional, based on what is available, evident and possible. The everyday and the local thereby remain an active part of the political, both strategically and implicitly, in the aftermath of socio-environmental protest.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the organisations and individuals in Cajamarca that participated in this research for their participation and insights, and the NGOs CATAPA and LAMMP that put me in contact with them. Many thanks to the anonymous reviewers, as well as

the editors of this journal and this special issue for their useful comments and suggestions.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. Comité Académico Técnico de Asesoramiento a Problemas Ambientales, and Latin American Mining Monitoring Programme, respectively.
2. At the national level, as of 2019, Peru's population is 21% rural, 79% urban; Cajamarca's population is 64% rural, 36% urban (CPI (Compañía Peruana de estudios de mercados y opinión pública s.a.c), 2019).
3. Literally: Indians, racial term for *campesinos*.

References

- Aguinaga M, Lang M, Mokrani D, et al. (2013) Development critiques and alternatives: a feminist perspective. In: Lang M and Mokrani D (eds) *Beyond Development: Alternative visions from Latin America*. Quito, Ecuador: Fundacion Rosa Luxemburg, 41–59.
- Ahmed S (2000) *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bebbington A, Humphreys Bebbington D, Bury J, et al. (2008) Mining and social movements: struggles over livelihood and rural territorial development in the Andes. *World Development* 36(12): 2888–2905. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2007.11.016
- Bury J (2005) Mining Mountains: neoliberalism, land tenure, livelihoods, and the new Peruvian mining industry in Cajamarca. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 37(2): 221–239. DOI: 10.1068/a371
- Castillo G and Brereton D (2018) Large-scale mining, spatial mobility, place-making and development in the Peruvian Andes. *Sustainable Development* 26(5): 461–470. DOI: 10.1002/sd.1891
- Conger Lind A (1992) Power, gender, and development: popular women's organizations and the politics of needs in Ecuador. In: Escobar A and Alvarez S (eds) *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 134–149.
- CPI (Compañía Peruana de estudios de mercados y opinión pública s.a.c) (2019) Perú: Población 2019. Available at: http://cpi.pe/images/upload/paginaweb/archivo/26/mr_poblacional_peru_201905.pdf (accessed 5 March 2020).
- De la Cadena M (1991) "Las mujeres son más indias": Etnicidad y género en una comunidad del Cusco. *Revista Andina* 9(1): 7–29.

- De la Cadena M (2005) Are mestizos hybrids? The conceptual politics of Andean identities. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37(2): 259–284. DOI: 10.1017/S0022216X05009004
- Dunn K (2001) Identity, space and the political economy of conflict in central Africa. *Geopolitics* 6(2): 51–78. DOI: 10.1080/14650040108407717
- Escobar A (1992) Culture, economics, and politics in Latin American social movements theory and research. In: Escobar A and Alvarez S (eds) *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 62–88.
- Forstner K (2013) Women's group-based work and rural gender relations in the southern Peruvian Andes. *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 32(1): 46–60. DOI: 10.1111/j.1470-9856.2011.00693.x
- Franco P (2016) Project conga: An unresolved social license. In: Stachowicz-Stanusch A (ed.) *Corporate Social Performance In The Age of Irresponsibility: Cross National Perspective*. Charlotte, USA: Information Age Publishing Inc, 209–236.
- Gudynas E (2013) Debates on development and its alternatives in Latin America: a brief heterodox guide. In: Lang M and Mokrani D (eds) *Beyond Development: Alternative Visions From Latin America*. Quito, Ecuador: Fundacion Rosa Luxemburg, 15–39.
- Gustafson P (2001) Roots and routes: exploring the relationship between place attachment and mobility. *Environment and Behavior* 33(5): 667–686.
- Jenkins K (2014) Women, mining and development: an emerging research agenda. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 1(2): 329–339. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2014.08.004
- Jenkins K (2015) Unearthing women's anti-mining activism in the Andes: Pachamama and the "mad old women". *Antipode* 47(2): 442–460. DOI: 10.1111/anti.12126
- Jenkins K (2017) Women anti-mining activists' narratives of everyday resistance in the Andes: staying put and carrying on in Peru and Ecuador. *Gender, Place & Culture* 24(10): 1441–1459. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2017.1387102
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2012) Digging women: towards a new agenda for feminist critiques of mining. *Gender, Place & Culture* 19(2): 193–212. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2011.572433
- Laurie N (2011) Gender water networks: femininity and masculinity in water politics in Bolivia. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35(1): 172–188. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.00962.x
- Li F (2009) Negotiating livelihoods: women, mining and water resources in Peru. *Canadian Woman Studies* 27(1): 97–102.
- Li F (2013) Relating divergent worlds: Mines, aquifers and sacred Mountains in Peru. *Anthropologica* 55(2): 399–411.
- Loayza J (2012) Muertos en Cajamarca suben a 5, mientras la región vive en un clima de tensión. *La Republica*, 5 July.
- Marchand M (2003) Challenging globalisation: toward a feminist understanding of resistance. *Review of International Studies* 29(S1): 145–160. DOI: 10.1017/S0260210503005965
- Mee K and Wright S (2009) Geographies of belonging. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 41(4): 772–779. DOI: 10.1080/a41364
- Mercier L and Gier J (2007) Reconsidering women and gender in mining. *History Compass* 5(3): 995–1001. DOI: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2007.00398.x
- Newmont Mining Corporation (2016) *Annual Report Pursuant to section 13 or 15(d) of the securities exchange act of 1934. For the Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2015*. Washington D.C.
- Paredes Peñafiel AP and Li F (2019) Nourishing relations: controversy over the Conga mining project in northern Peru. *Ethnos* 84(2): 301–322. DOI: 10.1080/00141844.2017.1410490
- Rishbeth C and Powell M (2013) Place attachment and memory: landscapes of belonging as experienced post-migration. *Landscape Research* 38(2): 160–178. DOI: 10.1080/01426397.2011.642344
- Rowe WW and Schelling V (1991) *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America*. London: Verso.
- Scannell L and Gifford R (2010) Defining place attachment: a tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 30(1): 1–10. DOI: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.09.006
- Scott J (1986) Everyday forms of peasant resistance. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 13(2): 5–35. DOI: 10.1080/03066158608438289
- Starn O (1991) *Con los Llanques todo Barro: Reflexiones sobre Rondas Campesinas, Protesta Rural y Nuevos Movimientos Sociales*. Peru: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.
- Thwaites K and Simkins I (2007) Experiential landscape: revealing hidden dimensions of people-place relations. In: Thwaites K, Porta S, Romice O and Greaves M (eds) *Urban Sustainability Through Environmental Design: Approaches to Time-People-Place Responsive Urban Spaces*. Routledge: London and New York, 141–145.
- van der Ploeg JD (2009) *The New Peasantries: Struggles for Autonomy and Sustainability in an Era of Empire and Globalization*. London: Routledge
- Veltmeyer H and Petras J (2014) A new model or extractive imperialism. In: Veltmeyer H and Petras J (eds) *The New Extractivism: A Post-Neoliberal Development Model or Imperialism of the Twenty-First Century*. London: Zed Books, 21–46.
- Vinthalen S and Johansson A (2013) Everyday resistance: exploration of a concept and its theories. *Resistance Studies Magazine* 1(1): 1–46.
- Westwood S and Radcliffe SA (1993) Gender, racism and the politics of identities in Latin America. In: Westwood S and Radcliffe SA (eds) *Viva: Women and Popular Protest in Latin America*. London: Routledge, 1–29.
- Zanotti L (2013) Resistance and the politics of negotiation: women, place and space among the Kayapó in Amazonia, Brazil. *Gender, Place & Culture* 20(3): 346–362. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2012.674927

Author Biography

Inge A. M. Boudewijn received her PhD in social sciences from Northumbria University in 2019, and is currently a research fellow at Northumbria University's centre for

international development. She is a feminist, interdisciplinary scholar, drawing from geography, sociology and anthropology and participatory, creative methodologies. She is particularly interested in the interlinkages between gender, natural resource extraction and activism.

Women's organizing against extractivism: towards a decolonial multi-sited analysis

Human Geography
 2020, Vol. 13(1) 49–59
 © The Author(s) 2020
 Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
 DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910898
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Martina Angela Caretta¹, Sofia Zaragocin², Bethani Turley³, and Kamila Torres Orellana⁴

Abstract

In Anglophone geography, proposals have called for the decolonization of geographical knowledge production to be focused on tangible and material manifestations of how dialogue is initiated and mediated among different ontologies and epistemologies. We strive to respond to this call by empirically cutting across the American continent to highlight the embodied and transnational dimensions of natural resource extraction. Across the Americas, extractive industries' water usage often brings corporations into prolonged conflicts with local communities, who mobilize to resist the initiation and/or expansion of extractive activities that they view as threatening to their health, way of life, and their families and communities' territories. Through two case studies from West Virginia (WV), USA, and Cuenca, Ecuador, we propose an analytical framework capturing how women organize against the extractive industry as a result of embodied water pollution. We do this with the aim of decolonizing geographical knowledge production, as we propose a decolonial, multi-sited analytical approach, which serves to rethink the scale of effects of extractive industry. By showing how resource extraction affects women's bodies and water while also effectively allowing us to compare and contrast embodied water relations in WV and Ecuador, we better understand how extractivism works across scales—the body, the environment, and transnationally. We contend that a multi-sited approach disrupts the North–South geographical discursive divide and furthers a decolonial geographical approach in making apparent the embodied production and lived experience of territory across various scales. In this piece, we promote debates on decoloniality within Anglophone geography by proposing that we must not only consider epistemologies and spatial ontologies outside the western canon, but engage with practices and theories occurring in different parts of the globe in a simultaneous fashion as well. We call on fellow geographers to do the same.

Keywords

Ecuador, extractivism, decoloniality, West Virginia, women

La organización de las mujeres contra el extractivismo. Hacia un análisis decolonial de múltiples ubicaciones

Resumen

En la geografía anglófona, las propuestas han pedido que la descolonización de la producción de conocimiento geográfico se centre en manifestaciones tangibles y materiales de cómo se inicia y media el diálogo entre las diferentes ontologías y epistemologías. Nos esforzamos por responder a este llamado cortando empíricamente a través del continente americano para resaltar las dimensiones encarnadas y transnacionales de la extracción de recursos naturales. En todo el continente americano, el uso del agua de las industrias extractivas a menudo lleva a las empresas a conflictos prolongados con las comunidades locales, que se movilizan para resistir el inicio y / o la expansión de actividades extractivas que consideran amenazadoras para su salud, formas de vida y sus familias y los territorios de sus comunidades. A través de dos estudios de caso de West Virginia (WV), EE. UU. y Cuenca, Ecuador, proponemos un marco analítico que

¹West Virginia University, Morgantown, USA

²Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador

³Portland State University, Portland, Oregon, USA

⁴Universidad del Azuay, Cuenca, Ecuador

Corresponding Author:

Martina Angela Caretta, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506, USA.
 Email: martina.caretta@mail.wvu.edu

muestra cómo las mujeres se organizan contra la industria extractiva como resultado de la contaminación del agua. Hacemos esto con el objetivo de descolonizar la producción de conocimiento geográfico, ya que proponemos un enfoque analítico descolonial y de múltiples ubicaciones, que sirve para repensar la escala de efectos de la industria extractiva. Al mostrar cómo la extracción de recursos afecta los cuerpos y el agua de las mujeres y, al mismo tiempo, comparar y contrastar de manera efectiva las relaciones hídricas incorporadas en VM y Ecuador, comprendemos mejor cómo funciona el extractivismo en diferentes escalas: el cuerpo, el medio ambiente y transnacionalmente. Sostenemos que un enfoque de múltiples ubicaciones interrumpe la división discursiva geográfica Norte-Sur y promueve un enfoque geográfico descolonial al hacer evidente la producción encarnada y la experiencia vivida del territorio a varias escalas. En este artículo, promovemos debates sobre la descolonialidad dentro de la geografía anglofona al proponer que no solo debemos considerar las epistemologías y las ontologías espaciales fuera del canon occidental, sino también involucrarnos en prácticas y teorías que ocurren en diferentes partes del mundo de manera simultánea. Hacemos un llamado a otros geógrafos para que hagan lo mismo.

Palabras clave

extractivismo, mujeres, descolonialidad, Ecuador, Virginia Occidental

Introduction

In recent years, water contamination has been a major news headline across the Americas (Langin, 2018; Rojas, 2016; Vidal, 2017). Water is not only a material resource but constitutes and shapes societal relations and practices as well, often defined as waterscapes (Budds and Hinojosa-Valencia, 2012; Sultana, 2010; Swyngedouw, 1999). However, water, and its embedded societal relations and practices are currently under threat across the American continent due to natural resource extraction, for example, mining, hydraulic fracturing, and pipeline construction (Bosworth, 2019; Finewood and Stroup, 2012; Perreault, 2013). The transnational nature of large-scale resource extraction, including similarities across case studies with North American-based companies involved in extraction on the South American continent, provides an important rationale for our multi-sited approach. None of these country contexts, we argue, can be understood in isolation from broader patterns of extraction and community resistance across the region. Increasing public awareness of the threats posed to water by industrial and extractive operations has resulted in community organizing led by economic and racially diverse groups of men, women, and indigenous people (Bell, 2013; Bosworth, 2019; Haarstad, 2012; Jenkins, 2017).

The extractive industry's effect on women's and indigenous people's lives has been studied by feminist and human geographers and queer ecologists (e.g., Horowitz et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2017; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Lu et al., 2017). We contribute to this literature by exploring the social and embodied components of the resource extraction economy as it plays out in distinct waterscapes across the Americas. We suggest that exploring these dynamics from a multi-sited perspective with one site in the Global North and one in the Global South questions geographical fixity. West Virginia (WV), USA, and Cuenca, Ecuador, present in fact comparable scenarios where women's groups are affected by extractive industry and from which we draw a decolonial multi-sited analysis.

After having presented the methods, we delve into the analytical framework that we propose for this paper grounded in a decolonial multi-sited approach. Following, we outline our case studies and discuss results focusing on women's organizing and the relationship between their bodies and water. Finally, we examine how the framework we propose contributes to the understanding of extraction across scales.

Methods

We are four feminist geographers who carry out research in the country where we work—United States and Ecuador—and who focus on how and why water pollution and scarcity can trigger women to organize against the extractive industry. The data presented in this article was gathered at a time when we did not know each other. Martina and Sofia met in a feminist geography conference in 2017 and progressively interacted more until they collaborated on a NSF proposal and began coediting this special issue.

In our autonomous field works, we all used qualitative methods through a case study approach.

Martina and Bethani based in WV in 2017 conducted 25 in-depth semi-structured interviews with local nonindigenous women who lead water stewardship organizations in WV through a participatory research approach (see also Caretta, Forthcoming). Following, the data was validated through a focus group with some of the previous interviewees in the fall of 2018.

Sofia and Kamila from Ecuador, through action-research, conducted 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews and a workshop with peasant women who mobilize against water contamination resulting from mining extraction in Cuenca, Ecuador, in 2018. Sofia is a mestiza decolonial feminist geographer and an activist-researcher working at a private university in Ecuador and is part of the Critical Geography Collective of Ecuador, an autonomous interdisciplinary group that seeks territorial resistance through a wide range of socio-spatial geographical methodologies.

Notably, without knowing each other or of each other's work, we grounded our research projects in participatory and action-research frameworks that are geared toward supporting and advancing the cause of organizing against natural resource extraction. We have done this in different ways.

Following Martina's research in WV, women constituted a formal network under the collaborative undertaking of Martina and a few watershed organizations. After the creation of this network of support and mentoring among women water defenders, an art exhibit focusing on their relationship with water was organized at Martina's university in correspondence with Women's History Month. The exhibit, which showcased artifacts chosen by women water stewards, reflected on women's connection with water, displayed and celebrated the contribution of women in protecting WV waters, and received attention in the press indirectly (Patterson, 2019).

Following Sofia and Kamila's research in Cuenca, Ecuador, Sofia along with the other members of the Critical Geography Collective of Ecuador shared with women participants (some part of the Frente de Mujeres Defensoras de la Pachamama) a manual on feminist geography methods for the territorial resistance against extractive industry. Women had explicitly requested this manual to be able to gather their own data to challenge the predominant discourse of the positive effects of mining on local employment. Women were particularly interested in *cuerpo-territorio* (body-territory) and *agua-territorio* (water-territory) concepts, whereby notions of body, water, and territory are intimately linked and how these could be used to gather data about their conditions. Methods presented in the manual included transect walks to facilitate data collection about the embodied sense of water and emotions triggered by extractive activities (see also Colectivo de Geografía Crítica del Ecuador, 2018; Zaragocin, 2018; Zaragocin and Caretta, under review).

Accordingly, we both reflexively engage with marginalized and disenfranchised groups in coproducing knowledge while at the same time striving to hold the extractive industry accountable. These are elements which exemplify the epistemological principle of decolonization, which is examined in the following section.

A decolonial multi-sited framework

In our respective research projects, we have explored both women's lived and embodied experiences of water contamination and scarcity due to the extractive industry. We have done so by using disconnected but similar conceptual toolboxes: waterscapes and embodiment, and *agua-territorio* and *cuerpo-territorio*. In order to initiate a dialogue between concepts developed in diverse geographical places and spaces, we propose a decolonial multi-sited framework.

Waterscapes is considered by academics in the Global North as a valuable framework for understanding how relationships are socially ecologically created through water,

take place in diverse spatial and temporal scales, and shape and are shaped by power relations (e.g., Budds and Hinojosa-Valencia, 2012; Swyngedouw, 1999). Debates regarding access to and the distribution of water have been central to Latin American political ecology and critical geography (Boelens et al., 2016; Bolados, 2017; Caretta et al., 2015; Panez Pinto, 2018; Ruiz Meza, 2017), but they have been profoundly questioned by indigenous, communitarian, and social perspectives on representation, ontology, and epistemology of waterscapes (Porto-Goncalves, 2006). The understanding of relations created and mediated through water is understood by Latin American theorists through the lens of territory (Panez Pinto, 2018; Zaragocin, 2018). In part, this has to do with Latin American critical geography prioritizing the spatial identity of territory, which was recently brought into dialogue with Anglophone understandings of the term as a way to further decolonize Anglophone geography (Halvorsen, 2018). However, as decolonial Latin American feminist theorists and collectives have noted, a masculinist notion of territory has until recently dominated regional discussions on extractivism and territory (e.g., Colectiva Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo, 2017). The concept of territory, as outlined by Latin American indigenous and communitarian feminisms (Zaragocin, 2018), has fostered an important shift within Latin American discussions on the term, specifically toward an ontological shift in understanding the production of space whereby bodies and territories are simultaneously constructed and not as two distinct relational entities, but as one (see also Halvorsen, 2018). Following this relational embodied approach to territory, theorists in Latin America refer to aquatic space (Oslander, 2002), *agua-territorio* (water-territory) (Panez Pinto, 2018), and *cuerpo-territorio* (body-territory) (Cabral, 2010; Sweet and Ortiz Escalante, 2017). Both *cuerpo-territorio* and *agua-territorio* point toward holistic and fluid embodied understandings of water and territory. *Cuerpo-territorio* (body-territory) is a concept and a method linking body and territory according to indigenous ontologies of space and decolonial understandings of the gendered body. Body-territory has become a central tenet of contemporary Latin American feminist theory and politics (Ulloa, 2016; Zaragocin et al., 2018). Likewise, the concept of *agua-territorio* (water-territory) proposes new ways of comprehending waterscapes as the underlying spatial ordering of the everyday along Latin American riverways (Oslander, 2002). Water-territory proposes an analytical and ontological inseparability between territory and water (Panez Pinto, 2018).

The waterscapes concept, as opposed to *cuerpo-territorio* and *agua-territorio*, centers on the material reasons of how and why people's relations with water or among themselves are formed and negotiated. However, the immaterial, emotional, and embodied motives behind people's engagement with the preservation, restoration, and management of water are not taken into account by this concept. In this sense, the concept of embodiment used by Global North academics

responds to the importance of extending the understanding of waterscapes beyond the material. In fact, in feminist geography embodiment is used to recognize the body as part of knowledge production, rejecting the idea of disembodied geography (Longhurst, 1995). Feminist geographers have proposed an analytical approach combining water and embodiment by focusing on how water is shaped by and shapes gender subjectivity and emotions (Sultana, 2011). By the same token, political ecologists have examined the ways in which resource conflicts over water are experienced as everyday emotional struggles (Dallman et al., 2013; Keremane and McKay, 2011; Sultana, 2011).

However, the embodied nature of water contamination and scarcity due to the practices of the extractive industry remains to be consistently theorized across Global North and Global South scholars. Scholars have noted how even within environmental justice, the Global North theorization has dominated the discourse on contamination and extractivism using Latin America as the case study for environmental conflicts, but rarely as the source of theory (Álvarez and Coolsaet, 2018). Latin American critical geography and political ecology have been intimately tied to social movements (Zaragocin et al., 2018) for the defense of water (Bolados, 2017). Particularly, Latin American critical geography has been shaped by these exchanges and relations with activists (Zaragocin et al., 2018).

Neither in the Global North nor in the Global South have theorists developed a framework to be able to fully capture the interrelations between water and bodies. We argue that incorporating an analysis of bodily and emotional bonds to water helps reorient a typically neoliberal economic framing of water toward one focused on the everyday and the local rescaling of such analysis (Bondi et al., 2005; Sultana, 2011). We therefore propose linking the Global North geographical concept of waterscapes with the Global South embodied notions of territory, such as body-territory and water-territory, to emphasize the linkages and scale of the body and water. This proposed framework furthers the decolonial turn already occurring in Anglophone geography which questions the dominance of Western, white, and imperialist epistemologies and spatial ontologies as the only valid frameworks for the construction of geographical knowledge (Leeuw and Hunt, 2018; Naylor et al., 2018). A shift toward engaging with indigenous epistemologies (Clement, 2019; Holmes et al., 2015) and a focus on structures that sustain forms of epistemological violence in academia (Esson et al., 2017) have been presented in Anglophone geography as the way to avoid reproducing colonial geographical practices of knowledge production. Such proposals for decolonization in Anglophone geography have called on geographical knowledge production to be focused on tangible and material manifestations of how dialogue is initiated and mediated among different ontologies and epistemologies (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Relevant for this paper is the importance that the body and the concept of embodiment have had in furthering

decolonization in Anglophone geography, particularly in the context of feminist approaches to knowledge production (Naylor et al., 2018). Yet, while geographers are now prioritizing subaltern and indigenous epistemologies and ontologies as well as the scale of the body, these reflections circulate within the Global North with little sustained dialogue with scholars and activists in other regions, of which this piece is an example. In this context, we propose a decolonial multi-sited analytical approach, which links a transnational analysis of water contamination and scarcity due to extractive industry and gendered responses. This approach furthers decolonization in Anglophone geography, in that it promotes a multi-sited analysis of extractive industry as a form of geographical accountability. By building a multi-sited analysis that disrupts the North–South divide, we are emphasizing a decolonial approach to geographical scales of the consequences of water contamination and scarcity on women’s bodies and lives across space, and we can hold the extractive industry accountable on a transnational scale. The transnational extractive industry utilizes different geographical scales to blur the possibility of being held accountable by local communities and government to the consequences of its activities at multiple scales—the environment, communities, and bodies. Hence, the emphasis on a multi-sited understanding and practice of embodiment, water, and women’s bodies, makes it particularly pertinent to engage feminist geography in geographical decolonization more broadly (see also Zaragocin and Caretta, under review). Because of this multi-sited approach to gendered extractivism, we argue that a decolonial multi-sited framework serves to rethink the scale of embodied effects of extractive industry. Such an entry point effectively allows us to compare and contrast embodied water relations in WV and Ecuador (see Figure 1), while also enlarging the scale of our analysis to account for the transnational nature of the phenomenon we are examining.

Case studies: West Virginia, USA, and Cuenca, Ecuador

WV is a state in the eastern part of the United States. It is the only state that is completely comprised by the Appalachian Mountains, which run from New York to Alabama. Appalachia has historic ties with the coal industry since the beginning of the 1900s. Appalachia and WV’s economy remains reliant on coal, and now natural gas. Historically, companies at the state, national, and international levels have benefitted from extraction and have not reinvested into education and services that could benefit residents locally (Papayrakis and Gerlagh, 2004). Given the environmentally and socially damaging externalities resulting from energy extraction, this region has been defined as a sacrifice zone (Fox, 1999). Treated as marginal yet central to the nation’s ongoing project of energy modernity, the othering of Appalachia has occurred with tactics similar to processes in the Global South by environmental

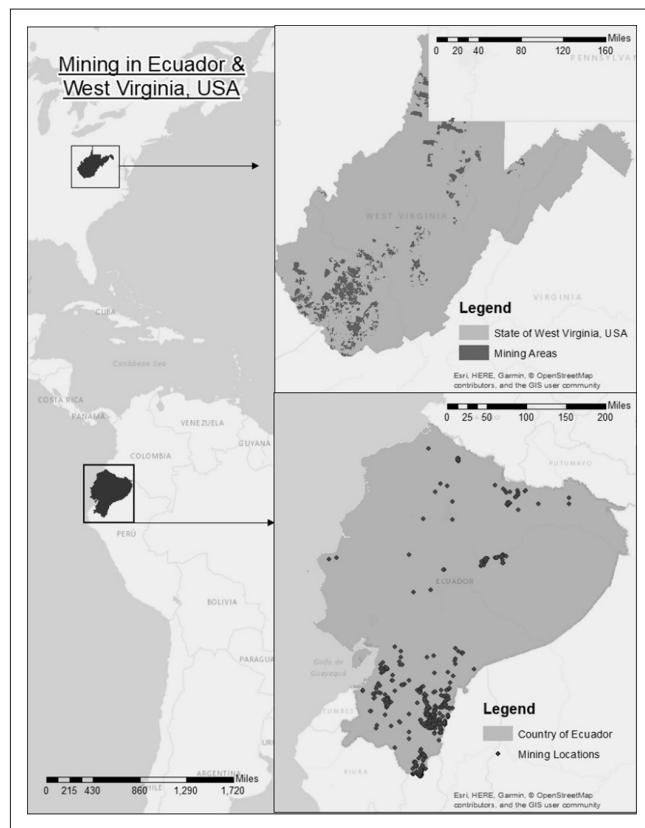


Figure 1. Map of study areas.

dispossession (Fox, 1999) and the othering of women and environmentalists (Bell, 2013). The state of WV provides water for domestic and productive purposes for 9m people on the East Coast of the United States or roughly 3% of the US population (Young et al., 2019). However, these waterways are jeopardized by the construction of three gas and oil pipelines and five more pipelines planned, stretching almost 500 miles and potentially affecting 2,246 stream sections and around 860 wetlands (West Virginia Rivers, 2017).

The Biosphere Reserve of Macizo del Cajas, in the region of Cuenca located in the south of Ecuador, supports the region's water supply and an important endemic biodiversity. The area surrounding the Reserve also holds significant reserves of silver and gold (Ministerio de Minería, 2016) and as such became a province prioritized for mining activity. There in 2011 the Río Blanco Mining Project was initiated as part of a process of extraction authorized by the Ecuadorian government. At that time, the Canadian company International Mineral Corporation (IMC) which was supported by local authorities summoned the local population to present the benefits that mining would bring to the area. After the start of operation in 2011, the mine was sold in 2013 to the company Junefield, Ecuagoldminig South America SA, which was mostly made up of Chinese capital. According to the company's data, the project would extract 605 thousand ounces of gold and 4.3 m ounces of silver in 11 years (Ecuador Productivo, 2016). The project covers 4,979 ha under concession, of which, according to the company, only 40 ha are

used for mining activities ("Proyecto Río Blanco Ya Exporta Material Mineral" 2018). The mining company and the Ecuadorian government's strategy has been to promote a sustainable development discourse that shifts attention from the consequences of environmental damage to the idea of a better distribution of the wealth generated by mining activity through the creation of jobs (Agencia de Regulación y Control Minero, 2019; Ecuador TV, 2011). Responsible mining, as defined by the Ecuadorian government, claims to utilize high technology that will not damage the environment while in the same vein tackling poverty in the community of Molleturo (Torres Guzman, 2018). According to the Development Plans of the Cuenca region, the parish of Molleturo where the Río Blanco project is located is in fact among the poorest areas in the country.

Hence, while half a continent away from each other, Cuenca region and WV are both subjected to the same logic of extraction at the expense of water and disenfranchised and poor local residents.

Women, water, and organizing

In this section, we explore the case studies to draw out similarities and differences of how extraction women-led resistance has been motivated by embodied water pollution.

Women-led organizing

Several authors (e.g., Smith, 2015; Bell, 2013) highlighted the crucial role that women have played in spearheading activist movements for the improvement of people's lives in Appalachia. Mother Jones played a crucial role in the labor movement in the 1900s and laid the groundwork for the organizing of working-class women and men. The first instances of women's activism against coal mining, triggered by their concerns around water quality, were recorded in 1970s in Kentucky (Maggard, 1999) and in WV (Cable, 1993). These movements were established through women's preexisting networks through churches, town hall meetings, and potluck dinners (Rice and Burke, 2018). Unsurprisingly, women environmental activists have been identified as mothers. Their worry for their children's health fueled their willingness to work to stop environmental destruction (Caretta, Forthcoming; Willow and Keefer, 2015). This situation has not changed today. The number of organizations opposing energy extraction in WV is growing and many, especially within the most active ones, are headed by or completely comprised of women (Caretta, Forthcoming).

The percentage of poor households in Molleturo, where the Río Blanco project is located in Cuenca, Ecuador, is 89.03%; this percentage is disproportionately comprised of women-headed households (Cuenca GAD Municipal, 2015). Accordingly, the protagonists of the Río Blanco resistance have been mainly women peasants. Since 2008, members of the Frente de Mujeres Defensoras de la Pachamama (Defenders

of the Pachamama Women's Front) have positioned themselves against mega-mining projects across the country (Solano, 2013). The Women Defenders Front of the Pachamama have also played an important role in Río Blanco. Several women shared in the interviews carried out in 2011 that the women made the community aware of the plans of the mining company (IMC) and raised awareness about its negative consequences, effectively obstructing the influence of the mining company a priori. They also mentioned that in 2015 seven women members of the Defenders Front suffered physical aggression from the police for publicly protesting in the Molleturo park against President Correa with a sign that read, "responsible mining, miserable tale." In both case studies, organizing against the extractive industry is mostly led by women.

In the next sections we will demonstrate that while women are all guided by the same motivations in their resistance, there are also numerous intersectional differences between them. First, women in WV are often older and retirees, while women in Ecuador are younger and have partaken in intergenerational organized women's groups for over a decade. Second, the level of education varies, with women in WV having at the bare minimum a high-school diploma and often a college degree, while in most cases the women in Molleturo are illiterate. Regardless of their educational background, all women have an acute understanding of the environmental and social repercussions that political and industrial interests have or will have on their communities. Third, all women hold an occupation, as farmers in Ecuador and both in the private and public sectors in WV. The work of organizing for many of them generally blurs the line between work and free time and is an integral part of their daily routine and their identities. Finally, and most notably, the way that they are perceived by their fellow citizens is diametrically different. Women in WV have been long othered and presented as outsiders to the affected communities, even though they are locals or have resided in the area for a long time (Bell, 2013 and Caretta, Forthcoming). The general population in WV appears to remain hostage of the industry which has astutely portrayed energy extraction as the only viable development pathway for the state (Bell, 2013). Conversely, women in Ecuador are supported by the larger population in Molleturo and the city of Cuenca as the negative consequences of the exploitation of metallic mining in areas have awakened greater interest in the protection of water ("Río Blanco, Días 18").

Women's bodies and water

Women in both communities convey a sense of belonging and an embodied and emotional connection to water, which they express as a sense of enjoyment via recreation, as well as a feeling of love toward nature and a feeling that water and nature are part of their heart and soul.

I love West Virginia ... Until I came here, and I got my first sense of place and I just absolutely fell in love with it here, so

there's the physical component. I love these woods and these trees and these animals ... I can't really do that anywhere else, so this is the place that I love, these are the mountains that I have fought for and will fight for and have and will put my life on the line for many times ... (Interviewee #7, 3 May 2017)

Along the same lines, a woman from Molleturo shares how, before the mining company surrounded the area and caused the disappearance of an important water source, they used to move freely with their animals. When she realized the water was gone, she began to reflect on the consequences that the mining had on her community. Nowadays, she is one of the most visible faces of the Molleturo women opposed to mining:

Before [the mining exploration] I did not understand what was so bad about mining, then I started to see that every year the water supply was decreasing. Reforestation for the mining company includes the Peruvian quinoa and that plant is not good with water. It dries up the land ... Before we had many animals, and it was not easy to walk through the mud, and water basins. But now, the pampa is dry, and in summer the earth is yellow ... I believe that this is due to mining, although, the mining company says it is due to the change in climate. (Interviewee #4, 2018)

Conversely, the extractive industry in WV is described as a threat to water. When asked about their water stewardship work or about how they can maintain their work in the face of the transnational corporate extractive industry and the ideologies that would compromise water resources, women articulate their connection to water and WV as the driving force behind their work. This embodied connection motivates their desire to overcome the economic and political challenges of an energy-producing state:

We need to make it so people can get jobs and welcome businesses, but not at the expense of our community's health. I grew up in one of the most pristine forest of WV and if they ever got destroyed because of a stupid pipeline or fracking operation, that's like my heart and soul ... It seems like that state is just saying to do whatever you want. It's frustrating for the people who really care about enjoying that water and enjoy that land and having it for their kids and to recreate on. (Interviewee #12, 17 May 2017)

In the face of threats of water contamination from extractive industry that impacts their communities, families, health, and positive connections to water, women have an embodied experience of water through their struggle and fight for its protection. However, women's emotional and embodied connection to water is questioned, attacked, and marginalized. Women in WV illustrate instances in which their emotional and embodied connection toward water has given leeway to their belittling as

unprofessional. The women frequently describe how being perceived as emotional is detrimental to their work of resistance, which builds upon their efforts as citizen scientists to monitor water quality.

This passion and having an emotional attachment to my work is seen as a weakness. It's seen as flighty. Oh like ... it's not logical. The industry totally plays on this all the time, saying oh you're just being rash or emotional. Even if you're not. You're a woman so you must be. (Focus group, 22 September 2018)

Women in Ecuador face much worse prospects as they are physically attacked. Because of their resistance against mining, they faced criminalization charges enforced by governmental institutions, which effectively facilitated the work of the mining company with the purpose of demobilizing social protest. Women of Frente de Mujeres Defensoras de la Pachamama have suffered from arbitrary deprivation of liberty, physical abuse, and terrorist charges for the obstruction of public highways, and physical aggressions by pro-mining groups in Molleturo. This persecution caused some women to lower their profile or even abandon the group (Solano, 2013). In 2016, Junefield distributed jobs amongst the Río Blanco community. Women were hired to do care-work, especially in the kitchen and under poor working conditions. Women workers constantly felt in danger and after several protests they asked to be escorted to their homes at night. Yet, they were faced by harassment in the mining camp itself:

The cook began to harass me. I kept working and once the cook sent me to bring food from the cellar and he followed me, he took me by force to try to kiss me, but I gave him a good slap and told him that he has to respect me, then I went to the dining room to serve the food to the staff and I told him that I'm going to notify the engineers, he told me to go ahead and speak to them because they are the same as him. (Interviewee #2, 2018)

In all, women in WV and Ecuador have been protagonists in the struggle against mining activity due to its gendered consequences on women's bodies and access to clean water. As presented in this section, the territorial implications of extractive industry are experienced and understood primarily from an embodied resistance. The extractive industry is a transnational business that works and depends on a macro- and micro-scale at the same time. Whereas extractive industry exploits lands and bodies from a detached relationship to land, justified on the basis of its transnational scales, the response from women in both WV and Cuenca is on an intimate scale from the body. Women's emotional attachment and embodied experience of water quality and quantity deterioration are what have moved them to challenge the modes of operation of these transnational industrial powers. In addressing the scale of extractive industry and women's embodied responses to the practices of the

industry, we aim to show the benefits of using a decolonial multi-sited approach, which we will expand on in the following section.

Conclusions

Exploitative and extractive economic models jeopardizing water are often met with resistance and opposition by civil society (e.g., Bell, 2013; Bosworth, 2019). Hence, it is crucial to understand the embodied nature of people's perceptions of water and how this motivates their organizing against natural resource extraction.

In this paper, we contribute to the literature on extractive industry's effects on women's and indigenous people's lives (e.g., Horowitz et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2017; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Lu et al., 2017) by proposing an analytical framework exploring the social and embodied components of the extraction economy as it plays out in distinct waterscapes across the Americas. We particularly focus on how women organize against the extractive industry as a result of embodied water pollution in order to better understand how extractivism works across scales—the body, the environment, and transnationally. We contend a multi-sited approach that disrupts the North–South divide on the analysis of the consequences of the practices of the extractive industry and furthers a decolonial geographical approach in making apparent the embodied production and lived experience of territory across various scales. We are bringing together not only two apparently different case studies, but also concepts formulated within different geographical traditions that underlie different geographical understandings of the gendered embodied responses and in relation to water as well. We do this by linking Anglophone and Latin American geographies departing from the concepts of waterscapes and embodiment, coming from Anglophone geography, and *cuerpo-territorio* and *agua-territorio* originating from Latin American scholarship.

As shown, both Ecuador and WV have a long history of natural resources extraction. Women have responded to the exploitation by the hand of the extractive industry by organizing to resist and oppose—frontally, openly, or subtly. Women's organizing is triggered by their concerns over diminishing water quality and supply and how that impacts communities' future health and wellbeing. Women in WV express an embodied connection with the waters of the many rivers in the state and they mobilize to preserve and restore the clean waters that they perceive an embodied link with. Women in Cuenca are also acute onlookers who detect changes in their surrounding waterscapes and how these changes affect their bodies. They also have firsthand experience of how extractivism is manifested in gender-based harassment and water scarcity.

In both cases, women speak up and organize against the environmental and embodied consequences of extractivism. This narrative, however, is still marginal and is often ostracized and criminalized by companies and the governments of WV

and Ecuador. They experience the violence of extractivism through the “re-patriarchalism of territory” in the forms of a predominantly male workforce, increased care-work assigned to women, lower salaries for women, the commodification and contamination of natural resources, and the masculinization of space through intoxication with alcohol and consequent sexual violence (Colectiva Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo, 2017; Halvorsen, 2018). Additionally, by stripping communities of their land and clean water, extractivism questions the sustainability of life, not only economic development (Colectiva Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo, 2017). Along these lines, women’s organizing enacts a vision of desirable place to live, work, and care for their family (see also Haesbaert, 2004), opposing the prevalent jobs versus environment discourse and challenging the narrative that all economic development requires resource extraction and environmental degradation (see also Bolados, 2017).

These case studies highlight the importance of a decolonial multi-sited approach, as women’s motives and experiences are analyzed relationally, not separately, as part of the Global North and/or South geographical dichotomy. When activist scholars bring together case studies and localized theories, we are no longer just recognizing that other epistemologies and spatial ontologies exist. We are disrupting the linear flow of knowledge (either north–south or south–north), and move toward a more nuanced gendered response to extractivism focusing on structural issues. We argue for the recognition that space is constituted through a multiplicity of embodied experiences across multiple scales. Moreover, we contend that a multi-sited perspective can help geographers overcome the tendency to homogenize different realities rendering them as effectively disembodied. Articulating these concerns with current Latin American geographical debates on territory (including water) and arguing for a decolonial turn of knowledge production are keys to conceptually advancing the embodied dimensions of water (Halvorsen, 2018; Zaragocin, 2018).

By outlining women’s lived and embodied experiences and responses, this paper challenges problematic representations of Appalachia and Andean Latin America, especially women in rural areas as “poor,” “passive,” and “backwards” and the commonly held belief that extractive activities affect primarily the Global South and act as a separate process from those that occur in the Global North. Developing a common understanding of how transnational companies create similar societal consequences is beneficial to communities that are actively engaged in contesting extractive activity. This approach is particularly important for those who strive to halt water contamination and scarcity for disenfranchised and minority communities, as the women whose knowledge and experiences we were able to learn from. When we shared with women in both WV and Cuenca that we had seen similar dynamics in the other case study site, they were eager to know more and learn from each other. Community organizers in Ecuador expressed a desire to know more about the experiences of communities in WV, stressing that they see this as a crucial and necessary

approach to strengthening their own practices. Women no longer felt isolated in their struggles, and in the case of Ecuador, they felt immediately supported in knowing that women in the Global North are also motivated in their organizing because of embodied water scarcity and contamination. For Ecuadorian peasant women, this thought disrupts a narrative of the poor vulnerable third world woman, which they are explicit in asserting that this does not represent them. Accordingly, by exploring the consequences of the extractive industry from a decolonial multi-sited perspective, we can also move past the assumption that communities bearing the brunt of the social exploitations at the hands of international corporation are located only in the Global South.

While we have yet to facilitate reciprocal learning among these women’s groups through a funded research project, this paper is the first attempt to start this learning process. By presenting these case studies relationally, however, we encourage learning at the academic level by decolonizing geographical knowledge production by engaging with the debate on radical accountability, a central feature of current decolonial debates in Anglophone geography (Daigle, 2018). Moreover, we advance this discussion by going beyond an understanding of decolonization for Anglophone geography as the mere inclusion of other epistemologies and spatial ontologies. We also argue for the recognition of common structural forces cutting across continents such as extractivism. By doing this, we contend that a transnational understanding of the effect of natural resource extraction on waterways across the Americas is useful for expanding conceptual understandings of the relationship between water, embodiment, and community relations. We call on geographers, particularly those positioned as activist research scholars to consider the advantages of a decolonial multi-sited analysis in that it provides a nuanced approach to the study and questioning of structural, capitalist, and neoliberal powers and their effects on communities, territories, and bodies.

Acknowledgements

We want to extend our appreciation to all the women that participated in the research in Ecuador and the USA. Thanks to Brandon Rothrock for formatting and proofreading.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was made possible thanks to funding from *Human Geography: A New Radical Journal* and the West Virginia University Mossburg Fund.

References

- Agencia de Regulacion y Control Minero (2019) "Buenas Perspectivas de La Minería.", Gobierno de La Republica Del Ecuador. Available at: <http://www.controlminero.gob.ec/buenas-perspectivas-de-la-mineria/> (accessed March 25, 2019).
- Álvarez L and Coolsaet B (2018) Decolonizing environmental justice studies: a Latin American perspective. *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 1(2): 1–20. DOI: 10.1080/10455752.2018.1558272
- Bell SE (2013) *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed: Appalachian Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press.
- Boelens R, Hoogesteger J, Swyngedouw E, et al. (2016) Hydrosocial territories: a political ecology perspective. *Water International* 41(1): 1–14. DOI: 10.1080/02508060.2016.1134898
- Bolados P (2017) La eco-geo-política del agua: una propuesta desde los territorios en las luchas por la recuperación del agua en la provincial de Petorca (Zona Central de Chile). *Rev Rupturas* 8(1): 167–199.
- Bondi L, Davidson J and Smith M (2005) Introduction: geography's emotional turn. In: Bondi L, Davidson J and Smith M (eds) *Emotional Geographies*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1–16.
- Bosworth K (2019) The people know best: Situating the Counterexpertise of populist pipeline opposition movements. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 109(2): 581–592. DOI: 10.1080/24694452.2018.1494538
- Budds J and Hinojosa-Valencia L (2012) Restructuring and rescaling water governance in mining contexts: the co-production of waterscapes in Peru. *Water Alternatives* 5(1): 119–137.
- Cable S (1993) From fussin' to organizing: individual and collective resistance at Yellow Creek'. In: Fisher S (ed) *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 69–84.
- Cabral L (2010) *Acercamiento a la construcción de la propuesta de pensamiento epistémico de las mujeres indígenas feministas comunitarias de Abya Yala. Feminismos diversos: el feminismo comunitario editado por ACSUR*, 11–25.
- Caretta MA (Forthcoming) Homosocial stewardship: the opposed and unpaid care work of women water stewards in West Virginia, USA. *Ecology and Society*.
- Caretta MA, Cadena Montero GY, Sulbarán L, et al. (2015) La revolución tiene cara de campesina?" Un caso de estudio de la participación activa de las mujeres en el riego del páramo venezolano. *Revista Latino Americana de Genero y Geografia* 6(2): 3–23. DOI: 10.5212/Rlagg.v.6.i2.0001
- Clement V (2019) Beyond the sham of the emancipatory enlightenment: rethinking the relationship of Indigenous epistemologies, knowledges, and geography through decolonizing paths. *Progress in Human Geography* 43(2): 276–294. DOI: 10.1177/0309132517747315
- Colectiva Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo (2017) *Mapeando el cuerpo-territorio. Guía Metodológica para mujeres que defienden sus territorios*. Available at: <https://miradascriticasdelterritoriodesdeelfeminismo.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/mapeando-el-cuerpo-territorio.pdf> (accessed 30 March 2019).
- Colectivo de Geografía Crítica del Ecuador (2018) *Geografiando para la Resistencia. Los feminismos como práctica especial*. Cartilla 3, Quito.
- Cuenca GAD Municipal (2015) *Plan de Desarrollo y Ordenamiento Territorial Del Canton Cuenca, Cuenca*. Available at: http://www.cuenca.gob.ec/?q=system/files/PDOT_Completo_2015.pdf (accessed March 30 2019).
- Daigle M (2018) Embodying relations of accountability in settlercolonial contexts. In: Naylor Let al. (ed) *Interventions: Bringing the Decolonial to Political Geography*. Vol. 66. Political Geography, 201–203.
- Dallman S, Ngo M, Laris P, et al. (2013) Political ecology of emotion and sacred space: the Winnemem Wintu struggles with California water policy. *Emotion, Space and Society* 6: 33–43. DOI: 10.1016/j.emospa.2011.10.006
- Ecuador Productivo (2016) *11 años de vida tendrá Proyecto Minero Río Blanco*. Available at: http://ecuadorinmediato.com/index.php?module=Noticias&func=news_user_view&id=2818806750&umt=11_anos_vida_tendra_proyecto_minero_rio_blanco (accessed March 30, 2019).
- Ecuador TV (2011) Sí a La Minería Con Total Responsabilidad Ambiental y Social, Dice Correa. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttbz6EyFQ7M> (accessed March 30, 2019).
- Esson J, Noxolo P, Baxter R, et al. (2017) The 2017 RGS-IBG chair's theme: decolonizing geographical knowledges or reproducing coloniality? *Area* 49(3): 384–388. DOI: 10.1111/area.12371
- Finewood MH and Stroup LJ (2012) Fracking and the neoliberalization of the hydro-social cycle in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale. *Journal of Contemporary Water Research & Education* 147(1): 72–79. DOI: 10.1111/j.1936-704X.2012.03104.x
- Fox J (1999) Mountaintop removal in West Virginia: an environmental sacrifice zone. *Organization & Environment* 12(2): 163–183.
- Haarstad H (2012) Extracting justice? critical themes and challenges in Latin American natural resource governance. In: Haarstad H (ed) *New Political Spaces in Latin American Natural Resource Governance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1–16. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057%2F9781137073723_1.
- Haesbaert R (2004) *O mito da desterritorialização: Do 'fim dos territórios' a multiterritorialidade*. Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil.
- Halvorsen S (2018) Decolonising territory: dialogues with Latin American knowledges and grassroots strategies. *Progress in Human Geography* 43(5): 790–814. DOI: 10.1177/0309132518777623
- Holmes C, Hunt S and Piedalue A (2015) Violence colonialism and space: towards a decolonizing dialogue. *ACME* 14(2): 539–570.
- Horowitz LS, Keeling A, Lévesque F, et al. (2017) Indigenous peoples' relationships to large-scale mining in post-colonial

- contexts: toward multidisciplinary comparative perspectives. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 5(3): 404–414. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2018.05.004
- Jenkins K (2017) Women anti-mining activists' narratives of everyday resistance in the Andes: staying put and carrying on in Peru and Ecuador. *Gender, Place & Culture* 24(10): 1441–1459. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2017.1387102
- Keremane GB and McKay J (2011) Using PhotoStory to capture irrigators' emotions about water policy and sustainable development objectives: a case study in rural Australia. *Action Research* 9(4): 405–425. DOI: 10.1177/1476750311409598
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2015) The feminisation of mining. *Geography Compass* 9(9): 523–541. DOI: 10.1111/gec3.12229
- Langin K (2018) Millions of Americans drink potentially unsafe tap water. how does your County stack up? *Science*.
- Leeuw S and Hunt S (2018) Unsettling decolonizing geographies. *Geography Compass* 12(7): e12376. DOI: 10.1111/gec3.12376
- Longhurst R (1995) The body and geography. *Gender Place and Culture* 2(1): 97–105.
- Lu F, Valdivia G, Silva NL (2017) Oil, revolution, and indigenous citizenship in Ecuadorian Amazonia, spring link, Switzerland. Available at: <https://www.springerlink.com/de/book/9781137564627>
- Maggard SW (1999) Gender, race, and place: confounding labor activism in central Appalachia. In: Smith BE (ed) *Neither Separate nor Equal: Women, Race and Class in the South*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 185–206.
- Ministerio de Minería (2016) *Ecuador País Minero*. Available at: https://issuu.com/mineriaecuador/docs/folleto_proyectos_emblematicos_mapa (accessed March 30, 2019).
- Naylor L, Daigle M, Zaragocin S, et al. (2018) Interventions: Bringing the decolonial to political geography. *Political Geography* 66: 199–209. DOI: 10.1016/j.polgeo.2017.11.002
- Oslender U (2002) "The logic of the river": a spatial approach to ethnic-territorial mobilization in the Colombian Pacifica Region. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 7(2): 86–117. DOI: 10.1525/jlca.2002.7.2.86
- Panex Pinto A (2018) Agua-Territorio en América Latina: Contribuciones a partir del análisis de estudios sobre conflictos hídricos en Chile. *Revista Rupturas* 8(1): 193.
- Papyrakis E and Gerlagh R (2004) The resource curse hypothesis and its transmission channels. *Journal of Comparative Economics* 32(1): 181–193. DOI: 10.1016/j.jce.2003.11.002
- Patterson B (2019) WVU Art Exhibit Celebrates Water and the Women Who Protect It, *WV Public Broadcasting*. Available at: <https://www.wvpublic.org/post/wvu-art-exhibit-celebrates-water-and-women-who-protect-it#stream/0> (accessed March 25, 2019).
- Perreault T (2013) Dispossession by accumulation? Mining, water and the nature of enclosure on the Bolivian Altiplano. *Antipode* 45(5): 1050–1069.
- Porto-Goncalves C (2006) El agua no se niega a nadie. *Polis* 14: 1–24.
- Rice JL and Burke BJ (2018) Building more inclusive solidarities for socio-environmental change: lessons in resistance from southern Appalachia. *Antipode* 50(1): 212–232. DOI: 10.1111/anti.12336
- Rojas AG (2016) La contaminación aumenta en la mayoría de los ríos de América Latina, África y Asia', *El País*. Available at: https://elpais.com/elpais/2016/09/01/ciencia/1472719506_387465.html (accessed March 30, 2019).
- Ruiz Meza LE (2017) Incorporando la perspectiva de género en la gestión del agua: lecciones aprendidas desde Chiapas, México. *En Sustentabilidad em Debate* 8(3): 37–50.
- Smith BE (2015) Another place is possible? Labor Geography, spatial dispossession, and gendered resistance in Central Appalachia. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 105(3): 567–582. DOI: 10.1080/00045608.2014.924731
- Solano L (2013) Social impacts of large scale mining exploration phase and the role of defenders of Pachamama resistance in projects and white river quimsacocha. Thesis prior to obtaining the title of Magister in Sociology and Development expertise, University of Cuenca, Cuenca.
- Sultana F (2010) Living in hazardous waterscapes: gendered vulnerabilities and experiences of floods and disasters. *Environmental Hazards* 9(1): 43–53. DOI: 10.3763/ehaz.2010. SI02
- Sultana F (2011) Suffering for water, suffering from water: emotional geographies of resource access, control and conflict. *Geoforum* 42(2): 163–172. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.12.002
- Sweet EL and Ortiz Escalante S (2017) Engaging territorio cuerpo - tierra through body and community mapping: a methodology for making communities safer. *Gender, Place & Culture* 24(4): 594–606. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2016.1219325
- Swyngedouw E (1999) Modernity and hybridity: nature, regeneracionismo and the production of the Spanish waterscape. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89(3): 443–465. DOI: 10.1111/0004-5608.00157
- Torres Guzman N (2018) 'El nuevo "consenso minero" en Ecuador : Discursos y prácticas contradictorias El caso del Macizo del Cajas', *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES-ILDIS) Ecuador; Colectivo de Geografía Crítica*, vol. 16. Available at: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/quito/14910.pdf>
- Tuck E and Yang KW (2012) Decolonization: indigeneity. *Education & Society* 1(1): 1–40.
- Ulloa A (2016) Feminismos territoriales en América Latina: defensas de la vida frente a los extractivismos. *NÓMADAS* 45: 123–139.
- Vidal J (2017) As water scarcity deepens across Latin America, political instability grows, *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/mar/01/water-scarcity-latin-america-political-instability> (accessed March 1, 2017).
- West Virginia Rivers (2017) Can West Virginia's waterbodies handle over 3,100 impacts by natural gas pipelines? Available at: <http://wvriivers.org/2017/09/pipeline/> (accessed March 30, 2019).
- Willow AJ and Keefer S (2015) Gendering extraction: expectations and identities in women's motives for shale energy opposition. *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 5(2): 93–120.
- Young D, Zégre N, Edwards P, et al. (2019) Assessing streamflow sensitivity of forested headwater catchments to disturbance and climate change in the central Appalachian Mountains region, USA. *Science of The Total Environment* 694, 133382.

- Zaragocin S (2018) Espacios acuáticos desde una descolonialidad hemisférica feminista. *Mulier Sapiens. Discurso, Poder, Género, Año V. Diciembre* 10: 7–19.
- Zaragocin S and Caretta MA (under review) Cuerpo-territorio as decolonial feminist geographical method for embodiment. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*.
- Zaragocin S, Moreano M and Álvarez S (2018) Hacia una reapropiación de la geografía crítica en América Latina. *ICONOS* 61: 11–32.

Author Biographies

Martina Angela Caretta is an assistant professor in Geography at the Department of Geology and Geography at West Virginia University. She holds a PhD in Geography from Stockholm University, Sweden. She is a feminist geographer investigating the human dimensions of water through participatory methodologies. Her doctoral dissertation explored gender contracts in smallholder irrigation farming systems in Kenya and Tanzania. Her current research revolves around the gendered embodied dimensions of natural resource extraction and how those are manifested through water pollution and scarcity. She is currently conducting research in West Virginia, USA and Latin America. She is the coordinating lead author of the “Water” Chapter of the Working Group II of the upcoming IPCC Assessment Report. She is also concerned with the gendered impacts of the neo-liberal academia, specifically focusing on mentoring and support practices among junior geography faculty. Her work has been published in *The AAG Annals*, *Gender Place and Culture*, *The Geographical Journal*, and *Qualitative Research*, among other journals.

Sofia Zaragocin is an assistant professor at the International Relations Department of Universidad San Francisco de Quito, with research interests on decolonial feminist geography and processes of racialization of space. She has written on geographies of settler colonialism along Latin American Borderlands, feminist geography and mapping gender-based violence in Ecuador. Her work has been published in *Antipode*, *Gender Place and Culture*, *Political Geography*, *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, among other journals. She is currently working on a hemispheric study on the hidro-social cycle, women and mining along the Americas. She is also part of the Critical Geography Collective of Ecuador, an autonomous interdisciplinary group that seeks territorial resistance through a wide range of socio-spatial geographical methodologies.

Bethani Turley is a PhD student at Portland State University in geography. She researches and has written about the embodied dimensions of water contamination due to natural resource extraction in West Virginia.

Kamila Torres Orellana is a PhD Candidate at the Andean University “Simon Bolívar” in cultural studies, and a Professor-researcher at the University of Azuay (Cuenca-Ecuador). She researches issues related to territory, food sovereignty and rural women movements. She has researched and published on problems around interculturality, public policy and education. She is a member of the Critical Geography Collective of Ecuador.



Fried eggs and all-women gangs: the geopolitics of Chinese gold mining in Ghana, bodily vulnerability, and resistance



Heidi Hausermann¹, Janet Adomako², and Maya Robles³

Abstract

Between 2008 and 2016, more than 50,000 Chinese citizens migrated to Ghana to mine gold on small-scale concessions. This is particularly surprising given that small-scale mining is an activity reserved for Ghanaian citizens. Foreign gold mining is mediated by various intersecting political economic and geopolitical shifts, including unprecedented gold demand, economic crisis, and informal conditions to Chinese loans. Based on long-term, mixed-methods fieldwork, and drawing from feminist geopolitics research, we argue Ghana's recent gold rush portends gendered implications for bodies in rural areas. We center our discussion on bodies to demonstrate the ways extractive practices increase vulnerability among women and children, including teen pregnancy and mercury exposure. Yet, women also contest foreign mining and its myriad implications (e.g., refusing to sell land and entering sites while menstruating despite being "forbidden" to do so). A feminist geopolitics perspective allows the tracing of specific political economic processes (Chinese monetary policies, informal loan conditions) to other sites (Pokukrom, the pregnant teen), thereby enabling a clearer understanding of how supportive interventions might occur.

Keywords

gender, geopolitics, Ghana, resistance, small-scale gold mining, vulnerability

Huevos fritos y pandillas de mujeres: la geopolítica de la minería de oro de China en Ghana, vulnerabilidad y resistencia corporal

Resumen

Entre 2008 y 2016, más de 50,000 ciudadanos chinos emigraron a Ghana para extraer oro en concesiones a pequeña escala. Esto es particularmente sorprendente dado que la minería en pequeña escala es una actividad reservada para los ciudadanos ghaneses. La extracción de oro en el extranjero está mediada por varios cambios políticos, económicos y geopolíticos que se cruzan, incluida la demanda de oro sin precedentes, la crisis económica y las condiciones informales de los préstamos chinos. Con base en el trabajo de campo a largo plazo, de métodos mixtos, y basándose en la investigación de la geopolítica feminista, argumentamos que la reciente fiebre del oro de Ghana presagia implicaciones de género para los cuerpos en las zonas rurales. Centramos nuestra discusión en los cuerpos para demostrar las formas en que las prácticas extractivas aumentan la vulnerabilidad de mujeres y niños, incluido el embarazo adolescente y la exposición al mercurio. Sin embargo, las mujeres también impugnan la minería extranjera y sus innumerables implicaciones (por ejemplo, negarse a vender tierras e ingresar a los sitios mientras menstrúan a pesar de estar "prohibido" hacerlo). Una perspectiva de geopolítica feminista permite el rastreo de procesos políticos

¹Department of Anthropology & Geography, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, USA

²Department of Geography, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Piscataway, USA

³Department of Human Ecology, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Piscataway, USA

Corresponding Author:

Heidi Hausermann, Department of Anthropology & Geography, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523, USA.
Email: Heidi.hausermann@colostate.edu

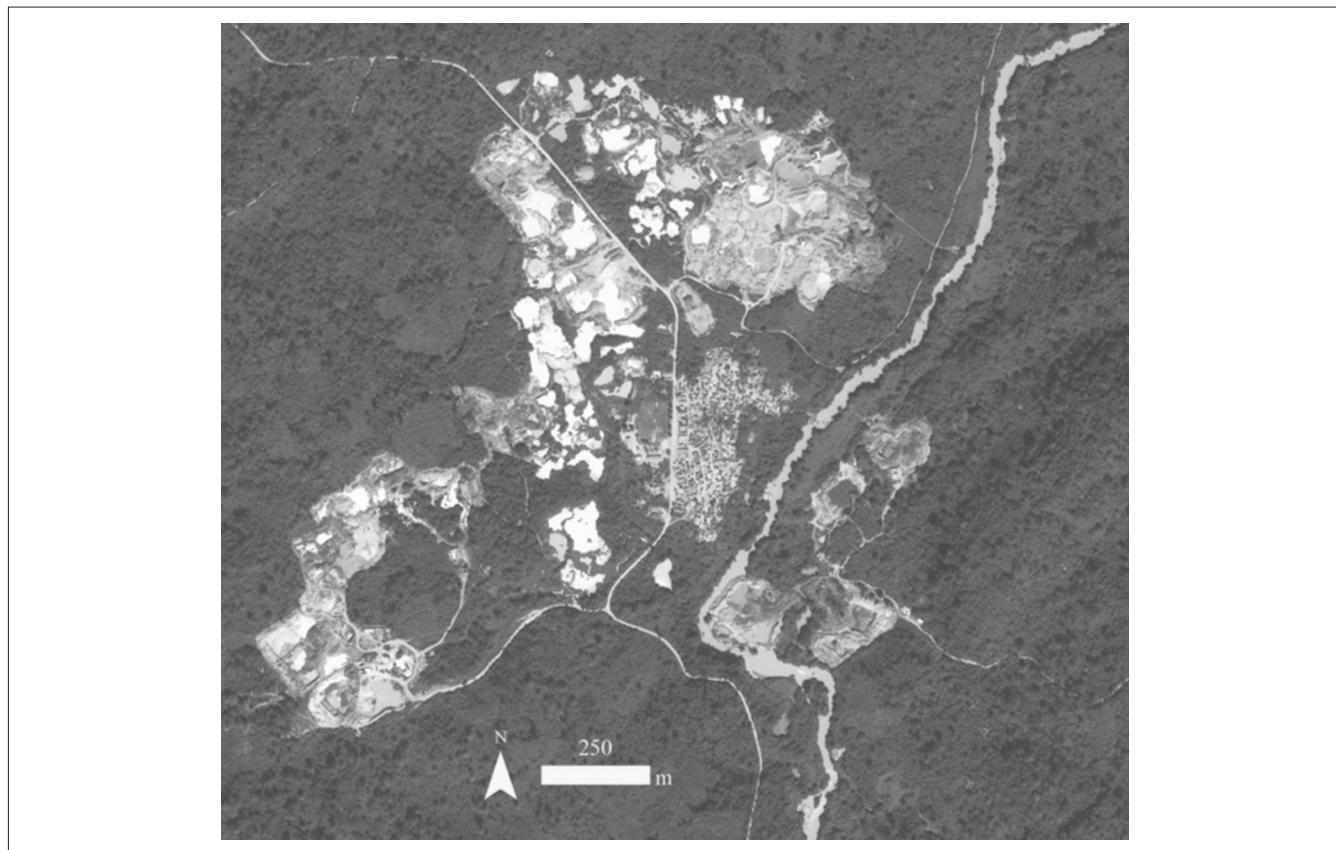


Figure 1. Mining pits surrounding Pokukrom in 2013.

económicos específicos (políticas monetarias chinas, condiciones de préstamos informales) a otros sitios (Pokukrom, la adolescente embarazada), lo que permite una comprensión más clara de cómo y dónde pueden ocurrir intervenciones para apoyar a las personas vulnerables.

Palabras clave

género, geopolítica, Ghana, resistencia, Minería de oro a pequeña escala, vulnerabilidad

Introduction

Between 2008 and 2016, more than 50,000 Chinese citizens migrated to Ghana to mine gold (Hufeng, 2013). In 2013, an official from Ghana's Minerals Commission estimated Chinese nationals held 70% of the country's small-scale concessions. This is particularly surprising given that small-scale mining is a right reserved for Ghanaian citizens, coded in minerals and environmental law.

We have studied foreign gold mining in Ghana since 2010. Our research has documented profound social and environmental transformations. Within a 300-m buffer¹ of the Offin River, mining—mostly Chinese operations—expanded 7,900% between 2008 and 2013, a time corresponding with an all-time high in gold prices; water in abandoned mining pits increased by nearly 33,000% during the same period (Hausermann et al., 2018).² Rural communities have

become surrounded by abandoned mining pits (Figures 1 and 2). Farmland has been destroyed and households grapple with food insecurity (Hausermann et al., 2018) and rising malaria incidence (Ferring and Hausermann, 2019). Rivers and streams have been rerouted to wash sediment, profoundly impacting hydrology. It is difficult to overemphasize the socio-environmental impacts of foreign gold mining (Baffour-Kyei et al., 2018; Bansah et al., 2018; Wilson, 2016), which prompted criticism from activists, policy makers, journalists, and others.

Criticism of foreign mining catalyzed political responses. In January 2019, Ghana's President, Nana Akufo-Addo, publicly stated, “Ghana and China have a strong relationship; however, we have a big problem [with] Chinese involvement in illegal mining activity in Ghana ... we have decided to do something about it” (Miyamoto, 2019).³ President

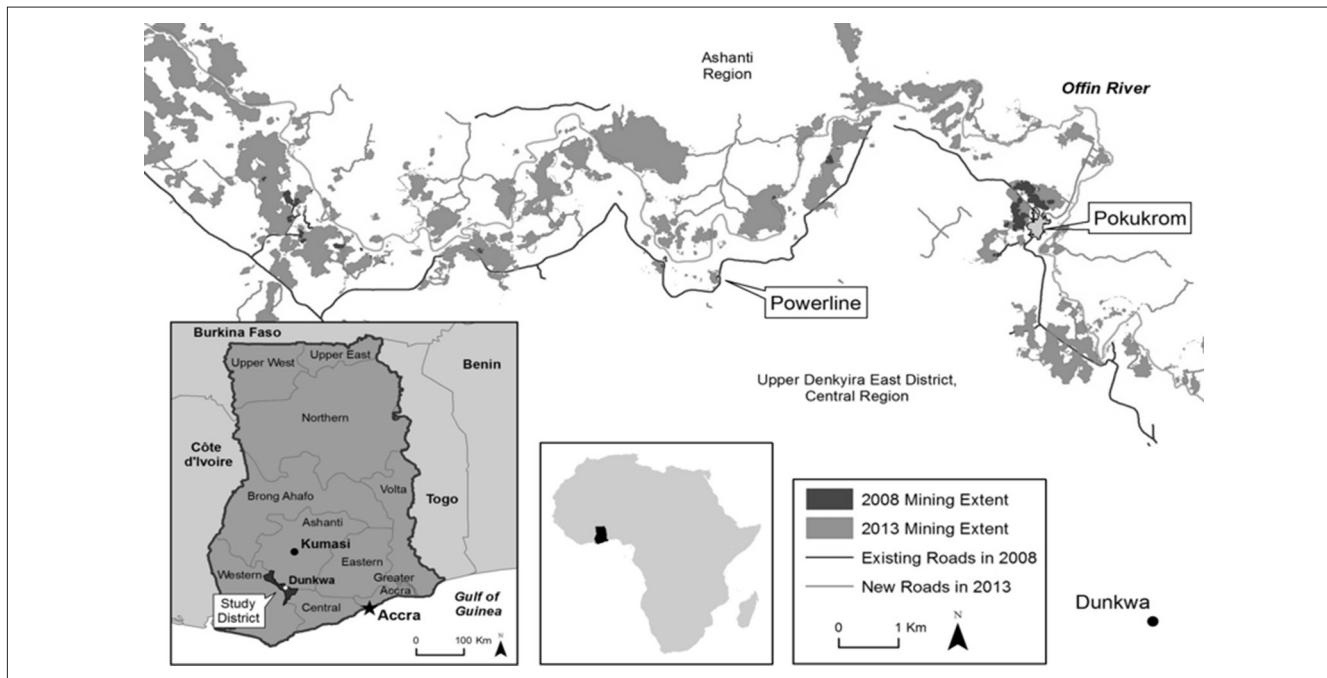


Figure 2. Study communities and extent of mining in 2008 and 2013.

Akufo-Addo's comments reflect a significant tension for the Ghanaian state: how to reckon Chinese–Ghanaian geopolitical relations, an influx of Chinese labor and capital in mining, and public outcry.

This article applies insights from feminist geopolitics scholarship to small-scale gold mining debates. We argue Ghana's recent gold rush possesses gendered implications for bodies in rural areas. We do not intend to disparage Chinese miners or silence the ongoing exploitative interventions of western nations in Africa (Ayers, 2013). Rather, we understand Chinese mining as the outcome of complex processes operating across different temporal and spatial scales, including 1990s neoliberal reforms (Hilson and Potter, 2005), shifting performances by state actors (Hausermann and Ferring, 2018), questionable "formalization" of the small-scale mining sector (Hirons, 2011; Hinton et al., 2017; Hilson and Maconachie, 2017), and capitalism's inherent contradictions (O'Connor, 1991). Chinese miners may also constitute exploited bodies in extractive relations, sent to Ghana by wealthy Chinese "kingpins" (also Hausermann and Ferring, 2018). Our object of analysis here is not Chinese miners specifically; we are rather focused on mining's socio-ecological transformations and the uneven implications for different people at the local level.

We center our discussion on bodies to demonstrate the ways extractive practices increase bodily vulnerability among women and children, including teen pregnancy and mercury exposure. Yet, women also contest gendered norms in mining. For instance, while women are "forbidden" to enter mining sites while menstruating, they do so anyway to

remine tailings, sell food, and earn income, thereby resisting patriarchal norms. In everyday life, women thus challenge geopolitical transformations inscribed on the landscape and bodies.

Bodies and geopolitics in small-scale gold mining

Worldwide, 20–30 million people are involved in informal, low-tech mining activities known as artisanal or small-scale mining (ASM) (Buxton, 2013). It is estimated women make up 50% of this workforce in Ghana (McQuilken and Hilson, 2016) and Africa more broadly (Eftimie et al., 2012). Small-scale mining employs millions more through "downstream" impacts (food, gold buying, transportation, sex work, etc.; Verbrugge and Geenen, 2019).

One central debate is whether ASM activities are a viable long-term economic strategy for poor people (Hilson and Garforth, 2013; Jönsson and Bryceson, 2009). In sub-Saharan Africa, reduced government spending, privatization, and deregulation have resulted in deeper socio-economic inequalities and unemployment (Wilson, 2016). These factors are often characterized as ASM driving forces (Hilson, 2010).

Other studies have provided more nuanced understandings of why miners engage in ASM, complicating the long-standing "get rich quick" narrative (Verbrugge and Geenen, 2019). Individuals (and communities) engage ASM for complicated reasons, including gendered exclusions in land

tenure (Brottem and Ba, 2019), security afforded by armed guards at mining sites (Maclin et al., 2017), and as a form of moralized resistance to industrial mining (Lahiri-Dutt, 2017).

ASM industries are often perceived as male dominated despite women's ubiquitous involvement⁴; "consequently, most research and policies have concentrated on men's jobs, while the contributions of women have been 'marginalized' and often overlooked" (Koomson, 2018: 101). Recent research has shed light on women's ASM participation (Buss et al., 2019; Hinton et al., 2017; Lahiri-Dutt, 2008; Lahiri-Dutt, 2015; Malpeli and Chirico, 2013). In Malian gold mining sites, women engage extra-marital relationships (*petit mariage*) that increase mineral access and represent a "pragmatic strategy to reduce risk and maximize benefit in a highly uncertain workplace" (Brottem and Ba, 2019: 56). Women in Papua New Guinea described health impacts from mining's physical demands *and* domestic activities (washing, cooking, etc.; Lynas, 2018). And in Central African Republic, where gold is believed to cause sterility, women avoid sites (Ingram et al., 2011), while women miners in Ghana are pushed out when pits get "too deep," despite helping excavate said pits (Koomson, 2018). This work has shown the diverse cultural, geologic, and political economic conditions under which women engage ASM.

These and other ASM studies focus on citizen miners and laborers who cross nearby international borders (Jönsson and Bryceson, 2009; Maclin et al., 2017; Maconachie, 2011; Nyame and Grant, 2014). Recent trends in Ghana, however,

represent something new: widespread influx of foreign machinery, miners, and capital in "small-scale" extraction (Figure 3). As Burrows and Bird (2017) put it,

Traditionally, small-scale gold mining in Ghana has been carried out by locals on their own land using hand-operated tools. These methods have slowly modernised and expanded, but the recent influx of foreign – predominantly Chinese – miners has accelerated this development. This is despite the fact Ghanaian law prohibits small-scale mining by non-citizens.

In tracing Chinese participation in Ghanaian mining industries, Hilson et al. (2014: 296) note the importance of 1970s labor deregulation in China, China's increasing role as an aid partner, and—perhaps most importantly—importation of workers and equipment in connection with development projects. Ghana has borrowed billions of dollars from China in recent decades, particularly for large infrastructural projects like dams, industrial sites, and roads (Amanor and Chichava, 2016; Hausermann, 2018; Swedlund, 2017). Most recently, the two countries signed a memorandum wherein Beijing will finance \$2 billion worth of Ghanaian rail, road, and bridge networks in exchange for 5% of Ghana's bauxite reserves (Smith, 2019).

And then there is China's demand for gold. Gold accumulation is a cornerstone of Beijing's monetary policy. Citizens are encouraged to acquire gold as an investment "safe haven," particularly in times of economic crisis. Wealthy



Figure 3. A typical Chinese mining site and equipment. Four Ghanaian men sit atop the "washing plant" and wash sediment, dumped into the plant by the excavator, for up to 12 hours a day. Water for washing is pumped into the site via a network of pipes and diesel generator. When finished, miners move on, without reclaiming land, leaving empty pits that fill with water over time.

Chinese—approximately 500 million individuals—use gold for investment in real estate, security, and capital markets (Boafo et al., 2019; Moyo, 2012). These processes, along with demand for jewelry and industrial purposes, triggered intense demand for the commodity. China leads global gold demand: of 4,345.1 tons produced in 2018, China consumed 1,151.43 (World Gold Council, 2019). While China is the world's largest gold producer, domestic production falls short of demand, prompting Beijing to secure the resource elsewhere.

Many interviewees—from government officials to rural farmers—speculated the Ghanaian government allows Chinese citizens to mine gold as an informal loan condition (also Hilson et al., 2014; Hausermann and Ferring, 2018; Boafo et al., 2019). A government official described in 2015:

The rumor is because Ghana is borrowing millions from China, the [Ghanaian] government allows them [Chinese citizens] to enter on tourist visas by the thousands.... I can't tell you if it is true or not...but they are coming in huge numbers, importing heavy machinery and taking millions worth of gold back to China... it seems unlikely that there has not been an accommodation or agreement for this.

Development experts note Chinese investment in Africa indeed coincides with “informal” access to natural resources, including minerals (Moody and Zhong Nan, 2013).

International development and geopolitical relations like these have long been taken up in feminist geography. Research has established how the “global” and the “intimate” are mutually constituted entities (Brickell and Cuomo, 2017; Dowler and Sharp, 2001), revealing the inseparability of masculinized “hot” geopolitics (war) and feminized “banal” intimate violences (sexual assault in the military) (Christian et al., 2016). A feminist geopolitics approach, “redraws the boundaries of the geopolitical and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the operation of power at multiple scales” (Massaro and Williams, 2013: 572). In a particularly relevant example, Luning and Pijpers (2017) examined how geology and water mediate geopolitical relations and co-habitation between mining corporations and ASM in Ghana.

Butler (2004) theorizes vulnerability and grievability vis-à-vis post-9/11 geopolitical violence. Vulnerability “becomes highly exacerbated under certain social and political conditions, especially those in which violence is a way of life and the means to secure self-defense are limited.” Like military interventions, gold mining and related landscape changes have resulted in dispossession and bodily harm. Yet, Butler also suggests loss and physical vulnerability are universal human conditions that possess political possibility: “Loss has made a tenuous ‘we’ of us all” (p. 20). Recognition of hurt and vulnerability in ourselves, instead of retaliation and aggression, may lead to reimagining a world where violence is minimized and interdependency is enhanced.

Other scholars have focused on resistance to geopolitical relations and violence (Pain and Staeheli, 2014; Smith, 2012). Canadian immigration policy is critiqued in transnational theater (Pratt and Johnston, 2014), refugees’ resist war and displacement through desire for education (Faria, 2017), mundane acts of “making-do” help women survive gendered violence in Delhi (Datta, 2016), and possibilities for careful intersectionality exist in the Trump era (Gökariksel and Smith, 2017). Much of this work explores resistance as small, gendered, and everyday acts. As Faria (2017: 6) explains, “Threaded through this work is an understanding of violence and resistance as knitted-together, with attention to mundane, quiet and/or indirect practices of resistance that are often ignored in the literature and in life.” Bodies, moreover, are sites where the geopolitical is produced, known, and resisted (Smith, 2012: 1518).

In Ghanaian small-scale gold mining landscapes, the geopolitical becomes embodied as uneven vulnerability to teenage pregnancy and mining pits that are a constant reminder of what is lost (farms, clean water sources, income, livelihoods) *and* pose new threats to bodily harm. Yet, women also contest mining in mundane ways, including wage gap contestation, co-optation of gendered mining terms, and formation of all-women “gangs.” In so doing, women reformulate access and understandings of belonging.

A brief history of small-scale gold mining in Ghana

Gold mining in Ghana dates to several centuries before Europeans’ arrival for ornamental use (Ofosu-Mensah, 2011). Mining activities expanded during the colonial era; the first gold mining companies formed shortly after Britain’s Gold Coast Colony was established in 1874 (Hilson, 2002). Prospecting and extraction were widespread by the early 1900s.

Following Ghana’s Independence from Britain in 1957, mineral control became vested in the state via the 1962 Minerals Act (Nyame and Blocher, 2010). By 1966, all but one gold mine was nationalized (Hilson, 2002). Production declined under nationalization and debt increased, contributing to implementation of 1980s neoliberalism in natural resource markets (Obeng-Odoom, 2015). As Hilson and Potter (2005) described, “In what many commentators regard as a desperate attempt to revive the slumping economy, national policy-makers pledged an allegiance with the IMF and World Bank, on which the fate of the country has rested for the past twenty years.”

Based on comparative advantage ideologies, gold mining was a major target of neoliberal reforms. The Minerals and Mining Law of 1986 liberalized the sector and extended a series of benefits to prospective investors, including low investment taxes for first year of operation; complete capitalization of pre-production expenses; and—perhaps most

relevant to the recent gold rush—elimination of import duties on mining equipment (Hilson and Potter, 2005). Neoliberal reforms resulted in extremely favorable conditions for foreign intervention, catalyzing the influx of billions of dollars into mining (Aryee, 2001). Currently, Ghana is the largest producer of gold in Africa and ranked eighth globally (Boafo et al., 2019).

Small-scale mining was also legalized in 1989 through the Mercury Law, Small-Scale Gold Mining Law, and Precious Minerals and Marketing Law. Legalization of ASM activities aimed to promote entrepreneurial subjects in a regulated industry. Through systems of licensing and registration, the state sought to transform “squatters into citizens” through ASM (Hilson and Potter, 2005). ASM was thus legally reserved for Ghanaian citizens, as a way to empower and modernize the poor.

To acquire concessions up to 25 acres, prospective miners apply for licenses from the Minerals Commission and undergo permitting procedures in other agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency. Yet, studies have shown lengthy licensing procedures and associated fees hinder most Ghanaians’ ability to obtain licenses (Banchirigah, 2008; Teschner, 2012). State institutions provide little technical or financing assistance (Hilson and Pardie, 2006). Entrepreneurial subjects, moreover, were assumed to be men in neoliberal formalization processes. These assumptions persist today, despite women’s historic and ubiquitous involvement in ASM (Koomson, 2018).⁵

Many state officials—including women working on mining issues, ironically—articulated small-scale mining is “not a woman’s job.” One high-ranking government official questioned a report estimating 50% of Ghana’s ASM workforce is women, saying the figure is “wildly inaccurate” as women only carry load (sediment) and thus, “fail to participate in actual extraction.” Another Minerals Commission official, interviewed in 2015, reported women “only sell food and sex” at mining sites. Many state actors dismiss women’s roles in mining—as manual laborers, load carriers, food vendors, and so on—as illegitimate. We seek to disrupt these narratives by highlighting the impacts of foreign mining on women’s (and others’) lives and how women resist gendered tropes in everyday life.

A mixed methodological approach for understanding the geopolitics of foreign mining

This research draws from long-term fieldwork and observation. Between 2010 and 2012, the lead author worked on a project examining interconnections between landscape disturbance from mining and a necrotizing skin infection. In 2012, we began a 5-year project looking more closely at the politics and impacts of small-scale mining. Most fieldwork took place in Pokukrom and Powerline along the Offin River

in Central Region (Figure 2). Interviews were also conducted in other communities, urban areas, and Western Region mining sites.

Between October 2012 and July 2013, 67 interviews were conducted with community members, traditional authorities, academics, NGO representatives, and people involved in ASM. We also interviewed state officials (Ghana Health Service, Minerals Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, etc.).

Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Handwritten notes, taken during all interviews, were typed at night. To avoid projecting *a priori* assumptions onto data, a grounded theory approach (Holton, 2010) was followed wherein repeated ideas, experiences, or elements were coded manually using ATLAS.ti (2014) software. Several rounds of data review refined codes.

Based on interview data, a household survey was developed. In July 2013, we conducted 138 spatially stratified household-level surveys in Pokukrom and Powerline. Survey participants were selected using a high-resolution satellite image from January 2013. Points were created for each roofed structure and randomly selected for the survey sample using QGIS. Structures were located using handheld maps and Global Positioning System units. For structures not housing people (cocoa shed, church, etc.), we surveyed the closest family compound.⁶ The survey contained closed and open-ended questions querying food security, health, livelihoods, landscape change, and land acquisition processes. We analyzed survey data descriptively and using cross-tabulation in SPSS. Between July 2015 and January 2017, based on survey results, 60 follow-up interviews were conducted. This research thus draws from 127 interviews in total. We have used pseudonyms to ensure participant anonymity.

Uneven bodily implications

Interview respondents consistently drew connections between Chinese miners’ use of heavy equipment and landscape degradation. Edward, a local teacher, explained:

At first there was a gang [of Ghanaian miners] working there ... they didn’t cause the destruction you see now. But then the Chinese started coming, around 2010, with their heavy machinery ... the Chinese easily import excavators, washing plants, pumps ... And with that equipment they can clear land. When they are finished, they just leave the pits so the whole place becomes flooded and infertile.

Nearly all survey respondents (91%) identified negative aspects of foreign mining. Wide-ranging responses, when asked to identify the “most serious outcome,” indicate the breadth of impacts: hydrological and water quality changes (22%), health impacts (malaria, teen pregnancy, poor water

quality; 21%), uncovered/open pits (20%), impacts on roads and bridges (14%), farmland destroyed (14%).

Women provided detailed descriptions of mining's impacts on water sources. This is likely due to gendered social reproduction activities like water collection, cooking, and bathing children, activities that put women in contact with water and shape environmental knowledge. Lucy, a 38-year-old farmer and trader in Pokukrom, described in 2015:

The galamsey⁷ has had a lot of negative effects on the rivers. When we first arrived here [20 years ago] there was a river just here that we fetched from. We could also fetch from the Offin. Presently, they have all been destroyed. They have become like red sand ... You can't drink it, regardless of how thirsty you are...

Grace, 52, stopped farming when her farm was flooded by miners:

The river has been completely destroyed. They have mined on all sides, and even inside the river itself. Our farmland has turned to mining pits. Even if your land is not taken for mining, it can be flooded and becomes useless. So that is why I am sitting here ... my farm was flooded.

Respondents also noted mining's impact on groundwater, including changes to the color, smell, and taste of borehole and well water. Lucy explained:

There is a borehole here and another here [gesturing close by]. All the water sources have gone bad ... the water is cloudy and has a strange taste. That one there [gestures to borehole], smells bad. You have to buy [water]. You buy and store. If you do not have money, you cannot buy. And we have no one to call on for help. So we are living with that state of affairs.

Powerline had no boreholes when this research was initiated. In 2013, we petitioned Perseus Mining, an Australian mining company, to drill Powerline a borehole, which they did. Within a year, water from the borehole was contaminated.

Respondents articulated, and showed, sadness when talking about landscape and water degradation. As geopolitical and political economic changes—China–Ghana development relations and historic highs in gold demand—are inscribed on the landscape, local people experience the outcomes viscerally and emotionally. Fear was also expressed vis-à-vis foreign mining and its outcomes, particularly concerns about children.

Of those surveyed, 94% said pits pose significant hazards; for 62% of those folks, the greatest concern was the threat to children and livestock. A 42-year-old chainsaw operator explained in 2017:

The main concern is the safety of the children. I am an adult and can tell when to avoid a pit or a dangerous route, but kids are not that discretionary. Not long ago, a police officer came over to arrest someone. The person lives here and knows the community so well that he was able to avoid the pits and escape. In the attempt to chase him, the police officer almost fell into one of the pits. He halted suddenly, like a goat does, and that kept him from falling in. He left very disturbed... It happened right here; behind that blue kiosk. The officer almost fell into that pit there. Now what if that was your child? The problem is anybody can unexpectedly fall into it and die. It could be your child or your sibling. This issue is really troubling to us.

While we laughed at the vision of a police officer halting like a goat to avoid falling in a pit, people's fear of losing animals or loved ones is something we heard about often. Only 7% had a bad experience with a pit themselves: either they or livestock fell in. One woman remembered nearly drowning while trying to save a young goat. As of February 2017, there were at least three deaths in Pokukrom from drowning in abandoned mining pits: one man, walking to farm at dawn, fell in. The other two were children.

Foreign mining possesses other implications for children. When asked if mining impacted children, 69% survey respondents answered yes. Of those, 61% believed children leave school to mine, while 18% stated the biggest concern was teen pregnancy. Young boys—particularly those from very poor families—remine tailings left by the Chinese. Pastor Asani of Powerline explained:

The boys are very much involved in galamsey If on attaining the age of 10 or 12 years, a child is able to do galamsey, and make about 100 or 200 Ghana Cedis in a week, they won't go to school.

Gold buyers (typically a community member or frequent visitor) provide mercury and other tools. Boys remine tailings or pit sediment, amalgamating ore by hand using mercury. The mercury-supplying buyer then purchases the gold, paying lower prices than adult miners receive. A galamsey operator noted in 2017:

The kids sneak into galamsey by working on the taboo day, when no one is at the sites. The buyers provide them with buckets, shovels, mercury, everything. The greatest mistake of these buyers is they don't care about age. If children bring them money, they don't ask about their age.

Young boys are exposed to mercury directly through these activities (also Ferring and Hausermann, 2019).

Adolescent girls, on the other hand, are vulnerable to pregnancy vis-à-vis the sudden influx of miners and cash. One disease control officer stated, "You cannot go to a community along the Offin these days without seeing a very



Figure 4. Ewe miners dredge mine the Offin River and pits left by Chinese.

young girl – 12, 13, 14 years of age – who is about to give birth.” Indeed, clinicians from several health facilities expressed concern about the rise in teen pregnancies and consistently linked the issue to mining.

Around 2010, young Ghanaian men started moving to Pokukrom and Powerline in large numbers for mining jobs. Some work as laborers at Chinese sites. Others, particularly Ewe from Volta Region, build floating “barges” and dredge mine the river and abandoned mining pits (Figure 4). Respondents consistently linked the influx of male migrants, cash availability, poverty, food insecurity, and teen pregnancy. Akua, a 38-year-old trader, explained:

Considering that the guy gets the girl fried egg, and all her mother got her is yam with salt, it makes the girl less responsive to the prompting to go to school. Because she is eating eggs from this guy, so she quits school. And then she becomes pregnant. So that is our problem.

Bernadette, also a trader, was so concerned with mining’s impact on children she sent her kids to live with relatives:

I have taken my children out of this place because of the galamsey. It is keeping children from attending school. Because of the money they get from going [to do galamsey], they are not concerned with school... It is mostly the boys. They don’t go to school, they prefer galamsey instead ... then they get money and give it to girls; and even a young child ends up pregnant ... so that is why I have moved my children from this place.

While Bernadette possessed the resources and familial support to move her children away from Pokukrom, many do not possess these capabilities or desires.

As the Chinese government puts gold at the heart of national monetary policy, encourages citizens’ to obtain the mineral, and negotiates mining as an informal loan condition, it is particular bodies—including Ghanaian children—who are put in harm’s way. The profoundly uneven implications of global geopolitics can be traced through feminist approach wherein, “Lives are supported and maintained differently, and there are radically different ways in which human physical vulnerability is distributed across the globe...” (Butler, 2004: 32). While some lives are highly protected and privileged (the Chinese kingpin or white American geographer), others encounter multiple and daily forms of danger (pits, mosquitoes, mercury) that are difficult to navigate with limited resources. Yet, while rural people may not have the capacity or heavy equipment to fill-in abandoned pits, restore life-supporting hydrologic processes, or eradicate Anopheles mosquitoes, they are not simply passive victims. Various, intersecting forms of resistance occur in Ghana’s mining landscapes, particularly among and between women.

Resistance

Powerline and Pokukrom are located on a dirt road that runs parallel to the Offin River; the road is the main thoroughfare to and from mining sites. In 2012, fed up with trucks’ impact



Figure 5. Community members in Pokukrom barricade the main road.

on local infrastructure, community members in Pokukrom barricaded the road using benches from the primary school (Figure 5). Local men were at the center of the conflict, due to its confrontational and public nature. For several days, tolls were extracted from foreign miners and their drivers while other vehicles (taxis, etc.) were allowed to pass. Tolls were invested in community development projects (trash management, borehole construction, weeding, etc.).

Individuals also resist foreign mining. Auntie Abena is an elderly cocoa farmer who inherited land from a male relative many years ago. She lives in Pokukrom and is exceedingly bright and savvy, despite little formal education. When she inherited the farmland, she had a formal document notarized, putting the land in her name. She is one of the only women we encountered with documentation of land “ownership,” even though it is not a state-issued title.

For years, miners—both Chinese and Ghanaian—and high-ranking traditional leaders harassed Auntie Abena to sell her farm. She carefully documented miners’ bribes and threats with hand written notes and enrolled family members to defend her. Her favorite story to tell is when a mining operator sent her a Mother’s Day gift to motivate her to sell the farm. She kept the gifts—plantains and rice—until Father’s Day, when she sent them back, firmly signaling she would not sell.

Neighbors and family members have advised Auntie Abena to sell her farm and invest in other livelihoods and new land. She refuses and resists for various reasons, including that Cocoabod, the parastatal managing Ghanaian cocoa production, provides her grandson a school scholarship. She often expressed disgust with mining and articulated a moral obligation to protect her land. She also expressed empathy toward others who lost land and experience food insecurity. While she struggles with cassava and plantain yields due to

soil infertility, “if someone who has lost land comes to beg for a small piece [of cassava], I will give it to them.” Auntie Abena’s deep desire to educate her grandson combines with emotional responses to land degradation and dispossession, to shape practices of resistance.

Women also resist and confront gendered mining norms and practices. In 2012, community members started remining tailings and sediment left by the Chinese. This work is typically done using simple “dig and wash” techniques, organized in small groups. In some cases, pumps and *Chang-fa* rock-crushing machines are brought in. At these “recycling” sites, load-carrying, washing sediment, and secondary economic activities like selling food are considered “appropriate” jobs for women.

Uneven wages are associated with gendered divisions of labor. Men often earn higher wages, particularly those working with *Chang-fa*, mercury, or dynamite. Even when men and women do the same tasks, men can earn more (also Lahiri-Dutt, 2008). This is the “double standard” of globalization: while women are integrated into workforces, they earn low wages in informal sectors (Bakker and Silvey, 2012).

Some women, however, contest wage gaps. Rose, a 37-year-old miner in Pokukrom, described in 2017:

You have to take care, because some [site bosses] will cheat because you are a woman. They will pay you a lesser wage, or withhold pay until they have a big [gold] find ... I always check with my brother [also a worker at the site] to see how much the men are paid.

Acutely aware of discrimination, women gain information about wages and use evidence to pressure or shame bosses into equal pay.



Figure 6. An all-women recycling gang near Pokukrom.

All-women recycling gangs were also formed in response to wage gaps and other injustices (Figure 6). One gang of women remined sediment with men, but became frustrated with the unfair distribution of gold. Using knowledge and social relationships gained in previous gangs, including mercury amalgamation and gold buyer connections, the women formed their own gang, they “recycled” tailings using simple technologies like a board, carpet, and buckets. Gold is now shared evenly among them.

Gendered understandings of bodies, including assumptions about what women’s bodies should look like, also shape resistance. Women miners are commonly called *obaa-barima*, meaning “female-man.” The term refers to a woman who does a “man’s job” or “acts like a man.” *Obaa-barima* also denotes women whose bodies have changed, through masculinized activities like mining, to “look like a man.”

Women miners acknowledge and embody understandings of *obaa-barima*. They laughed at men who were concerned with their physical transformation and articulated pride associated with physical strength. In doing so, women resist, appropriate—even take pride in—gendered tropes about mining bodies. Helen, a young miner who remines Chinese pits, explained:

I always farmed [on family’s farm]. But when the galamsey started, I wanted to make money. My brother started first and I followed . . . Farming is not easy . . . but with the mining, things are even more difficult. Sometimes I stand in water all day lifting heavy buckets . . . when I get home, I am so tired I cannot even eat. I am stronger than before . . . [laughing] my brothers tease me because my body is like a man’s, but they

don’t tease me so much, because they know [how strong I am].

Helen recognizes mining’s physical demands, even in comparison to manual farming labor. She acknowledges how her body has become “like a man’s” and her brothers’ related teasing. In these recognitions there is pride in her physical strength and autonomy, which manifests in a joking threat against her brothers. This was articulated by other women: the physical strength and financial autonomy achieved through mining shape pride and independence.

Women also contest cultural “taboos” related to mining practices and bodies. Menstruating women are “forbidden” to visit mining sites. People believe the river spirit forbids it, or worry women will “contaminate” the gold (also Ofosu-Mensah, 2010). Akoto, a 45-year-old woman, explained:

When a woman menstruates, she is not allowed to go to mine site . . . you cannot contaminate the gold with blood . . . when you go [while bleeding] they [miners] will not get any gold . . . when you are on the site and you menstruate, you have to leave the site and go home . . . this way, the gold will not be destroyed.

Some sites even subject women to physical examinations. Women resist these patriarchal, controlling, and stigmatizing practices. Rose, for instance, remined tailings at the edge of an active Chinese site. When asked if she stayed home while menstruating, she laughed, “Will the kids stop eating while I am bleeding?” For Rose, the need to generate income and feed family members trumps cultural understandings that

stigmatize and control women's bodies. Another gang of women revealed an advantage of not working with men was the absence of disciplinary tactics policing cultural "taboos." In Ghana, such mundane forms of resistance open up new possibilities for women miners.

Conclusion

In the last decade, 50,000 Chinese miners migrated to Ghana to extract gold on small-scale concessions. Miners use heavy machinery to remove land cover and wash massive amounts of sediment. Farms have been transformed to water-logged pits. Boys refuse to go to school because of quick cash earned by "recycling" Chinese tailings. Pregnancies among teenage girls from poor families have skyrocketed with an influx of young migrants who can provide "fried eggs." Adults worry about children's safety, education, and bodies. The physical harm and violence caused by foreign mining, in addition to the emotional distress expressed by many, show how geopolitical relations "...operate through and upon those bodies, such that particular subjectivities are enhanced, constrained and put to work, and particular corporealities are violated, exploited and often abandoned" (Dixon and Marston, 2011: 445).

While geopolitical transformations and their socio-environmental outcomes clearly become inscribed on the landscape and bodies, people also resist and challenge mining (including gendered norms) and its outcomes. Community members have barricaded roads, refused to sell land, and formed all-women "gangs." In unjust landscapes, people's ability to "get by" and reinvent themselves—as petty traders who sell food at Chinese sites or miners who recycle tailings—demonstrates strength, courage, and creativity. Women, moreover, contest wage gaps or unequal gold distribution, co-opt gendered terms intended as insults, and ignore cultural taboos around reproductive processes. Protest of Chinese mining's social and environmental impacts, moreover, resulted in political responses, including President Akufo-Addo's public announcement in early 2019 that Chinese mining must end despite the two countries' "strong relationship." Bodies and seemingly mundane actions are sites where the geopolitical is produced *and* resisted.

We have emphasized feminist geopolitics in Ghana's ASM sector, shedding light on the myriad ways people, across intersecting axes of social difference, are shaped by and respond to foreign mining. This is important for several reasons. First, such a perspective allows for the tracing of specific broader scale phenomenon (e.g., Chinese monetary policies centered on gold; informal loan conditions) to other sites (Pokukrom, the pregnant teen). Untangling these relations breaks down narratives and binaries that frame all Chinese mining as "illegal" and points to the complicated, yet empirical conditions that enable such activities. Furthermore, feminist geopolitics helps identify how ASM enables tremendous wealth creation *and* incredible

violence. A sector predicated on the empowering of poor Ghanaian subjects has morphed into something quite different. Future efforts to "formalize" ASM must take an honest look at current social and environmental conditions, including women's involvement. To do so requires taking stock of inflicted suffering and creating a public in which oppositional and marginalized voices are not degraded or dismissed, but valued for instigations to a "sensate democracy they occasionally perform" (Butler, 2004: 151). State officials and other policy makers would be remiss to continue narratives that deny or marginalize women's participation in the sector. Rather, it is a moral obligation of state officials and others to help identify the ways diverse citizens—and vulnerable populations, most importantly—can be best supported.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. This buffer was selected because, when research was initiated in 2010, minerals and environmental policies stated no mining site should exist within 300 m of a natural water body.
2. In 2008, mining (as a land cover class) covered 4 hectares within 300 m of the river; by 2013, it expanded to 323 hectares. During the same period, water in abandoned pits increased from 0.26 hectares to 86 hectares.
3. "Big men," including politicians, are deeply involved in foreign mining (Hausermann and Ferring, 2018). It was rumored Ghana's two main political parties, the National Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC), controlled mining sites near our study communities. Leading up to Ghana's 2016 presidential election, the parties ramped up mining to finance campaigns. President Akufo-Addo (NPP) won the election, highlighting the complicated and ironic nature of his early-2019 statements.
4. A recent report on global ASM trends (Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF), 2017) provides little mention of critical issues faced along gender lines, despite that images of women miners are featured throughout the report, including the cover. Research also has the tendency to define "miners" in masculinist terms (Garvin et al., 2009; Teschner, 2012). While this can happen unwittingly or due to research design, it characterizes ASM in ways that elide the complex realities of women's participation.
5. Women have long been vital to gold extraction in Ghana, including in precolonial times (Ofosu-Mensah, 2011). As Malpeli and Chirico (2013) put it, "... in the West African gold mining sector, the role of women as panners is a well-established tradition,

- as the mining of gold has been carried out in the region for over 2,000 years."
6. We identified 268 roofs in Pokukrom using high-resolution satellite imagery and surveyed 117 of those, or 44%. However, several structures were cocoa sheds, churches, stores, or other sites not housing people. For the much smaller community of Powerline, we also surveyed 44% (21 surveys from 48 roofed structures).
 7. ASM is commonly referred to as "galamsey" in Ghana.

References

- Amanor KS and Chichava S (2016) South-south cooperation, agribusiness, and African agricultural development: Brazil and China in Ghana and Mozambique. *World Development* 81: 13–23. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.11.021
- Aryee BN (2001) Ghana's mining sector: Its contribution to the national economy. *Resources Policy* 27(2): 61–75. DOI: 10.1016/S0301-4207(00)00042-8
- ATLAS.ti (2014) (version 7.1.8). Berlin, Germany: Scientific Software Development.
- Ayers AJ (2013) Beyond myths, lies and stereotypes: The political economy of a 'new scramble for Africa'. *New Political Economy* 18(2): 227–257. DOI: 10.1080/13563467.2012.678821
- Baffour-Kyei V, Mensah A and Owusu V (2018) Impact of small-scale mining activities on the Livelihoods assets of rural households in the Bekwai Municipality, Ghana. *Ghana Association of Agricultural Economists (GAAE) 2018 Conference (2nd)*, August 8-11, Kumasi, Ghana.
- Bakker I and Silvey R (2012) *Beyond States and Markets*. London: Routledge.
- Banchirigah SM (2008) Challenges with eradicating illegal mining in Ghana: A perspective from the grassroots. *Resources Policy* 33(1): 29–38. DOI: 10.1016/j.resourpol.2007.11.001
- Bansah KJ, Dumakor-Dupey NK, Kansake BA, Assan E and Bekui P (2018) Socioeconomic and environmental assessment of informal artisanal and small-scale mining in Ghana. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 202: 465–475. DOI: 10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.08.150
- Boafo J, Paalo SA and Dotsey S (2019) Illicit Chinese small-scale mining in Ghana: Beyond institutional weakness? *Sustainability* 11(21): 5943–18. DOI: 10.3390/su11215943
- Brickell, K and Cuomo D (2017) Feminist geopolitics. *Progress in Human Geography* 43(1): 1–19.
- Brottem LV and Ba L (2019) Gendered livelihoods and land tenure: The case of artisanal gold miners in Mali, West Africa. *Geoforum* 105: 54–62. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.07.005
- Burrows E and Bird L (2017) "Gold, Guns and China: Ghana's Fight to End Galamsey," Global Initiative. Available at: <https://globalinitiative.net/gold-guns-and-china-ghanas-fight-to-end-galamsey/>
- Buss D, Rutherford B, Stewart J, et al. (2019) Gender and artisanal and small-scale mining: Implications for formalization. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 6(4): 1101–1112. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2019.10.010
- Butler J (2004) *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso.
- Buxton A (2013) "Responding to the challenge of artisanal and small-scale mining. How Can Knowledge Networks Help?" IIED, London. Available at: <http://pubs.iied.org/16532IIED.html>
- Christian J, Dowler L and Cuomo D (2016) Learning to fear: Feminist geopolitics and the hot banal. *Political Geography* 54: 64–72.
- Datta A (2016) The intimate city: Violence, gender and ordinary life in Delhi slums. *Urban Geography* 37(3): 323–342. DOI: 10.1080/02723638.2015.1096073
- Dixon DP and Marston SA (2011) Introduction: Feminist engagements with geopolitics. *Gender, Place & Culture* 18(4): 445–453. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2011.583401
- Dowler L and Sharp J (2001) A feminist geopolitics? *Space and Polity* 5(3): 165–176. DOI: 10.1080/13562570120104382
- Eftimie A, Heller K and Strongman J, et al. (2012) *Gender dimensions of artisanal and small-scale mining: A rapid assessment tool-kit*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Faria C (2017) Towards a countertopography of intimate war: Contouring violence and resistance in a South Sudanese diaspora. *Gender, Place & Culture* 24(4): 575–593. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2017.1314941
- Ferring D and Hausermann H (2019) The political ecology of landscape change, malaria and cumulative vulnerability in central Ghana's gold mining country. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2018.1535885>
- Garvin T, McGee TK, Smoyer-Tomic KE and Aubynn EA (2009) Community-company relations in gold mining in Ghana. *Journal of Environmental Management* 90(1): 571–586. DOI: 10.1016/j.jenvman.2007.12.014
- Gökariksel B and Smith S (2017) Intersectional feminism beyond U.S. flag hijab and pussy hats in Trump's America. *Gender, Place & Culture* 24(5): 628–644. DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2017.1343284
- Hausermann H (2018) Ghana must progress, but we are really suffering': Bui dam and livelihood implications for rural people. *Society & Natural Resources* 31(6): 633–648. DOI: 10.1080/08941920.2017.1422062
- Hausermann H and Ferring D (2018) Unpacking land grabs: Subjects, performances and state in Ghana's 'small-scale' gold mining sector. *Development and Change* 49(4): 1010–1033. DOI: 10.1111/dech.12402
- Hausermann H, Ferring D, Atosona B, et al. (2018) Land-grabbing, land-use transformation and social differentiation: Deconstructing "small-scale" in Ghana's recent gold rush. *World Development* 108: 103–114. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.03.014
- Hilson G (2002) Harvesting mineral riches: 1000 years of gold mining in Ghana. *Resources Policy* 28(1-2): 13–26. DOI: 10.1016/S0301-4207(03)00002-3
- Hilson G and Potter C (2005) *Subsistence Industry: Artisanal Gold Mining in Ghana*. UK and USA: Blackwell Publishing.

- Hilson G (2010) Child labour in African artisanal mining communities: Experiences from Northern Ghana. *Development and Change* 41(3): 445–473. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7660.2010.01646.x
- Hilson G and Garforth C (2013) Everyone Now is Concentrating on the Mining: Drivers and Implications of Rural Economic Transition in the Eastern Region of Ghana. *Journal of Development Studies* 49(3): 348–364. DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2012.713469
- Hilson G, Hilson A and Adu-Darko E (2014) Chinese participation in Ghana's informal gold mining economy: Drivers, implications and clarifications. *Journal of Rural Studies* 34: 292–303. DOI: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2014.03.001
- Hilson G and Maconachie R (2017) Formalising artisanal and small-scale mining: Insights, contestations and clarifications. *Area* 49(4): 443–451. DOI: 10.1111/area.12328
- Hilson G and Pardie S (2006) Mercury: An agent of poverty in Ghana's small-scale gold-mining sector? *Resources Policy* 31(2): 106–116. DOI: 10.1016/j.resourpol.2006.09.001
- Hinton JJ, Hinton BE and Veiga MM (2017) Women in Artisanal and Small Scale Mining in Africa. In: *Women Miners in Developing Countries* Routledge, 209–226.
- Hirons M (2011) Managing artisanal and small-scale mining in forest areas: Perspectives from a poststructural political ecology. *The Geographical Journal* 177(4): 347–356. DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-4959.2011.00405.x
- Holton JA (2010) The coding process and its challenges. In: Bryant A and Charmaz K (eds) *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 265–289.
- Huifeng H (2013) Ghana's crackdown on illegal gold mining prompts Chinese exodus. *South China Morning Post*. Available at: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1272624/ghanas-crackdown-illegal-gold-mining-prompts-chinese-exodus>
- Ingram V, Tieguhong JC, Schure J, Nkamnia E and Tadjuidje MH (2011) Where artisanal mines and forest meet: Socio-economic and environmental impacts in the Congo Basin. *Natural Resources Forum* 35(4): 304–320. DOI: 10.1111/j.1477-8947.2011.01408.x
- Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) (2017) *Global Trends in Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM): A review of key numbers and issues*. IISD: Winnipeg.
- Jönsson JB and Bryceson DF (2009) Rushing for gold: Mobility and small-scale mining in East Africa. *Development and Change* 40(2): 249–279. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7660.2009.01514.x
- Koomson E (2018) Work patterns and gender reproduction in the Talensi small-scale gold-mining industry in Ghana: Implications for social welfare policy. *International Journal of Social Welfare* 28(1): 100–107. DOI: 10.1111/ijsw.12310
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2008) Digging to survive: Women's livelihoods in South Asia's small-scale mines and Quarries. *South Asia Survey* 15(2): 217–244.
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2015) The Feminisation of mining. *Geography Compass* 9(9): 523–541. DOI: 10.1111/gec3.12229
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2017) Resources and the politics of Sovereignty: The moral and Immoral economies of coal mining in India. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 40(4): 792–809. DOI: 10.1080/00856401.2017.1370211
- Luning S and Pijpers RJ (2017) Governing access to gold in Ghana: In-depth geopolitics on mining concessions. *Africa* 87(4): 758–779. DOI: 10.1017/S0001972017000353
- Lynas D (2018) A good business or a risky business: health, safety and quality of life for women small-scale miners in PNG, CH. In: Lahiri-Dutt K (ed) *Ch. 7 in Between the Plough and the Pick*, 151–170.
- Maclin BJ, Kelly JTD, Perks R, Vinck P and Pham P (2017) Moving to the mines: Motivations of men and women for migration to artisanal and small-scale mining sites in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Resources Policy* 51: 115–122. DOI: 10.1016/j.resourpol.2016.12.003
- Maconachie R (2011) Re-Agrarianising Livelihoods in Post-conflict Sierra Leone? Mineral Wealth and Rural Change in Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Communities. *Journal of International Development* 23(8): 1054–1067. DOI: 10.1002/jid.1831
- Malpeli KC and Chirico PG (2013) The influence of geomorphology on the role of women at artisanal and small-scale mine sites. *Natural Resources Forum* 37(1): 43–54. DOI: 10.1111/1477-8947.12009
- Massaro VA and Williams J (2013) Feminist geopolitics. *Geography Compass* 7(8): 567–577. DOI: 10.1111/gec3.12054
- McQuilken J and Hilson G (2016) Artisanal and small-scale gold mining in Dhana. Evidence to inform an action dialogue. *International Institute for Environment and Development*.
- Miyamoto H (2019) Ghana leader fears Chinese are illegally mining gold." Nikkei Asian Review. Available at: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Ghana-leader-fears-Chinese-are-illegally-mining-gold>
- Moody A and Zhong Nan N (2013) "Work in Progress." ChinaDaily. Available at: http://africa.chinadaily.com.cn/weekly/2013-01/11/content_16106378.html (accessed January 4, 2017).
- Moyo D (2012) *Winner Take All: China's Race for Resources and What it Means for the World*. New York: Basic Books.
- Nyame FK and Blocher J (2010) Influence of land tenure practices on artisanal mining activity in Ghana. *Resources Policy* 35(1): 47–53. DOI: 10.1016/j.resourpol.2009.11.001
- Nyame FK and Grant JA (2014) The political economy of transitory mining in Ghana: Understanding the trajectories, triumphs, and tribulations of artisanal and small-scale operators. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 1(1): 75–85. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2014.01.006
- O'Connor J (1991) On the two contradictions of capitalism. *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 2(3): 107–109. DOI: 10.1080/10455759109358463
- Obeng-Odoom F (2015) Understanding land reform in Ghana: A critical postcolonial institutional approach. *Review of Radical Political Economics* 48(4): 661–680.
- Ofosu-Mensah AE (2010) Traditional gold mining in Adanse. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 19(2): 124–147.
- Ofosu-Mensah AE (2011) Historical overview of traditional and modern gold mining in Ghana. *International Research Journal*

- of Library, Information and Archival Studies 1(1): 006–022. <http://www.interesjournals.org.IRJLIAS>
- Pain R and Staeheli L (2014) Introduction: Intimacy-geopolitics and violence. *Area* 46(4): 344–347. DOI: 10.1111/area.12138
- Pratt G and Johnston C (2014) Filipina domestic workers, violent insecurity, testimonial theatre and transnational ambivalence. *Area* 46(4): 358–360. DOI: 10.1111/area.12138_8
- Smith E (2019) “China’s \$2 billion deal with Ghana sparks fears over debt, influence and the environment.” Available at: <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/11/21/chinas-2-billion-ghana-deal-fears-over-debt-influence-environment.html>
- Smith S (2012) Intimate geopolitics: Religion, marriage, and reproductive bodies in Leh, Ladakh. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102(6): 1511–1528. DOI: 10.1080/00045608.2012.660391
- Swedlund HJ (2017) Is China eroding the bargaining power of traditional donors in Africa? *International Affairs* 93(2): 389–408. DOI: 10.1093/ia/iiw059
- Teschner BA (2012) Small-scale mining in Ghana: The government and the galamsey. *Resources Policy* 37(3): 308–314. DOI: 10.1016/j.resourpol.2012.02.001
- Verbrugge B and Geenen S (2019) The gold commodity frontier: A fresh perspective on change and diversity in the global gold mining economy. *Extractive Industries and Society* 6(2): 413–423. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2018.10.014
- Wilson J (2016) The village that turned to gold: A parable of Philanthrocapitalism. *Development and Change* 47(1): 3–28. DOI: 10.1111/dech.12163
- World Gold Council (2019) Demand and supply data. Available at: <https://www.gold.org/goldhub/data/demand-and-supply>

Author Biographies

Heidi Hausermann is an associate professor at Colorado State University. She employs mixed methods to address research questions spanning health and environment interaction, resource politics and landscape change.

Janet Adomako is a doctoral candidate at Rutgers University. Her research focuses on the intersection of gender, small-scale mining, technology and diverse understandings of gold.

Maya Robles is a recent graduate of Rutgers University, where she majored in environmental policy. She currently works on environmental issues for the Sourland Conservancy in New Jersey.

Mining and women in northwest Mexico: a feminist political ecology approach to impacts on rural livelihoods

Human Geography
 2020, Vol. 13(1) 74–84
 © The Author(s) 2020
 Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
 DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910901
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



América N. Lutz-Ley¹ and Stephanie J. Buechler²

Abstract

Women's participation in large-scale mining (LSM) has been increasing in Mexico and worldwide; however, few comprehensive studies exist on the socioeconomic effects of mining on women depending on the specific roles they play in this activity. The objective of this study was to analyze, from a feminist political ecology perspective, the effects of mining on women in a rural community in Sonora State, in arid northwest Mexico, a region with important participation of LSM in the country. For this purpose, we developed a mixed methods approach combining literature review on gender and LSM, semistructured in-depth interviews, and analysis of secondary government data. Most literature on women and mining treats them conceptually as a homogeneous social group or focuses on only one role women play in mining. We address this gap by identifying several roles women can play in their interactions with the mining sector and then analyzing and comparing the effects of mining associated with these distinctive roles. In doing so, we unravel the gendered complexities of mining and highlight the socio-ecological contradictions embedded in these dynamics for individual women who are faced with significant trade-offs. Mining can provide economic and professional opportunities for women of varying educational and socioeconomic levels in otherwise impoverished and landless rural households. At the same time, women are unable to, as one interviewee phrased it, "break the glass ceiling even if using a miner's helmet," especially in managerial positions. Extraction of natural resources in the community is accompanied by the extraction of social capital and personal lives of miners. We give voice to the socio-ecological contradictions lived by women in these multiple roles and offer potential insights both for addressing gender-based inequities in mining and for avenues toward collective action and empowerment.

Keywords

women in mining, feminist political ecology, rural livelihoods, northwest Mexico, extractivism

Minería y mujeres en el noroeste de México: Un acercamiento desde la ecología política feminista a los impactos sobre medios de vida rurales

Resumen

La participación de las mujeres en la minería de gran escala se ha incrementado en México y alrededor del mundo; sin embargo, existen escasos estudios comprehensivos de los efectos socioeconómicos de la minería sobre las mujeres dependiendo de los roles específicos que ellas juegan en esta actividad. El objetivo de este estudio es analizar, desde la perspectiva de la ecología política feminista, los efectos de la minería sobre mujeres de una comunidad rural del estado de Sonora, en el noroeste árido de México; una región con importante participación de la minería de gran escala en el país. Con este propósito desarrollamos un acercamiento metodológico mixto, combinando el análisis de literatura sobre género y minería de gran escala, con entrevistas semiestructuradas y análisis de datos secundarios producidos por agencias gubernamentales. La mayoría de los estudios sobre mujeres y minería las concibe

¹Center of Studies on Development, El Colegio de Sonora, Sonora, Mexico

²School of Geography and Development and Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA

Corresponding Author:

América N. Lutz-Ley, Center of Studies on Development, El Colegio de Sonora, Obregon 54, Hermosillo 83000, Sonora, Mexico.
 Email: alutz@colson.edu.mx

conceptualmente como un grupo social homogéneo, o se centran solamente en uno o dos roles de las mujeres en la minería. En este trabajo se cubre esta brecha mediante la identificación de múltiples roles que las mujeres pueden desempeñar en sus interacciones con el sector minero y el análisis comparativo de los efectos de la minería asociados con estos distintos roles. De esta manera, se desentrañan las complejidades de la minería vistas desde el género y se enfatizan las contradicciones socio-ecológicas inmersas en estas dinámicas para mujeres que enfrentan costos individuales significativos. La minería puede proveer oportunidades económicas y profesionales para mujeres de distintos niveles educativos y socioeconómicos en hogares rurales empobrecidos o sin tierras productivas. Al mismo tiempo, las mujeres no han podido, en palabras de una minera, “romper el techo de cristal ni usando un casco minero”, especialmente en posiciones de mando. La extracción de recursos naturales en la comunidad se acompaña de la extracción de capital social y el tiempo de vida personal de las mineras. Se da voz a las contradicciones socio-ecológicas vividas por mujeres que ocupan estos múltiples roles y se ofrecen visiones potenciales para atender estas inequidades basadas en el género en la minería, así como posibles caminos hacia la acción colectiva y el empoderamiento.

Palabras clave

mujeres en la minería, ecología política feminista, medios de vida rurales, noroeste de México, extractivismo

Mining and women in northwest Mexico

Mining provides employment for men, and increasingly women, in rural semi- or nonagrarian households (Bell and Braun, 2010; Lahiri-Dutt, 2011). Although globally mining is considered a masculine livelihood, there is historical evidence of female participation (Lahiri-Dutt, 2011; Mercier and Gier, 2007). Today women constitute a major workforce in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), participating comparatively less in large-scale mining (LSM) (Jenkins, 2014). Women's enhanced access to socioeconomic opportunities through employment in both ASM and LSM could modify power relationships and gendered livelihood structures in predominantly agrarian contexts where mostly men hold land and water rights (Castro-Ramírez et al., 2015).

Women's participation in LSM in arid northwest Mexico is increasing, yet women's experiences in this sector have not been systematically studied. The objective of this article is to address this gap by analyzing, from a feminist political ecology (FPE) perspective, how mining affects livelihood dynamics in a rural community in Sonora State. Informed by literature review, in-depth interviews, and secondary data analysis, the main contribution of this article is to explore and describe mining's livelihood effects on women's lives as a function of the roles they play related to LSM, emphasizing social–ecological contradictions and personal and professional trade-offs they face due to different types of relationships to mining activities.

In Mexico, the number of female employees working in LSM (sector 21) grew significantly in 2004–2014 (see upper part of Figure 1), especially in Sonora (see lower part of Figure 1). Sonora is the country's top producer of gold, copper, molybdenum, graphite, and wollastonite, with mining contributing 17% of Sonora's GDP via over 40 mines, many in rural municipalities (Servicio Geológico Mexicano, 2017).

For Sonoran women participating in contemporary LSM, access to stable income is not assured; remuneration and availability of jobs shrink and expand according to minerals'

international prices (Bracamonte Sierra et al., 1997) and labor is also subject to wage caps and flexibility policies that favor high levels of subcontracting (Lutz-Ley, 2016). Subcontracting, in addition to creating uncertain livelihoods, also hinders formation of collective action, dividing permanent and temporary workers (Tetreault, 2016). However, LSM is sometimes perceived as the only option to remain in communities, because women's access to paid agricultural labor is much lower than men's (Buechler and Lutz-Ley,

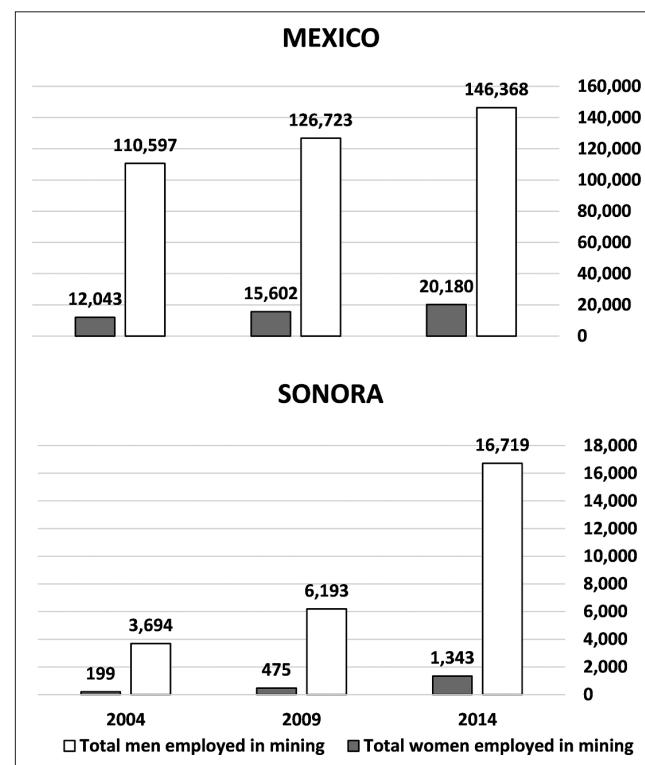


Figure 1. Numbers of men and women in mining in Mexico and in Sonora State. (Source: elaborated by authors with data of INEGI's economic censuses of 2004, 2009, and 2014.)

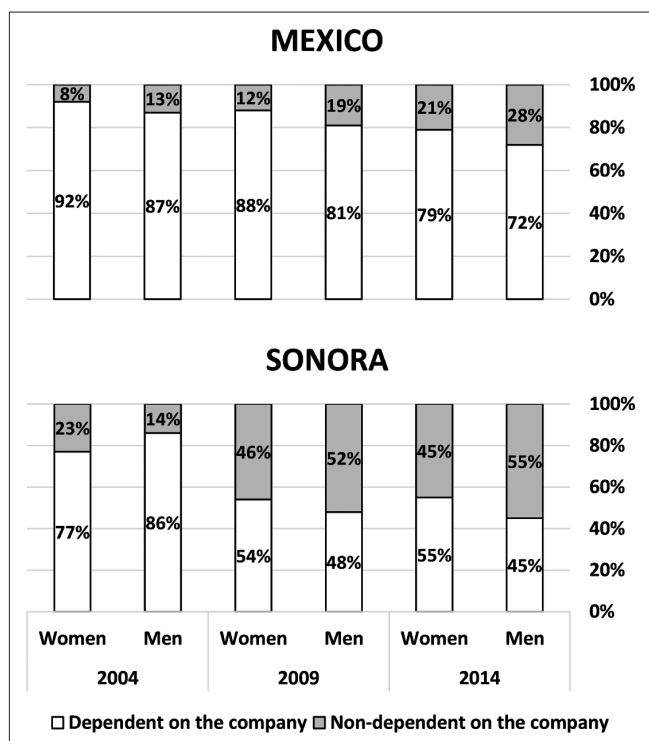


Figure 2. Proportion of male and female employees depending directly and indirectly on mining companies in Mexico and Sonora. (Source: elaborated by authors with data of INEGI's economic censuses of 2004, 2009, and 2014) ("Non-dependent on the company" are subcontracted employees).

2019). Figure 2 shows the proportion of male and female employees who depend directly and indirectly (outsourced) on mining. In Sonora, an abrupt change occurred with approximately half the workforce hired via subcontracted jobs in 2009–2014 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2016). This indicates a high integration into global markets, with significant participation of international companies (Servicio Geológico Mexicano, 2017).

For women not participating directly in mining, impacts on community's resources and landscape have important effects on their livelihoods and household water and food security. Environmental risks and impacts tend to affect each gender differently because occupational roles follow a gender division of labor, with different levels of dependency on local resources (Buechler, 2015). As natural resources become scarcer and more polluted, women's work in procuring inputs for domestic production and reproduction increases (Browning-Aiken, 2000). On the other hand, literature and our own interviews reveal gains in rural livelihoods' diversification and income for women when a mine opens in their communities. However, these positive effects depend importantly on women's capacity to negotiate with the mines, and their social and work positions in communities and companies.

A feminist political ecology of women in LSM

FPE frames gender as a crucial differentiating social category and views the distribution of natural and material resources, risks, impacts, and access to environmental decision-making as reflecting gendered power relationships (Buechler and Hanson, 2015; Rocheleau et al., 1996). FPE is a useful though underutilized theoretical framework for the analysis of women's roles in LSM (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015a, Lahiri-Dutt, 2015b; Binoy, 2017) especially in Latin America (Brain, 2017; Viteri, 2017). FPE helped analyze women's positionings in gendered power relationships within mining and their community, particularly those related to (1) women's access and rights to natural resources and natural resource-based employment; (2) mining women's agency within their households, communities, and workplaces; and (3) physical and social impacts and risks of mining for women.

In building our literature review, most of the studies we found on mining, rural livelihoods, and gender referred to ASM (e.g. Hilson et al., 2017; O'Faircheallaigh and Corbett, 2016), although we purposely focused only on LSM studies. A major proportion of those were studies on rural communities in Asia (Behzadi, 2019; work by Lahiri-Dutt in multiple years; Grobmann et al., 2017; Mukherjee, 2014); Africa (Akiwumi, 2011; Kaggwa, 2019; Kotsadam and Tolonen, 2016); and Oceania (Lozeva and Marinova, 2010; Mayes and Pini, 2014), with fewer empirical contributions in Latin America (Brain, 2017; Himley, 2011). FPE analyses of LSM effects on livelihoods found, among other things: (1) women's disadvantage in negotiations between mining companies and land tenure-related communal organizations; (2) undermining of women's roles as food and clean water providers due to environmental impacts and/or work overload when they participate in LSM; and (3) gender inequities in wages, working conditions, and career advancement in mining jobs (Lozeva and Marinova, 2010).

In Mexico, one study incorporating feminist analysis of mining is Salazar and Rodríguez's (2015) work on Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Hidalgo examining women's increasing work in mining, political involvement in anti-mining social movements, and deleterious environmental effects on housework. Castro-Ramírez et al. (2015) studied land dispossession due to mining in Zacatecas, Mexico, and found that women had much less power in negotiations with mining companies due to low legal entitlement to land. Belasko (2012, 2014) revealed how women have progressively integrated into LSM with higher workloads, yet had difficulties accessing managerial positions in a sector with significant subcontracting. An in-depth study on women in mining communities in Sonora is the dissertation of Browning-Aiken (2000), which documents the formation of a political front by miners' wives and daughters, to protest insufficient and polluted domestic water caused by Buenavista del Cobre in Cananea, one of the

largest copper mines in the world. Despite this nascent interest on mining in Mexico from a feminist perspective, according to Belasko (2014: 18), “the situation of Mexican women in the mining and metals’ sector is among the most unknown and ignored in the Mexican mining industry.”¹

Our literature analysis agrees with other authors (Brain, 2017; Jenkins, 2014) who found that most studies dealt with single roles or positionalities of women in mining or saw them as a homogeneous group sharing similar incentives, motives, and impacts. Jenkins’ (2014) review of studies in the Global South, in particular, points to the lack of recognition of the different roles women can play in their relationships with mining and how other positionalities, such as socioeconomic status, education, age, and ethnicity, modify mining’s impacts on women. We examine women’s different roles and also how these other positionalities impact their relationship to mining in rural Mexico. We analyzed, from an FPE perspective, women’s diverse experiences with LSM especially related to career and livelihood advancement, gendered workplace politics, and household dynamics in Cucurpe, Sonora.

Research methods

Identification of women’s roles in relation to mining

We analyzed 90 sources on mining, livelihoods, and gender, collected through systematic online database searches in English and Spanish of the terms “rural,” “livelihood,” “women,” “gender,” “mining,” and “extractivism” in titles and abstracts. Materials included peer-reviewed articles, policy reports, books, book chapters, and dissertations. We excluded studies on ASM, aiming to understand lesser-studied feminist issues in LSM. Our purpose was understanding how women’s experiences associated with mining work, and issues regarding intersections of mining and environment in Sonora and Cucurpe, compared to other areas.

Through analysis of literature we identified five distinctive roles of women in relation to mining, each associated with diverse trade-offs and social–ecological contradictions: (1) women miners, or those who work directly in the production process under contracting by the mines; (2) women offering outsourced services and inputs for mining companies; (3) women working in the domestic sphere in households located in the community which may or may not have at least one miner; (4) women working in managerial positions in mining; and (5) women who are politically active as leaders in mining communities. Most literature focuses only on one or two of these roles; this study, however, examined the effects that mining has on women depending on these different positions.

Study site

Cucurpe municipality is less than 140 km south of the United States–Mexico border. In 2015, 965 people lived in 308

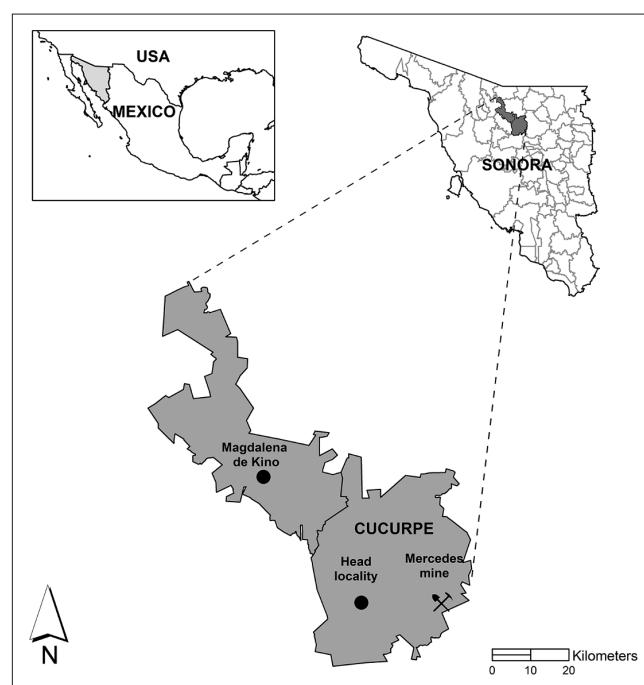


Figure 3. Cucurpe and the Mercedes mine (map credit: Dr. P. A. Reyes-Castro, El Colegio de Sonora. Source of data: INEGI).

households, concentrated mostly in the head locality with the same name (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2015). Livelihoods are primarily agrarian with smaller contributions from mining² and tertiary activities in Magdalena de Kino, population 31,000, less than 50 km from Cucurpe (see Figure 3). Land and water are administered through collective organizations and private ownership, and many households have diversified livelihoods (Lutz-Ley, 2016). Although some land is managed collectively, the greatest effort is focused on individually owned plots; this individualism is mirrored in the current lack of collective action in mining. Indeed, some farming households have part-time or full-time miner members.

The Mercedes Mining District (MMD) where the Mercedes mine is located (approximately 20 km from Cucurpe town) consisted until 2014 of approximately 69,000 hectares covered by 43 mining concession titles. These titles or access permits are valid for 50 years and were purchased from a private individual landowner by the first company (Canadian-based Yamana Gold Inc.) before the mine was acquired by the current owner, US-based Premier Gold Ltd. In 2017, Mercedes produced approximately 2,342 kg of gold and 9,582 kg of silver, representing 4.93% and 2.23%, respectively, of Sonora’s production of these metals (Premier Gold Ltd, 2018; Servicio Geológico Mexicano, 2017). The mine had 715 employees in 2017; 428 (60%) were dependent on the company and 287 (40%) were outsourced. A Cucurpe municipal official indicated that approximately 40–50 people from the town worked directly for the mine in

2018 and 50 were subcontracted; 40 were females performing low-wage chores (i.e., cooking, cleaning).

Semistructured interviews

To obtain empirical data for exploring the diverse roles and their effects, we conducted participant observation in Cucurpe and also recorded and analyzed the content of 14 semistructured interviews of women miners (both directly hired by the mine and outsourced), miners' wives, women in mining managerial positions, and women living in the community without ties to mining. These were conducted between March and November 2018 with follow-up and new interviews in 2019. We draw on the case of several women and excerpts from interviews with two mining representatives and two local leaders, all identified by snowball techniques from previous fieldwork. Interactions with the community have occurred since 2014 due to another project on livelihood adaptation that also informed this study. Lutz-Ley engaged in participant observation of activities of the newly constituted Sonoran chapter of the UK-based nonprofit *Women in Mining* (WIM).³

This study obtained most of the empirical evidence for roles 1–4 through semistructured interviews. Women activists represent a role of utmost importance because of the ecological citizenry implications and empowerment capacities these activities embody in rural and indigenous women (Binoy, 2017). This study was conducted when there was no concrete conflict in town (e.g., environmental effects were not reported at the time of the study), and we did not identify cases of women acting as sociopolitical leaders in confrontations with the mine. Our interviewees were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Results: positioning women in mining

The narratives of several women illustrate how their different positions translate into both similar and diverging effects on income and professional development, empowerment and autonomy, family and social relations, and environmental and health hazards.

Income and professional development

Lucia (32 years old) operates machinery inside the Mercedes mine (role 1). She is a mother of two young girls and completed secondary school (9 years of schooling). She entered the company 7 years ago to perform cleaning chores; however, the company offered her technical training for mining work.

For Lucia, one important reason to stay in mining is to provide her children with better opportunities. Her salary is higher than any other she could obtain considering her education (one sector representative interviewed said average salaries in mining for both men and women are 35% above

regular salaries in the state) and the low availability of paid rural jobs for women. She enjoys several benefits (i.e., full coverage health insurance) but her activities are risky and the journeys long. She rises every day around 3:40 am and the mine's bus departs at 4:40 am from Magdalena, where she and her husband—also a mining machinery operator—sometimes stay. Their 14-year-old lives in Magdalena with a relative so she can attend school, while her 2-year-old girl is cared for by Lucia's mother in Cucurpe. She works from 7 am to 7 pm, returning home around 9 pm. She is in a 6 × 3 shift, working 6 days and 3 days of rest.

Marta (52) (currently, role 4) is an unmarried woman with a master's degree. She has played several roles in mining, working directly for companies and indirectly as a subcontracted consultant in her own firm founded in 2007. She is the partner of the director of a major mining association in Sonora, with headquarters in Hermosillo, the capital city. Marta knows mining in its multiple dimensions and states proudly "I love mining," indicating a strong identity with the sector. Currently, she is president of the mining association ladies' club, a charity group composed of wives and partners of the association's male members. She is not completely satisfied with this role, stating that women should also be in decision-making positions. What she feels proudest of is the club's scholarship program for 51 low-income female and male college students from Sonoran mining communities to study mining-related careers.

For Marta and Lucia, mining is full of professional opportunities, and the pay is incredibly high in comparison with other jobs; but "this is not a job for just anyone." It requires significant commitment, time, effort, and courage. The job is carried out in remote places, subject to long journeys, uncomfortable installations, and risky conditions. Marta comments that women in mining usually occupy operational positions, but not the top ones: "... we can't break the glass ceiling even if wearing a miner's helmet." In the mining association she belongs to, 100 out of approximately 600 members are women. Marta encourages them to speak their minds and to take leadership roles, even if the room is "full of old men"; if more women take leadership roles within this association, they may begin to engage in collective action in the future.

For female outsourced employees (role 2), conditions can be equally risky but without the benefits mines provide for direct employees. This puts them in the most vulnerable position with respect to other women miners, especially if they have other socioeconomic characteristics magnifying the effects of these disadvantages, such as having low educational attainment, younger or older age, or being single mothers. This is the case of Laura (27), a single mother who started working 3 years ago as an outsourced safety personnel at Mercedes, and later office cleaning, also outsourced. She did not have as many benefits as directly hired women (i.e., social security, better pay, retirement savings, and health insurance). She stopped

working there when her son started attending school and her mother was not able to take care of him anymore. She currently has her own food stall outside the home she shares with her mother and relayed that she prefers it because she manages her own time. However, given the remoteness of Cucurpe, her chances to grow her business and improve financially are lower than if she was offered a position back in the mine.

For those women who do not work in the mining sector but live in a mining community, livelihood improvements depend on community programs the mine promotes, or benefits women can negotiate. Carmen (50), a librarian and board member of the local land organization (role 3), said that the mine has not hurt livelihoods, but actually helped in creating alternatives for men and women through financial support; for example, a water purification shop, hostels, dinners for mine employees, and other businesses. Other benefits are scholarships for miners' and the local communal landholders' children, support for local sports' teams, and investments in infrastructure (paved roads, improvements in public buildings, lighting, etc.) through a federal tax for physical improvement of mining communities (*Fondo Minero*, or mining fund). Carmen hopes the company does not leave, since, for her, the economic benefits of the mine on women's lives is evident: "they (women in town) look better dressed," "they have their business," and "they do not have to wait for their husbands to give them money." However, these financial impacts are not permanent; interviewees also reported that programs stopped when the mine's ownership changed.

Benefits women can negotiate with the mine usually transpire through formal decision-making structures (i.e., the municipal government, the communal land organization). For example, Carmen is knowledgeable of the support provided by the mine to the local communal land organization because she is a *comunera* (landholder) herself. Women with no access to formal local decision-making structures are less lucky. For example, Sara (44; also role 3), whose family's income is nonsteady and nonagrarian, has not seen changes in her condition because of the mine. Her family is landless, and her two adult sons have applied for a job in the mine without success. Women's participation in decision-making regarding municipal infrastructure remains limited too because of traditional arrangements of local decision-making that privilege men's opinions; therefore, even if women can derive livelihood benefits from the mine, those depend importantly on their personal position and capacity to negotiate.

Empowerment and autonomy

Empowerment and autonomy are two of the biggest achievements women feel mining has given them. Lucia thinks bravery is needed to enter an underground mine.

One of her biggest personal transformations due to mining is her new capacity for decision-making that builds on her prior practical and strong character. Also, the high income is a factor in building women's autonomy from family members.

Karla (39) has a bachelor's degree in ecology and recently founded her own consultancy firm on corporate social responsibility, after holding several positions in mining companies (shifting from role 1 to 2). She confides that her high income was a factor in ending her first marriage; it gave her a certain "empowered attitude" toward her partner as the main breadwinner. Although she works offering outsourced advising services to mines (role 2), in comparison to outsourced miner Laura (also role 2, above), her higher educational level, lack of children, and better socioeconomic endowments allowed her to benefit more professionally and economically from the sector.

In terms of gendered treatment, Lucia expresses that she has never felt like she was mistreated or treated unequally as a mine operator. She believes that opportunities depend on performance, not on who you are. However, Marta, in her managerial experience, states that women are not achieving decision-making positions, and this is because women are limited due to fear, large domestic workloads, and gender role impositions. Marta herself had to demonstrate that she could perform as well as any man in this environment, while defeating prejudice about women's emotional tone or the belief in women's incapacity for hard physical work. She relays: "the worst bullying I have ever received came from other women." She remembers when she got a managerial position, some women said to her face "you slept with the boss." Marta reflects,

There are gender discourses, good intentions, some gender equality policies in a few companies and society...but when the time comes, we (women) are not considered... I think men do not even notice these things. They are used to doing things their way.

Karla also experienced unsupportive and disempowering attitudes from women co-workers. When she started working in mining, traveling to Chile for training was offered to her because of her good performance. Her boss told her to consider it carefully because the other women in the department could be angry that she received this opportunity because, he said, "you are the new one, you do not understand this system yet." She still went, and her female co-workers started gossiping about her relationship to their boss. "This was very difficult to understand and overcome, I cried a lot." She also remembers that she was offered a job in the community relations department of a mine. However, when she was completing paperwork, the manager handed her an agreement promising she wouldn't get pregnant in the next 5 years, otherwise she could lose the job. Karla rejected the position and left the office of the

surprised manager because she “did not want to work with somebody with such a poor attitude.” Other women interviewed (not reported here) and some women informally contacted during WIM Sonora events concurred with this perception about structural gender inequalities in mining. WIM, as a nonprofit, serves currently as a collective action platform for women in higher positions working toward improved visibility, acceptance, and opportunities within mining; it has the potential, however, to broaden its scope to incorporate all mining women’s interests regarding effects on sustainable livelihoods.

Family and social relations

Lucia needs to rely on her family to have her young child cared for while she is working. Also, household chores are distributed between her, her husband, and her mother. When asked how she manages her multiple responsibilities, she laughs: “...I convert myself into an octopus, I ‘extend’ myself.” It is difficult to maintain friendship networks with the long workdays. Free days are dedicated to laundry, cleaning, grocery shopping, and being with family.

Marta also says that “mining is very jealous” of one’s time. She believes not having children helped her advance in her career. Most women who are mothers and miners must deal with family responsibilities, very long journeys, and demanding shifts, unless they receive or hire help. Mine managers also don’t recognize the different workloads and responsibilities assigned to men and women outside the companies that limit women’s capacity to access top positions. These are very hard issues for men with families too. Marta confided that she has seen a lot of miner fathers requesting “gender equality” to see their children, attend school meetings, and take them to the doctor. The mines usually permit this for mothers, not fathers. “Mining is a macho world, and more than that, a very corporatized sector,” she says. This lack of recognition by mining companies of fathers’ roles in parenting and the perpetuation of *machismo* within many rural households continue to place most child-rearing and housework on women’s shoulders.

Karla was also aware of these dynamics. After her first marriage ended, she decided to quit mining and develop consultancy activities while searching for a more stable family life because mining work was time-intensive. Some told her during fieldwork “what are you doing here? Go home and have children! Aren’t you scared that somebody is going to steal your husband from you?” Even as a young girl growing up in Cananea, a mining town, Karla wanted to be a geologist, but her father told her that was a “man’s career.” While mining is a difficult job, it is made even harder for women because of cultural impositions that openly persist in rural communities, and subtly persist in mining companies. In general, to be a successful woman in

mining, as in other economic sectors, support from social networks is vital.

Environmental, social, and health hazards

Both men and women face physical, social, and environmental risks related to mining. Of the women presented here, Lucia was the most exposed to physical risks due to her work in an underground mine. She is conscious that one day she might not emerge from the 1.5-km-deep tunnel. She remembers that the hardest challenges faced underground were a small fire and gas intoxication; both could have been fatal. However, she feels proud because “the same things they (men) do, I do too.” Lucia has good medical insurance that allowed her to receive better gyneco-obstetrician care when her youngest daughter was born, something her female townspeople (role 3) or her female subcontracted colleagues (role 2) do not have.

Marta explains it is difficult to be a woman in a place full of men. Using the same bathroom, wearing male miner clothes, and establishing respectful relationships with male co-workers (especially if drunk) are challenging. Another factor heightening risks is the increasing presence of drug traffickers (*narcos*) in the rural communities. Marta says that you learn to “feel no fear of anything” when you are out there. Karla shares a similar story from when she was working in an exploration project: “...when we [first] arrived and were surrounded by ten boys holding AK-47s... they surely thought: these people have come to invade us, and, on top of that... they are women!” These are both social and potentially bodily (physical) impacts women face in mining. For women not working directly in mining, but living in the community (role 3), the main environmental/health effects are impacts on water and land, and consequently on their livelihoods, and health effects of current and long-term pollution.

For the Mercedes mine, all land was part of a private ranch, therefore all negotiations were between private owners (Premier Gold Ltd, 2018). According to the Cucurpe municipal authority interviewed, the only case in which the mine dealt with the collective land organization was during power line construction; then the mine financially compensated each landholder. Several women also participated as members of the organization. However, far fewer women than men own land here which is similar to elsewhere in Mexico, where slightly fewer than 30% of rural landholders are women (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, Gobierno de Mexico, 2019). This is an obstacle to women’s negotiation with mining companies over access to livelihood resources (Castro-Ramírez et al., 2015; Salazar and Rodríguez, 2015).

There are also social-ecological risks associated with the mine’s presence and uncertainty about the reliability of government monitoring of water quantity and quality.⁴ The municipal representative interviewed did not trust the federal water

Table 1. Summary of roles of women in mining and their related positive (+) or negative (-) effects.

Roles of women	Socioeconomic and livelihood effects	Environmental and health effects
1. Women who work in the mining production process directly dependent on the mining company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonagrarian income (+) • Professional opportunities (+) • Empowerment (+) • Persistent inequalities (-) • Persistent glass ceiling (-) • High social and family costs (-) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better health services and insurance (+) • Higher risks of sickness or sudden death (-) • Lower environmental quality in the workplace and the community (-)
2. Women who work for outsourcing companies in the mining sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonagrarian income (+) • Persistent inequalities (-) • Job insecurity (-) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher risks of sickness or sudden death (-) • Lower environmental quality in the workplace and community (-) • Little or poor social and health insurance services (-)
3. Women who live in a mining community and/or reproduce domestic life in households which may or may not have one member who is a miner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More financial and material resources available (+) • Better educational opportunities (+) • Better infrastructure and public services (+) • Child-rearing overload (-) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on resources for livelihoods and/or domestic reproduction (+/-) • Food/water insecurity (-) • Impacts on environmental quality of the community (-)
4. Women who are in managerial or decision-making positions within the mining sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional opportunities (+) • Empowerment (+) • Persistent inequalities (-) • Persistent glass ceiling (-) • High social and family costs (-) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better health services and insurance (+) • Exposure to long-term stress and burnout (-) • Lower environmental quality in the workplace when working in the mining site (-)
5. Women who are political subjects in conflict/cooperation relationships with mines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss or deterioration of livelihoods and/or property (-) • If in cooperation, improved access to resources for alternative livelihoods and better community infrastructure (+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on physical, mental, emotional, or sexual health (-) • Exposure to environmental hazards (-) • Exposure to increased violence (-) • Exposure to long-term stress and burnout (-) • If in cooperation, improved access to public services, which can include health and care (+)

agency (CONAGUA) surveillance of the Mercedes tailings dam.

Who can guarantee that we won't have the problems the Sonora River had? (referring to a large copper leaching solution spill in the neighboring Sonora River in 2014). We want an official statement that monitoring is happening and everything is in order.

However, he did say that the mine is improving tailing storage. Although we did not interview CONAGUA's officials at the time, previous research points to the lack of personnel and surveillance as major problems (Lutz-Ley, 2016).

Table 1 summarizes the different effects associated with the roles identified. While we could find empirical evidence in Cucurpe for roles 1–4, the fifth one was not possible to find in this community in particular, but it exists in other places of Sonora and Mexico (Browning-Aiken, 2000; Salazar and Rodríguez, 2015). Role 5 is described through evidence from literature review.

Diverse roles, fair trade-offs?

Women's involvement in LSM in Latin America and Mexico is increasing, yet there is little literature on this

topic in the region (notable studies were identified for Australia, Africa, and Asia). Women in mining have been treated as a rather homogeneous group, and most literature focuses on women's participation in ASM. Our study addressed both a geographic and a conceptual gap, identifying through literature review five roles women play in LSM and finding empirical evidence via semistructured interviews for the first four roles in Cucurpe, Sonora, a small village in arid northwest Mexico. Sonora is a major mining region lacking in-depth studies on women in this sector. We also contribute to FPE by analyzing how these roles shaped women's experiences with LSM related to career and livelihood advancement, gendered workplace politics, and household dynamics. In general, we found that the higher wages women earned in a limited agrarian labor market, in part, silenced opposition to the longer-term environmental and livelihood impacts of mining in this community, but these benefits and dangers were not equally distributed within the community and among women.

Women working in regular and outsourced positions in mining (roles 1, 2, and 4), including operational and managerial jobs, are exposed to safety risks in their work, lack adequate facilities and clothing in remote exploration areas, and must also contend with new dangers like drug

traffickers in rural locations. Women in these positions indicated that mining gives them a strong identity and sometimes empowers them within their households and communities. However, they pay high costs to arrange their family responsibilities around their jobs. Women in outsourced positions, part of neoliberal flexibility policies of globalized mining operations, had less agency and were more vulnerable: they were even less likely to advance within mining than women in regular positions. Recent networks of women miners within the national Mexican mining labor union formed with women in other industries for greater gender equality offer a glimmer of hope for women in Cucurpe (Solidarity Center AFL-CIO, 2017); it remains to be seen if both permanent and temporary women miners could benefit.

Using an FPE analysis, we examined the ways in which these material relationships and experiences were mediated by challenging political environments for women who must stand their ground vis-à-vis mining companies, miner colleagues, and their own household and community members. All women miners interviewed mentioned major impediments to career advancement, because of a macho work culture and lack of recognition of gendered workloads outside the mines. Women are able to exert some pressure on mining companies and the government to use mining revenue to bring scholarships, infrastructure and income-generation projects to their communities, but their influence also depended on their capacity to participate in formal, community decision-making structures, which are characterized by traditional, gender-based inequalities related to decision-making capacity.

For those women who depend more on agrarian livelihoods and do not work directly in the mine (role 3), lack of legal access to resources is a major obstacle to their ability to negotiate with mining companies even though their livelihoods can be compromised. In rural Cucurpe considerable volumes of scarce groundwater are diverted for mining with inadequate water pollution prevention measures developed. Similarly, land concessions are extensive and long-standing, favoring land use for extractive industries, in the hands of companies instead of communities, much less in the hands of women.

Despite the problematic position of mines in rural communities, they play an important role for some women. This is due to low remuneration for agricultural jobs and for crops, paucity of available rural nonagricultural employment for women, and lack of jobs with comparable remuneration to mining. Even women with low educational attainment can earn more. Women hired directly by the mine receive superior benefits than subcontracted workers do. This labor market context makes them less likely to overtly resist the entry and persistence of extractive activities in their community. Some women like Marta and Karla have been able to develop higher-end businesses like consulting firms related to mining, but they were more educated than most women and men and

even said that career advancement was more difficult for women.

Women who endure and are promoted in mining are those who negotiate a more equal distribution of housework and childcare among themselves, spouses, and others. However, they sometimes face resentment and resistance from family and community members for their courage to enlarge the public space they occupy due to their mining jobs and from female mining colleagues for any upward mobility. Inclusion of their voices and FPE analysis shed light on the dynamic interconnections between the social, economic, and environmental impacts of LSM on Sonoran women in their careers, homes and communities, and their agency to shape these spaces.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The authors are grateful for the collaborative research seed grant received in 2017–2018 from the Next Generation Sonoran Desert Researchers (N-Gen) to initiate this research.

Notes

1. Our translation from original in Spanish.
2. Mining has been a historic, although nondominant activity in Cucurpe (Sheridan, T. 1988. *Where the Dove Calls. The Political Ecology of a Peasant Corporate Community in Northwest Mexico*. Tucson: The University of Arizona).
3. See <http://wimmexico.org.mx/> (accessed July 11, 2019).
4. Although we did not find official data for water consumption, Premier Gold's 2018 technical report states that the mine uses 9,000–15,000 m³ of water per month, most of it groundwater extracted from the mine tunnels' perforations. This is a significant volume for a mine in a semiarid region like Cucurpe. The local municipal representative and Carmen (role 3 above) reported no impact so far on the water sources for agriculture in the community.

References

- Akiwumi FA (2011) Transnational mining corporations and sustainable resource-based livelihoods in Sierra Leone. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 32(1): 53–70. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9493.2011.00419.x
- Behzadi NE (2019) Women miners' exclusion and Muslim masculinities in Tajikistan: A feminist political ecology of honor and shame. *Geoforum* 100(2019): 144–152.
- Belasko LA (2012) Corazón de la Tierra. Mujeres en la Minería. *Energía* 12(70): 1–16.
- Belasko LA (2014) Mujeres en la Minería. Frente de Trabajadores de La Energía de Mexico. *Energía* 14(282): 16–28.

- Bell SE and Braun YA (2010) Coal, identity, and the gendering of environmental justice activism in central Appalachia. *Gender & Society* 24(6): 794–813. DOI: 10.1177/0891243210387277
- Binoy P (2017) Darly and her battle with the sand-mining mafia: Tracing a feminist geopolitics of fear in the production of nature. *Human Geography* 10(2): 37–53. DOI: 10.1177/194277861701000203
- Bracamonte Sierra A, Lara Enríquez BE and Borbón Almada MI (1997) El desarrollo de la industria minera sonorense: El retorno a la producción de metales preciosos. *Región y sociedad* 8(13-14): 39–75. DOI: 10.22198/rys.1997.13-14.a1136
- Brain KA (2017) The impacts of mining on livelihoods in the Andes: A critical overview. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 4(2): 410–418. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2017.03.001
- Browning-Aiken A (2000) The transformation of Mexican copper miners: The dynamics of social agency and mineral policy as economic development tools. PhD Thesis, School of Anthropology, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA.
- Buechler S (2015) Climate-water challenges and gendered adaptation strategies in Rayón, a riparian community in Sonora, Mexico. In: Buechler S and Hanson AM (eds) *A political ecology of women, water and global environmental change*. New York: Routledge, 99–177.
- Buechler S and Hanson AM (eds) (2015) *A Political Ecology of Women, Water and Global Environmental Change*. New York: Routledge.
- Buechler S and Lutz-Ley A (2019) Livelihoods with multiple stressors: Gendered youth decision-making under global change in rural northwest Mexico. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 21(4): 1–24. DOI: 10.1177/2514848619878603
- Castro-Ramírez A, Zapata Martelo E, Pérez Olvera M and Martínez Corona G (2015) Desposesión, minería Y transformaciones en La vida de la población de Cedros, Zacatecas, México. *OXÍMORA Revista Internacional de Ética y Política* 7: 276–299.
- Grobmann K, Padmanabhan M and Von Braun K (2017) Contested development in Indonesia: Rethinking ethnicity and gender in mining. *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies* 10(1): 11–28.
- Hilson G, Hilson A, Maconachie R, McQuilken J and Goumandakoye H (2017) Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in sub-Saharan Africa: Re-conceptualizing formalization and ‘illegal’ activity. *Geoforum* 83(2017): 80–90. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.05.004
- Himley M (2011) El género y la edad frente a las reconfiguraciones de los medios de subsistencia originados por la minería en el Perú. *Apuntes: Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 38(68): 7–35. DOI: 10.21678/apuntes.68.618
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (2015) México en cifras- Sonora- Cucurpe, 2015. Available at: <https://www.inegi.org.mx/app/areasgeograficas/?ag=26#> (accessed 5 May 2019).
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (2016) *Censos Económicos 2014. Sonora*. Aguascalientes, Mexico: INEGI.
- Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres, Gobierno de Mexico (2019) Las mujeres rurales producen más del 50% de la producción de alimentos en México. Blog. 15 October. Available at: <https://www.gob.mx/inmujeres/articulos/las-mujeres-rurales-agentes-clave-para-el-desarrollo-sostenible> (accessed 20 December 2019).
- Jenkins K (2014) Women, mining and development: An emerging research agenda. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 1(2): 329–339. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2014.08.004
- Kaggwa M (2019) Interventions to promote gender equality in the mining sector of South Africa. *The Extractive Industries and Society*. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2019.03.015
- Kotsadam A and Tolonen A (2016) African mining, gender, and local employment. *World Development* 83(2016): 325–339. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.01.007
- Lahiri-Dutt K (ed) (2011) *Gendering the Field: Towards Sustainable Livelihoods for Mining Communities*. ANU E-Press.
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2015a) The feminisation of mining. *Geography Compass* 9(9): 523–541. DOI: 10.1111/gec3.12229
- Lahiri-Dutt K (2015b) Understanding water access in mining areas. In: Buechler S and Hanson AM (eds) *A political ecology of women, water and global environmental change*. New York: Routledge, 38–57.
- Lozeva S and Marinova D (2010) Negotiating gender: Experience from Western Australian mining industry. *Journal of Economic and Social Policy* 13(2): Article 7.
- Lutz-Ley AN (2016) Human adaptation to social and environmental change in rural communities of the San Miguel Watershed in arid northwest Mexico. PhD Thesis, Arid Lands Resource Sciences, University of Arizona, Tucson, USA.
- Mayes R and Pini B (2014) The Australian mining industry and the ideal mining woman: Mobilizing a public business case for gender equality. *Journal of Industrial Relations* 56(4): 527–546. DOI: 10.1177/0022185613514206
- Mercier L and Gier J (2007) Reconsidering women and gender in mining. *History Compass* 5(3): 995–1001. DOI: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2007.00398.x
- Mukherjee S (2014) Mining and women: The case of the Maria of Chhattisgarh. *Social Change* 44(2): 229–247. DOI: 10.1177/0049085714525500
- O’Faircheallaigh C and Corbett T (2016) Understanding and improving policy and regulatory responses to artisanal and small scale mining. *The Extractive Industries and Society* 3(4): 961–971. DOI: 10.1016/j.exis.2016.11.002
- Premier Gold Ltd (2018) *Technical Report on the Mercedes Gold-Silver Mine, Sonora State, Mexico. NI 43-101 Report*. Premier Gold Ltd.
- Rocheleau D, Thomas-Slayter B and Wangari E (1996) *Feminist political ecology: Global issues and local experience*. New York: Routledge.
- Salazar H and Rodríguez M (2015) *Miradas en el territorio. Cómo hombres y mujeres enfrentan la minería*. Heinrich Böll Stiftung-México, Centroamérica y El Caribe: Mexico.
- Servicio Geológico Mexicano (2017) *Panorama Minero del Estado de Sonora*. SGM: Diciembre 2017. Mexico.

- Solidarity Center AFL-CIO (2017) Breaking Ground: Mexico's Miners Push for Workers' Rights. Available at: <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/photostory/breaking-ground-mexicos-miners-push-worker-rights/> (accessed 28 December 2019).
- Tetreault D (2016) Free-market mining in Mexico. *Critical Sociology* 42(4-5): 643–659. DOI: 10.1177/0896920514540188
- Viteri CN (2017) *Territoriality, Narratives and Violence: Stories of Eight Women Living in the Presence of a Large-Scale Mine in Ecuador. Master's Thesis 153, International Development, Community and Environment (IDCE) Program.* Worcester, USA: Clark University.

Author Biographies

América Lutz-Ley, PhD, is a professor researcher at the Center of Studies on Development, at El Colegio de Sonora, in Mexico. She holds a PhD in arid lands resource sciences from the University of Arizona (2012-2016), an MA degree in social sciences with focus in public affairs from El Colegio de Sonora (2008-2010), and a BA degree in psychology from the Universidad de Sonora (2002-2007). Her award-winning research for her master program focused on the role and features of organized civil society (NGOs) networks around environmental issues in Mexico. Later, this focus broadened to consider the social and institutional factors contributing to global change adaptation in northwest Mexico-Southwest US in critical aspects of human development, such as water security, rural sustainable livelihoods, gendered

environmental impacts of change, adaptation policies, and local development and adaptation strategies. Since August 2017, she works at El Colegio de Sonora, where she teaches a graduate course on sustainability and development. América is also member of the National Researchers System in Mexico (level: Candidate).

Stephanie Buechler, PhD, is an associate research scientist in environmental policy and an associate research professor at the Udall Center; and an associate research professor in the School of Geography and Development at the University of Arizona. Buechler holds a PhD in sociology from Binghamton University (2001), an MA in public affairs from Cornell University (1992), and a BA in political science from Haverford College (1989). Her research focusses on gendered natural resource use under changing environmental conditions in rural, peri-urban and urban settings; gender, agriculture and renewable energy projects and gender and mining. She has conducted research in Guanajuato, Zacatecas and Sonora, Mexico; Tucson, Arizona and upstate New York, USA; Hyderabad and Uttarakhand, India; and Tegucigalpa, Honduras and will soon embark on research on gendered livelihoods and environmental displacement due to climate change in Argentina. She is also affiliated with the Institute for the Environment; Gender and Women's Studies; and Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, USA.

The divided city and the grassroots: the (un)making of ethnic divisions in Mostar

Human Geography
 2020, Vol. 13(1) 85–87
 © The Author(s) 2020
 Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Giulia Carabelli. (2018). *The Divided City and the Grassroots: The (Un)Making of Ethnic Divisions in Mostar*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan. XV, 191.

Reviewed by: Sunčana Laketa, University of Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel, Switzerland
 DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910921

Many metropolitan areas are affected by rising nationalism; raging ethnic, racial, and religious tensions; socio-political polarization; and inequality. The fragmenting effects of conflicts and violence in cities are taking various forms in different contexts, sometimes morphing into extreme cases of urban polarization known as “divided cities”. While the concept of divided cities is useful in understanding starkly fragmented urban areas, the notion of division in such places has often been rendered in top-down, static, and fixed terms. Giulia Carabelli foregrounds this critique in her new book *The Divided City and the Grassroots: The (Un)Making of Ethnic Divisions in Mostar*. For Carabelli the scholarship on divided cities has predominantly focused on legal frameworks and institutional infrastructures in ways that naturalize and fetishize the violence of division, ultimately failing to take account of the complexities and inconsistencies of daily life in those places. In other words, the very label of a divided city enacts a structuring effect that elides the possibilities of envisioning the city differently. Division for Carabelli is a dynamic process that is far from settled. The book, thus, brings attention to the domain of grassroots organizing in divided cities in order to portray a different picture of urban division, one that tries to expose the internal contradictions and struggles in such cities. Using the analytical framework of Lefebvre’s spatial triad, Carabelli takes us to the city of Mostar in southern Bosnia and Herzegovina—a city that is often rendered as a divided city in both popular and academic discourse (e.g., Calame and Charlesworth, 2009).

The book investigates both unplanned and planned moments of disruption of dominant notions of division, to question what the politics of subversion and transformation looks like in places depicted as a failure of democracy (as suggested by, e.g., Bollens, 2007). The book attempts to expand the realm of what is possible in the divided city and to allow more spaces for ambiguity and social relations that

are “other-than-divided” (11). In addressing the dynamic spatiality of the divided city, Carabelli raises important discussions around several pertinent issues: the subtleties of the affective dimensions of everyday urban life, the discourses and practices of international elites embedded in the colonial project of Europe’s civilizing mission in the Balkans, the problematics of the neoliberal approach to peacebuilding, the devastating and ultimately disempowering effect of the marketization of the grassroots organizing in the post-conflict city, as well as associated critiques of the market economy and neoliberal capitalism.

Ethnic and/or national identity politics have been the main organizing principle of political life in much of the post-conflict Yugoslav region. The spatial underpinning of this ideology manifests in the desire to create homogenous territories, ones that belong to a single community—in other words, ethnically “clean” territories. In cities, this struggle over territorial control has been the driving force of much of restructuring of urban built environment. As a result, many cities across the region, from Mitrovica to Sarajevo, emerged as divided cities. Mostar is a particularly poignant example of this territorial struggle to fragment the city along ethno-national and religious lines—between its Croatian/Catholic and Bosniak/Muslim communities. In order to disturb the framing of division as “an immutable reality” (9) in Mostar, Carabelli develops a processual understanding of the divided city. In other words, she conceptualizes division as a process that is never settled and fixed, but rather grounded in the dynamic and unfolding production of space. In order to do so, and following Henri Lefebvre’s theorizing on the social production of space, Carabelli identifies three main groups of actors in the city: European powers, ethno-national elites, and everyday citizens. Throughout the book she addresses how each group of actors engages with the conceived, perceived, and lived spaces of the city.

The first chapter describes the destruction and reconstruction of the city during and following the war. This chapter introduces the critique of the colonial imaginaries and discourses of international elites involved in the peacebuilding and political reunification processes in Mostar. Mostar is represented as a difficult city, as always lacking in progress toward European ideal of multiculturalism, and ultimately as a place of hopelessness and failure to properly enact the “European” vision of unity. Carabelli

analyses the implication of these discourses on spatial planning and reconstruction of the city through the images of the “united” city that are always grounded in the notion of abstract space. She argues these representations of space disempower the very citizens of Mostar, depicting them as victims of ethno-national order of things, in ways that rarely allow citizens their own voices or attend to citizens’ own views on the possibility of living together. This exclusion of the public is a process that is evident in representations of space by both external actors and domestic ethno-national elites. Therefore, the chapter proceeds to highlight the interplay between both groups of actors as they reproduce dominant ideas of unity and division in the city.

The following chapter focuses on everyday life in Mostar, in order to subvert the hierarchical vision that depicts citizens as victims or as merely passive consumers of the divided/united city. Here, Carabelli analyses meeting places in the city as examples of spatial practices before and after the war. Indeed, the before and after maps of socialization practices illustrate the way division permeates everyday life and affects practices of inhabiting the city following the war. The routinized rhythms of the lived space in many ways reproduce the discursive and the phenomenological experience of inhabiting two parallel cities. Here lies one of the greatest difficulties in understanding processes of political transformation in the divided city: How to account for political agency in a place of stark division, a place where seemingly “nothing ever changes”? This is also one of the most important contributions of the book, as Carabelli does not simply dismiss urban polarization as something that has been imposed on the citizens of Mostar “from above”, as is often seen in liberal academic celebrations of resistance and progressive change. Rather, the book is relevant precisely as it shows the difficulties of on-the-ground struggles for “surviving Mostar” and attempting to live a “normal” life in the face of the political crisis. Carabelli here turn to the emotional and the affective register of life in Mostar in order to “imagine and account for political agency when resistance is understood through spontaneous (rather than politically planned) acts of subversion” (109).

In one of the most interesting subchapters of the book, Carabelli engages with Berlant (2011) notions of “flat affect” and “lateral agency” to argue for the importance of being “still” as a form of political agency rather than a lack thereof. She highlights humor and sarcasm that permeate social space in Mostar as practices that subtly subvert the normalized accounts of division. The emotions of flatness, immobility, and detachment that form the affective life in Mostar become examples of political agency of surviving in a starkly polarized post-conflict environment. This account is important as it reframes dominant (“western”) understanding of the political by putting forth the importance of “the (political) projects that aim for survival in the divided city without being affected by it” (111).

The final chapter attends to more planned, rather than spontaneous, moments of political transformation. Here, the focus is on the work of Abart, an art collective that aimed to actively re-appropriate the notion of the divided city. Through engaging with the cultural projects, performances, and other artworks staged under the Abart platform, the chapter addressed the potential of art as a tool of change in cities. Moreover, Carabelli argues, the arts have a potential for mobilizing citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina that usually see official politics as corrupt and generally distant from everyday concerns. The artworks produced under Abart also further the argument on the importance of humor, parody, and sarcasm as moments of disturbance and as potential openings for performing the city otherwise (see also Bogojević et al., 2019). The chapter further shows how the art group struggled to acquire funding and remain in operation, despite its wide reaching impacts. Thus, the final chapter brings forth important critiques of neoliberal capitalism, compromised peacebuilding efforts in the city, and the managerial approach to diversity. With Carabelli as one of the collaborators of Abart, we see a first-hand and emotional account of the struggles of grassroots organizing under neoliberal capitalism with constant requirements for “profit-making” and “job creation” in the creative industries. Again, rather than romanticizing the creative efforts of the art collective, the chapter shows on-the-ground struggles of surviving the neoliberal logic with, for Abart, ultimately devastating requirements to compromise one’s vision in order to fit with the bureaucratic funding conditions of different “peacebuilding” and “diversity” initiatives.

The book raises a number of important issues with well-rounded arguments that clearly speak to both expert and general audiences, especially those who are unfamiliar with the work of Lefebvre or the complexities of ethno-national division in former Yugoslavia. I find the book to be an engaging read, to the point of wanting to know more about two topics. First, the book is missing a more in-depth engagement with questions of subjectivity and identity, especially since these are important ideological devices in Mostar, and post-Yugoslav space in general. Moreover, as the questions of ethno-national identity are underdeveloped in Lefebvre’s work, the book stands to make a significant contribution in considering questions of identity as they relate to and co-articulate with the dominance of capital. How is the notion of subjectivity understood within the dominant frame of ethnic nationalism? What is the role of the discursive formulations and embodied socio-spatial practices that form and transform identities? Second, given the emphasis on the critique of neoliberal capitalism, the book is surprisingly silent on the specificities of how the capitalist relations of production take shape in Mostar. What is the role of what Chelcea and Druță (2016) call “zombie socialism” in structuring contemporary connections between capitalism and ethnic nationalism? And, what are the spatial underpinnings of neoliberal capitalism in the divided post-socialist city that work to perpetuate forms of precarity in the European periphery (Horvat and Štiks, 2012)?

To conclude, *The Divided City and the Grassroots* offers much to scholars of Lefebvre as the book extends the importance of ethno-national subject in understanding the capitalist production of space, and to a host of scholars interested in processes of political transformation in starkly polarized urban environments. The book also makes an important contribution to scholarship of post-Yugoslav space and urban geographies of the Balkans, especially as it shows how neo-liberal capitalism and dominant ethno-national ideologies merge together to create increasingly shrinking notions of public space and the possibilities of progressive politics therein.

References

- Berlant L (2011) *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Bogojević A, Pužić A and Žuljević M (2019) False stories from the history of Mostar. *Space and Polity* 23(2): 216–228. DOI: 10.1080/13562576.2019.1635445
- Bollens SA (2007) *Cities, Nationalism and Democratization*. London: Routledge.
- Calame J and Charlesworth E (2009) *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Chelcea L and Druță O (2016) Zombie socialism and the rise of neoliberalism in post-socialist central and eastern Europe. *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 57(4-5): 521–544. DOI: 10.1080/15387216.2016.1266273
- Horvat S and Štiks I (2012) Welcome to the desert of transition!: Post-Socialism, the European Union, and a new left in the Balkans. *Monthly Review* 63(10): 38–48. DOI: 10.14452/MR-063-10-2012-03_4



Brave New Worlds: on Gramsci, genetics, and historical geography

Human Geography
2020, Vol. 13(1) 88–90
© The Author(s) 2020
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Óscar García, Agustín, & Martin Bak, Jørgensen. (2016). *Solidarity Without Borders: Gramscian Perspectives on Migration and Civil Society Alliances*. London: Pluto Press. 240 pp. £12.99, 9780745336312.

Nash,, Catherine. (2015). *Genetic Geographies: The Trouble with Ancestry*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. vii-238. £16.51, 9780816690732.

Reviewed by: Charles Travis, Trinity College Dublin and University of Texas, Arlington, TX, USA
DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910923

To paraphrase Malcolm X, the chickens of “identity politics” cossetting academic, governmental, and popular discourse over the past quarter century have come home to roost. This is ironic, as the aim of such a political project was to douse cultural and ethnic brushfires erupting within the Anglo-American and European cultural bubble. The mass immigration to the “liberal” West by people who don’t share the same skin pigmentation or religious ideology as the citizens of their host countries precipitated the political explosion of 21st century ethnonationalist populist bombs. Hitler’s 1923 Munich Beer Hall Putsch will soon mark its centennial, and to borrow a phrase from the Irish poet W.B. Yeats, the beasts of Brexit, Trumpism, and Putinism are slouching toward their new, respective Jerusalems.

Driven by political conflict, economic blight, climate change, and other maladies, the new “huddled masses” are finding their host societies not as advertised. What they might have considered the high culture of the European enlightenment is but a mirage. It is within this context that two recent works provide some conjecture and consideration of issues related to the historical geographies of our “Brave New World” in the 21st century: Agustín and Jørgensen’s *Solidarity Without Borders* and Nash’s *Genetic Geographies*.

The origins of Agustín and Jørgensen’s work, *Solidarity Without Borders: Gramscian Perspectives on Migration and Civil Society Alliances*, began in 2013 when the Arab Spring and popular mobilizations in Greece and Spain stood up to European Union austerity politics. These events, coupled with war in Syria and political and climatic conditions in North Africa, created a geographical dynamic in which masses were traveling to the European continent, as the economies of those countries were contracting. It is no

surprise that conditions were ripe for xenophobia and political turbulence.

Host countries (particularly in central and eastern Europe) are creating obstacles and borders quicker than even President Trump can tweet (and bleat about his shambolic wall and travel ban restrictions). Additionally, migrants discover that previously arrived fellow travelers (some by days, months, years, even generations, and from different geographical and ethnic origins) are as unwelcoming as natives of EU host countries who perceive that their *lebensraum* may be shrinking and identities diluting. Subsequently, Agustín and Jørgensen’s work discusses the salience of Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci’s thought, as a means to build social solidarity between members of European civil society and various migrant groups. Their project confronts the new populist nationalisms, emerging across the face of the European Union, that are fomenting anti-immigration sentiments and policies.

The work is divided into four parts, bookended by an introduction and a conclusion. Part I *The Heterogeneity of Political Actors*, draws on Gramsci’s argument that alliances between gradations in class are necessary to overcome state and corporate hegemony. Part II *Solidarity and Alliances* argues that civil solidarity campaigns need to embrace and transcend identities and particularities to transform alliances and connect struggles on local, national, and supranational scales in Europe. Chapter 6 *Gramsci, Migrants and Trade Unions: An Irish Case Study*, by Mary Hyland and Ronaldo Munck, puts forth the case that trade union campaigns in Ireland to embrace migrant workers (from Africa, Poland, Brazil, Lithuania, and Russia) may have inhibited the formation of xenophobic political parties like those mushrooming in other European countries (*Golden Dawn* in Greece, *Freedom Party* in Austria, *the UK Independence Party*, *Alternative for Germany*). Their chapter exploring how unions in Ireland navigated the issue of migration without falling into the pitfalls of sectarianism segues well into Part III *Avoiding Misplaced Alliances*. Chapters in this section explore how rifts between different immigrant groups and native workers are created by partisan political interests through the cynical use of propaganda.

In Chapter 8 *Hegemony, Migration and Misplaced Alliances: Lessons from Gramsci*, Peter Mayo argues that

divisions between native workers and immigrants were fomented during Greece's financial crisis with the EU, with the latter being portrayed as nonproductive job stealers. Migrants from across the Mediterranean were painted as enemies of Greek workers, creating misplaced alliances with nationalist and right fringe political parties. The book's final section Part IV *Space of Resistance* features case studies of urban movements in Sweden and refugees struggles for rights in Hamburg, Germany. The subtext of this edited volume seems to be underscored by Gramsci's essay *Some Aspects of the Southern Question* (1926) in which he teases out difference between the working class in the northern industrial cities of Italy and agricultural workers in the southern leg of the boot-shaped peninsula. Both, Gramsci notes, were exploited by the middle-class bourgeoisie and called for an alliance between the Northern factory workers and Southern farmers to create a historic alliance to challenge the hegemonic order of the *pezzonovante* class of the Church and State.

Gramsci's analysis of an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is predicated on the fact that workers have access to the means of production (i.e., their labor) and will unite to control the political and economic agency of these means. Aside from German Prime Minister Angela Merkel's open-arm policy (a rallying cry for ethnonationalist parties), refugee migrants in west, mid, and southern Europe have been allowed to drown on Turkish beaches or create shanty-towns like in the French port of Calais (now razed) as a beach-head for a cross-channel leap to Britain (a ship of state departing the EU fleet), or placed in camps or asylum centers and refused work permits, ostensibly to control their means of production, within the uncertain economic and political landscapes of Brexit Europe.

Meanwhile, in the "Free World," the marketing strategies of pop-genomic science celebrate the diversity of our ethnic landscapes while its customer's political landscapes roil from populist tactics that foment cultural divisions between "natives" and "immigrants." Genomic science under the guises of National Geographic's *Genographic Project* and *FamilyTreeDNA* has now joined the game, offering the public DNA tests to map their ethnic and geographic origins on the "global family tree." Nash's *Genetic Geographies: The Trouble with Ancestry* explores this emerging geographic territory in which colorful spaghetti string mappings of ancestral migration webs (vividly advertised for people in search of "country and kin") are sent to customers for a vial of spittle, and what would constitute a month's salary in certain parts of the world.

Nash's study focuses in part on the pop-culture corporate marketing of genomic science as a type of social engineering, which attempts to ameliorate racists discourses. Chapter 1, *Genome Geographies: The Making of Ancestry and Origins*, makes that case that genetic affinities and geographical spaces have been similarly constructed and contain problematic blind spots in assumptions of racial neutrality. Chapter 2, *Mapping*

the Global Human Family: Shared and Distinctive Descent, takes to task the *Genographic Project*'s use of cultural categories, as the basis of its sampling strategy. Nash argues effectively that traditional cartographic modes employed in colonial and imperial ventures are employed in the project to represent "culturally defined groups as genetic units" (81). In Chapter 3, *Our Genetic Heritage: Figuring Diversity in National Studies*, Nash compares and contrasts multicultural and traditional narratives about ethnic origins in the United Kingdom. In her discussion of *The People of the British Isles*, a project aiming to map the genetic diversity of the archipelago, she notes that the project does so by arbitrarily creating a temporal border at the *fin de siècle* of the 19th century. The citizens of United Kingdom with two generations of grandparents are enumerated and decoded, with other citizens living in the geographical space of Britain, considered, to use an Irish phrase, as "blown-ins" who possess ethnic roots in other places and are not considered part of what Nash terms the "Genetic Nation State" (103).

In Chapter 4, *Finding the "Truths" of Sex in Geographies of Genetic Variation*, Nash considers the social construction of science in terms of ideology, and epistemological conventions which have framed power, kinship, and sex. Genetic studies have posited that male Y-chromosomes haplogroups (a genetic population sharing a common ancestor) have produced fanciful ideas about the inheritance and transmission of "warrior genes" from super-sexually prolific alpha males (such as Genghis Khan and the fifth century Irish King Niall of the Nine Hostages). However, Nash notes that the identification and geographical analysis of distinct, female mtDNA and particular Y-chromosome haplogroups over the past decade have produced new cartographies that differentiate human origin and migration by more sophisticated framings of gender, lineage diversion, and place. By recontextualizing human ethnic identity and origin in such a manner, Nash geographically teases out larger issues of difference and belonging, elided in "corporate" DNA services. In doing so, she dissects assumptions underlying the linear narratives of anthropological genetic history. In her own words, Nash's work spatializes the field of genomic science by considering the confluences of

. . . culture, and commerce of human populations genetics geographically by foregrounding the geographical dimensions of the field itself—in terms of its data, methods, and matters of interest—and pursue the nature and implications of the ways in which human relatedness is configured geographically in terms of spatial boundedness, networks, propinquity, distance, extent, stretch, scale and origins. (22)

The prose in this interesting and valuable work tends to run on like the previous indented paragraph. Ideas also seem to be re-rehearsed and elongated at times from chapter to chapter until they are orchestrated in a final crescendo in the book's conclusion. An editorial intervention to break up paragraphs and reduce a sense of redundancy in the narrative

flow of ideas in subsequent chapters would have tightened the structure of Nash's book. However, wading through a few word-thickets to get to the hidden gardens of insight that constellate the body of Nash's work will be worthwhile to the reader interested in cutting-edge intersections between the practices of historical geography and the decoding hermeneutics of genetics.

In conclusion, Agustín and Jørgensen's *Solidarity Without Borders* and Nash's *Genetic Geographies*, though distinct in scope and scale, offer critical and radical geographic commentaries, eerily complementing Michael Winterbottom's *Code 46* (2003) (a dystopic science fiction film set in the near future, informed by current trends in migration and

biotechnology) and Aldous Huxley's classic *Brave New World* (1932). Focusing Gramscian lenses on relations between European host countries and migrants, Agustín and Jørgensen's collection teases out navigations of nationalized and racialized landscapes, and contestations of institutional settings and spaces of class where systematic injustices against migrants and refugees are perpetuated. In turn, Nash's interrogation of genetic genealogy illustrates that despite efforts to market its biotechnology products as vehicles to promote a shared human ancestry and intertwined histories, its practices carry implications for reinforcing subtle, but divisive ideological framings of race, ethnicity, and gender in the popular imagination.



Don't cry for me, Latin America

William I. Robinson¹

Human Geography
2020, Vol. 13(1) 91–94
© The Author(s) 2020
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910941
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Abstract

The upsurge of mass struggles in Latin America comes at a time when the party-based Left has lost hegemony. The far-Right is seeking a restoration of neoliberalism as part of a militarized expansion of transnational corporate plunder. Spaces that until recently exercised a modicum of autonomy, such as indigenous highlands in Guatemala and Peru, areas of the Amazon, and Colombia's Pacific coast, are being violently cracked open and their abundant natural resources and labor supply made available to transnational capital. There is a disjunction throughout Latin America between mass social movements that are resurgent and the institutional Left that has lost its ability to mediate between the masses and the state with a viable project of its own. The most likely scenario is a momentary stalemate as storm clouds gather.

Keywords

Latin America, Pink Tide, Global Capitalism, Neoliberalism, Crisis

The mass popular struggles sweeping Latin America against a resurgent neoliberalism and far-right aggression present the global Left with a peculiar paradox: they come at a time when the institutional and party-based Left has lost the hegemony it had previously conquered and is now all but in tatters. Any attempt at explaining this paradox must start by placing the current moment of popular rebellion within the larger backdrop of the political dynamics of global capitalist expansion and crisis in the region in recent years.

Global capitalism is at this time facing an organic crisis that is as much structural as it is political (Robinson, 2014). Structurally, the system faces a crisis of overaccumulation and has turned to a new round of violent and often militarized expansion around the world in search of fresh opportunities to unload surplus accumulated capital and stave off stagnation. Politically, the system faces a breakdown of capitalist hegemony and crises of state legitimacy. As popular discontent has spread, the dominant groups have turned to ever more coercive and repressive forms of rule around the world, both to contain this discontent and to force open up new opportunities for accumulation through an intensification of neoliberalism.

Nowhere is this dual crisis more manifest than in Latin America. The November 2019 coup d'état in Bolivia and the tenacious resistance to a fascist takeover; the early October 2019 uprising against neoliberal restoration in Ecuador; the sustained rebellions throughout 2019 and into 2020 in Haiti, Chile (the latter the very cradle of neoliberalism), and Colombia; the return to power of the Peronists in Argentina in late 2019 followed just weeks later by the electoral ouster

of the leftist Broad Front in Uruguay; among other recent developments, all point to a season of great flux and uncertainty that is upon the region. But these current upheavals must be placed within the broader political dynamics of capitalist globalization.

A pink tide post mortem?

As Latin America became swept up into capitalist globalization from the 1980s and on, it experienced a vast transformation of its political economy and social structure (Robinson, 2008). Only after the dominant classes managed to beat back the revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s, a new breed of transnationally oriented elites and capitalists led the region into the global age of hothouse accumulation, financial speculation, credit ratings, the internet, gated communities, ubiquitous fast-food chains, and malls and superstores that dominate local markets in emerging megacities. These transnational elites and capitalists forged a neoliberal hegemony in the 1990s and undertook sweeping privatization, liberalization, deregulation, and austerity. Yet capitalist globalization aggravated poverty and inequality, displaced tens of millions from the popular classes, produced mass

¹University of California at Santa Barbara, USA

Corresponding Author:

William I. Robinson, University of California at Santa Barbara, CA 93106, USA.
Email: w.i.robinson1@gmail.com

under- and unemployment, and triggered a wave of transnational migration and new rounds of mass mobilization among those who stayed behind.

The leftist or Pink Tide governments swept to power in elections early in the new century on the heels of mass rebellions against this juggernaut of capitalist globalization. The turn to the Left in Latin America raised great expectations and inspired popular struggles around the world. Hugo Chavez's call for a 21st-century socialism sparked hopes that the region could point the way toward an alternative to global capitalism. The Pink Tide governments challenged and even reversed the most glaring components of the neoliberal program, redistributed wealth downward, and dramatically reduced poverty and deprivation. Yet the structural power of transnational capital, and especially of global financial markets, over the effort by states and social movements to undertake transformations is enormous and pushed the Pink Tide states to accommodate these markets. Leftist rhetoric aside, the Pink Tide governments based their strategy on a vast expansion of raw material production in partnership with foreign and local contingents of the transnational capitalist class (for such a critique, see, *inter alia*, Robinson, 2008; Webber, 2017; Gonzalez, 2018).

With the exception of Venezuela during the height of the Bolivarian revolution, what stood out was the absence of any shift in basic property and class relations despite changes in political blocs, a discourse in favor of the popular classes, and an expansion of social welfare programs financed by taxing corporate extractive industries. The spread of transnational corporate mining and agroindustry brought about a greater concentration of land and capital and heightened the structural power of global markets over leftist states. As a result, the Pink Tide countries became ever more integrated into the transnational circuits of global capitalism and dependent on global commodity and capital markets.

The popular masses were clamoring for more substantial transformations. The turn to the left did open up space for these masses to push forward their struggles. Yet states often suppressed demands from below for deeper transformation in their drive to attract transnational corporate investment and expand extractivist accumulation. These states demobilized social movements, absorbing their leaders into the government and the capitalist state, and subordinated their mass bases to the left parties' electoralism. Because there were no more substantial structural transformations that could address the root causes of poverty and inequality, social programs were subject to the vagaries of global markets over which the Pink Tide states exercised no control.

Once the 2008 world financial crisis hit, they came up against the limits of redistributive reform within the logic of global capitalism. The extreme dependence of Pink Tide countries on raw materials exports threw them into economic turmoil when, starting in 2012, global commodities markets collapsed. These countries experienced extraordinarily high growth rates so long as the global economy was expanding

and commodities prices remained high as a result of China's voracious appetite for the region's raw materials exports. The downturn undermined governments' abilities to sustain social programs, leading them to negotiate concessions and austerity with financial elites and international agencies, such as happened in Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and elsewhere. The resulting political tensions helped fuel popular protest and open up space for a right-wing resurgence. While Pink Tide countries cannot be painted with one broad brushstroke, these are essential elements of a background analysis to the recent coup in Bolivia, the ouster of the Workers Party in Brazil, and other Pink Tide reversals.

The return of the right

The traditional ruling classes were forced early on in the Pink Tide process to arrive at a modus vivendi with leftist governments given the balance of social and class forces. But just as soon as economic crisis and political turmoil opened up space for the Right's maneuvering, it moved onto the offensive, often violently, in an attempt to recover direct political power. The constitutional and extra-constitutional turn to the right started with the 2009 coup d'état in Honduras. This was followed by the "soft coup" in 2012 against leftist President Fernando Lugo in Paraguay; the electoral ouster in 2015 of the Peronists in Argentina; the "parliamentary coup" in Brazil in 2016 against the governing Workers Party; the return of the Right in Chile in 2017 with the election of President Sebastián Piñera and his *Chile Vamos* coalition; the election in Colombia in 2018 of the far-Right President Iván Duque, who is but the titular face of the fascist *Uribista* project; and the electoral defeat in early 2019 of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador (the election of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and his *Morena* party in Mexico is the exception to the right turn).

This sharp turn to the right has involved an escalation of repression throughout the region and a mobilization of far-right parties and business groups, culminating most recently in the October 2019 coup d'état in Bolivia, as the region seems once again to be settling into authoritarian regimes (see *inter-alia* Robinson, 2019). Latin America is becoming a cauldron of state and private violence fused together for the purpose of repressing the popular revolt and opening up the continent to further corporate plunder. Central to this far-Right turn has been a racist, authoritarian, and militaristic retrenchment to consolidate and expand transnational corporate power. In this regard, the region holds up a mirror to where the rest of the world is headed; it is emblematic of the global police state (Robinson, 2020) yet also of a rising tide of resistance from below.

But the writing was already on the wall before the Right recovered direct political power. Latin American militaries have rapidly expanded in recent years in lockstep with a new round of transnational corporate and financial expansion in

the region. Spaces that until recently exercised a modicum of autonomy, such as indigenous highlands in Guatemala and Peru, areas of the Amazon, and Colombia's Pacific coast, are being violently cracked open and their abundant natural resources and labor supply made available to transnational capital.

According to a 2018 report by the Inter-American Dialogue based in Washington, DC, "Security for Sale" (Kinosian and Bosworth, 2018), in 2017 over 16,000 private military and security companies in Latin America employed some 2.4 million people and often collaborated with state forces in repressing social movements. The lines between current and retired military and police personnel and these private companies are blurred, involving "an interwoven network of current military, former military, private security, business elites and government officials." The Brazilian, Bolivian, Mexican, and Venezuelan militaries doubled in size in recent years, and Colombia's military quadrupled. The rest of the region's militaries have grown in size by an average of 35% (Kyle and Reiter, 2019).

The Right is now attempting to utilize the direct political power it has recovered to violently roll back the Left's mildly reformist program and to impose a full restoration of neoliberalism as part of this militarized expansion of transnational corporate plunder. It was a new round of neoliberal measures that above all proved the tinder to the recent explosion of mass protest. The April–August 2018 revolt in Nicaragua against the government of President Daniel Ortega was sparked by its decision to impose pension reform. The September–October 2019 uprising of indigenous, peasants, and workers in Ecuador came in response to the deal reached by the government of President Lenin Moreno with the IMF to end fuel subsidies. The rebellion in Chile against the whole neoliberal edifice was initially triggered by the government's decision to raise public transportation fares. In Argentina, it was the neoliberal assault launched by the government of Mauricio Macri during the course of his tenure (2015–2019) that led to its ouster in the polls in October 2019. And in Colombia the mass protests starting in late 2019 were triggered by the government's promulgation of new austerity measures.

Hegemony in dispute

Structural crises of world capitalism are historically times of sustained social upheaval and transformation, as reflected in Latin America's recent history. Worldwide, the spiraling crisis of hegemony appears to be approaching a general crisis of capitalist rule. This may seem counterintuitive since the transnational capitalist class and its agents have been on the offensive against the popular classes everywhere. Yet the aggressive resurgence of the Right in Latin America and around the world (e.g., in India under Modi) is a response to the crisis that rests on shaky foundations.

At the structural level, crisis refers precisely to the existence of obstacles to the ongoing accumulation of capital, and therefore to the tendency toward stagnation and declining profits. Given unprecedented levels of inequality worldwide, the global market cannot absorb the rising output of the global economy, which is reaching limits to further expansion. Continued growth in recent years has been based on unsustainable debt-driven consumption, wild speculation in the global casino that has inflated one financial bubble after another, and state-driven militarization, or what I term *militarized accumulation*, as the world enters a global war economy and international tensions escalate.

While the global economy teeters on the brink of recession, Latin America's economy had already sunk into recession in 2015 (United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2018, see in particular figure 1.1, 28) and has remained largely stagnant to date (even in Bolivia, which registered the highest sustained growth rates during the expansion, these rates began to contract in recent years, forcing the government to draw down reserves). The transnational capitalist class and its local contingents are attempting to restore profitability by placing the burden of the crisis on the popular classes through renewed neoliberal austerity. But the Right is unlikely to succeed. As 2019 came to a close, Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro's poll numbers were in free fall, the neoliberal Mauricio Macri was ousted at the polls in Argentina, and the governments of Ecuador, Chile, and Colombia were forced to backpedal on austerity measures.

The Right's inability to stabilize its project comes at a time when the institutional and party Left has lost much of the power and influence it had won. Hence there appears a chasm between civil and political society. There has emerged an evident disjuncture throughout Latin America—*symptomatic of a worldwide phenomenon on the Left*—between mass social movements that are at this time resurgent and the institutional and party Left that has lost its ability to mediate between the masses and the state with a viable project of its own. The most likely scenario is a momentary stalemate as storm clouds gather.

If now is surely the time for solidarity with the masses of Latin America struggling against the far-right takeover, it should also be a moment to reflect on the lessons from this very important world region for the global Left. The Pink Tide, we must recall, came to power not by smashing the capitalist state but by constitutional means and electoral processes through which they assumed the administration of capitalist states. Smashing the capitalist state was simply not on the table. It is not enough to recall Marx's exhortation that the working classes cannot take ready hold of the capitalist state and use it for their purposes. Given the violent return of the far-Right, we may be tempted to consider it a moot point as to whether the Pink Tide governments could have done more to bring about structural transformation even if there was no possibility of breaking with world capitalism.

But the lessons here for the global Left are critical. The matter is one of the ability of autonomous mass social movements from below to force states to undertake such transformations. This in turn involves rethinking the triangular relations among states, Left parties, and mass social movements. The Left's model for governance based on absorbing social movements and subordinating the popular agenda to electoralism and to the exigencies of capitalist stability leads to a dead-end, or worse, back to the Right. It is only mass mobilization from below that can impose a counterweight to the control that transnational capital and the global market exercise from above over capitalist states in Latin America (as in other regions), whether administered by the Left or the Right.

Any renewed leftist project in Latin America, as around the world, will have to deal with the matter of elections and of the capitalist state. We have learned that subordinating the popular agenda to winning elections will only set us up for defeat even if we must participate in electoral processes when possible and expedient, and even if the electoral arena remains a strategic site of struggle. In my view if we are to face the current onslaught of the Right, the Left must urgently renovate a revolutionary project and a plan for refounding the state. We have also learned from recent experience of the leftist party Syriza in Greece and the Pink Tide governments in Latin America, as well as social democratic governments that came to office around the world in the late 20th century, that once a left force wins government office, it is tasked with administering the capitalist state and its crisis. It is thus pushed into defending that state and its dependence on transnational capital for its reproduction, which places it at odds with the same popular classes and social movements that brought it to power.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

- Gonzalez M (2018) *The Ebb of the Pink Tide: The Decline of the Left in Latin America*. London: Pluto Press.
- Kinosian S and Bosworth J (2018) "Security for Sale: challenges and Good Practices in Regulating Private Military and Security Companies in Latin America," Inter-American Dialogue (Washington, D.C.), March. Available at: <https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Security-for-Sale-FINAL-ENGLISH.pdf> (accessed February 1, 2020).
- Kyle BJ and Reiter AG (2019) "A New Dawn for Latin American Militaries," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 3 May, on-line edition. Available at: <https://nacla.org/news/2019/05/06/new-dawn-latin-american-militaries> (accessed February 1, 2020).
- Robinson WI (2008) *Latin America and Global Capitalism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Robinson WI (2014) *Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson WI (2019) "The Second Implosion of Central America," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 28 January, on-line edition. Available at: <https://nacla.org/news/2019/01/28/second-implosion-central-america> (accessed February 1, 2020).
- Robinson WI (2020) *The Global Police State*. London: Pluto Press.
- United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (2018) *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean*. Santiago, Chile: ECLAC, on-line edition. Available at: https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43965/131/S1800836_en.pdf (accessed February 1, 2020).
- Webber J (2017) *The Last Day of Oppression, and the First Day of the Same: The Politics and Economics of the New Latin American Left*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Author Biography

William I. Robinson is professor of Sociology, Global Studies, and Latin American Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara. His latest books are *The Global Police State* (Pluto Press, 2020) and *Into the Tempest* (Haymarket, 2018).

Marx's law of value: a critique of David Harvey

Human Geography
2020, Vol. 13(1) 95–98
© The Author(s) 2020
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/1942778620910942
journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Michael Roberts¹

Abstract

In 2018, Professor David Harvey, the human geographer and the eminent scholar of Marx's works and their modern relevance, wrote a short paper entitled 'Marx's refusal of the labour theory of value'. In this paper, Harvey presents a series of theoretical confusions. The dual nature of value in a commodity is ignored by him. So Marx's theory of crisis (based on insufficient surplus value) is replaced with insufficient use values for workers as consumers. The class struggle becomes not workers versus capitalists, but consumers versus capitalists or taxpayers versus governments. This is confusing to a class analysis and strategy for the working-class struggle.

Keywords

value, Marx, underconsumption, over-accumulation

Professor David Harvey (DH), the human geographer, is probably the most eminent Marxist scholar alive today with a host of books, papers and educational videos to his name on Marxist economic theory.^{1,2} In April 2018, he circulated a short paper expressing succinctly his view of Marx's value theory that he outlined more expansively in his latest book, *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason* (Harvey, 2017). I replied to this paper Roberts (2018).

In the paper, DH argues that Marx did not have a 'labour' theory of value at all (Harvey, 2018a). Instead, Marx argued that value was a *reflection* of labour embodied in a commodity which is only created/revealed in exchange in the market. As DH puts it: 'if there is no market, there is no value'. If this is correct, then it is through the realization of value as expressed in money that value emerges, not in the production process as such.

DH then goes on to argue that if wages are forced down to the minimum or even to nothing, then there will be no market for commodities and thus no value and that this is the 'real root of capitalist crises'. So it follows that a policy for capital to avoid crises would be by 'raising wages to ensure "rational consumption" from the standpoint of capital and colonizing everyday life as a field for consumerism'.

DH points out that this interpretation of value theory 'is far beyond what Ricardo had in mind and equally far away from that conception of value usually attributed to Marx'. I can agree that it certainly is. But is DH right in his interpretation of Marx's value theory and, even if he is, does such interpretation have any empirical validity? I would answer no to both these questions.

DH starts by saying that 'It is widely believed that Marx adapted the labour theory of value from Ricardo as a founding concept for his studies of capital accumulation'. Most Marxist economists are aware of the distinction between Marx's value theory and Ricardo's. But the difference is not what DH says it is, namely, Ricardo had a 'labour theory of value' and Marx did not. The difference is that Ricardo had a theory of (use-) value based on 'concrete labour' (physical amounts of labour) measured in labour time, while Marx's law of value was based on 'abstract labour' (i.e. value measured in labour time when 'socially' tested on the market).

Under capitalism, human labour power itself is a commodity to be sold on the market. Indeed, this is a key characteristic of the capitalist mode of production where the majority has no means of production and must therefore sell their labour power to the owners of the means of production. So, just as with other commodities, labour has a dual character. On the one hand, it is useful labour, that is, expenditure of human labour in a concrete form and for a specific purpose to create use values. On the other hand, it is abstract labour, that is, expenditure of human 'labour power' without specific characteristics, which creates the value of the

¹National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico

Corresponding Author:

Michael Roberts, National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico City, 06320, Mexico.
Email: bobmckee99@yahoo.com

commodity in which it is represented. Marx made the distinction between labour and labour power, a distinction that is crucial for the understanding of the source of profit.

For any given time period, the worker produces more value than the wage equivalent paid by the owner of capital for the use of that labour power. This difference Marx calls ‘unpaid labour’ or surplus value. Marx’s value theory of abstract labour exposes the exploitative nature of the capitalist mode of production, which neither Ricardo’s nor Adam Smith’s labour theory of value does. This was the great advance in Marx’s law of value over classical political economy.

DH mentions just once (and in passing) this vital discovery of Marx (i.e. abstract labour) that distinguishes Marx’s law from the classical labour theory of value. And that is because DH wishes to press on to his interpretation of Marx’s theory as one where value is created/realized only in exchange, and not in the process of production using labour power.

But the value of a commodity is the labour contained in it and expanded during the production process before it gets to market. Value is expended physical and mental human labour, which is then abstracted by the social process of production for the market. Value is not a creature of money – on the contrary. Money is the representation or exchange value of labour expended, not vice versa. I think Marx is clear on this crucial point. He says in Capital Volume One: ‘The value of a commodity is expressed in its price before it enters into circulation, and it is therefore a pre-condition of circulation, not its result’ (Marx, 1977: 260).

In a subsequent reply to this critique, DH denies that he considers value is only created in exchange or circulation (Harvey, 2018b):

Let me be clear. Value is always created in the act of production. But it is realized in the moment of market exchange. I therefore think of value in terms of what Marx calls ‘the contradictory unity of production and realization’. Value cannot be produced through market exchange. But it cannot be realized outside of market exchange. Marx is clear enough about that.

DH goes on:

But – and here this may be my peculiar way of looking at it – I take the value created in production to be only a ‘potential’ value until it is realized. An alternative way would be to say that the value is produced but then the value is lost if there is no demand for it in the market.

In my view, DH is engaging in a degree of sophistry here as this response differs from his initial paper. In contrast, professor Murray Smith, in his book *Invisible Leviathan* (Smith, 2019: 115), provides a concise explanation of the difference between Marx’s law of value and the kind of interpretation

with which DH is associating himself. To try and argue that that value is created

not in production but ‘at the articulation of production and circulation’ [is] a notion replete with circular reasoning and requiring the most robust of mental gymnastics to entertain.... The problem with this approach is that if one accepts that ‘abstract associated labour has no substantial existence apart from the value form, money’, then commodity values appear to be severed entirely from any determination in the conditions of their production, and the way is paved for an effective *identification* of value and price.

There is a reason behind DH’s interpretation. If value is created only at the moment of exchange for money and ‘money rules’, then it will be (effective) demand that will decide whether capitalism smoothly accumulates without recurring crises. To show this, DH uses some of the graphic examples provided by Marx in Chapter 25 of Volume One. DH emphasizes that capitalist accumulation aims to minimize the value of labour power – even to the point of pauperism. DH concludes that

If this is a typical outcome of the operation of the capitalist law of value accumulation, then there is a deep contradiction between deteriorating conditions of social reproduction and capital’s need to perpetually expand the market. As Marx notes in Volume 2 of Capital, the real root of capitalist crises lies in the suppression of wages and the reduction of the mass of the population to the status of penniless paupers.

There are several points here. First, Chapter 25 in Marx’s Capital Volume One, entitled ‘The general law of capitalist accumulation’, does not just refer to the pauperization of the working class. DH leaves out a very important aspect of that ‘general law’: the tendency for the organic composition of capital to rise. This is what drives up relative surplus value. It is also a key factor in the tendency of the rate of profit to fall (developed in Volume 3 of Capital), ‘the most important law of political economy’ according to Marx (Marx, 1971: 748), which lays the basis for Marx’s theory of crises. DH ignores this.

DH goes further in his interpretation:

Value depends on the existence of wants, needs and desires, backed by ability to pay in a population of consumers.... It also means that the diminution of wages to almost nothing will be counterproductive to the realization of value and surplus value in the market. Raising wages to ensure ‘rational consumption’ from the standpoint of capital and colonizing everyday life as a field for consumerism are crucial for the value theory.

Thus, DH argues that capitalism goes into crises because wages are suppressed; and raising wages, ensuring ‘rational

consumption', would provide the 'ability to pay' and so end the crisis.

In his subsequent reply to my critique, DH says:

It was Marx, not me, who said 'the real root of crises' lies in the diminished purchasing power of the working classes and if I cite Marx on that point it is because it is a neat antidote to all those who endlessly cite the falling rate of profit.

This is of course not the first time that DH has been dismissive of the falling rate of profit theory (see Harvey, 2006). But this underconsumptionist interpretation of Marx's crisis theory had been firmly dismissed by Marx himself in the famous note in the same Volume 2 that DH refers to:

It is sheer tautology to say that crises are caused by the scarcity of effective consumption.... That commodities are unsaleable means only that no effective purchasers have been found for them. But if one were to attempt to give this tautology the semblance of a profounder justification by saying that the working-class receives too small a portion of its own product and the evil would be remedied as soon as it receives a larger share of it and its wages increase in consequence, one could only remark that crises are always prepared by precisely a period in which wages rise generally and the working-class actually gets a larger share of that part of the annual product which is intended for consumption. From the point of view of these advocates of sound and 'simple' (!) common sense, such a period should rather remove the crisis. (Marx, 1978: 414–15)

In my view, Marx rejected both the law of value as DH interprets it and the conclusion that crises are caused by an inability to pay for the 'wants, need and desires' of people. But one might argue that Marx was wrong and DH was right on the cause of crises. Empirical evidence does not support DH, however.

Let me cite just three facts. The first is that workers' consumption is not the largest sector of 'demand' in a capitalist economy; rather, it is productive capital consumption. In the United States, consumption would seem to constitute 70% of GDP. However, if you look at 'gross product' which includes all the intermediate value-added products not counted in GDP, then consumption is only 36% of the total product; the rest constitutes demand from capital for parts, materials, intermediate goods and services. It is investment by capitalists that is the swing factor and driver of demand, not consumption by workers.

In his reply to my critique, DH rejects the relevance of the size of capitalist purchases of capitalist production.

Suppose for some reason the final consumers cannot pay or get fed up with autos. Then all the accumulated value is lost (devalued). In practice, as Marx observed, the chain of payments might take a while to work through but when it does

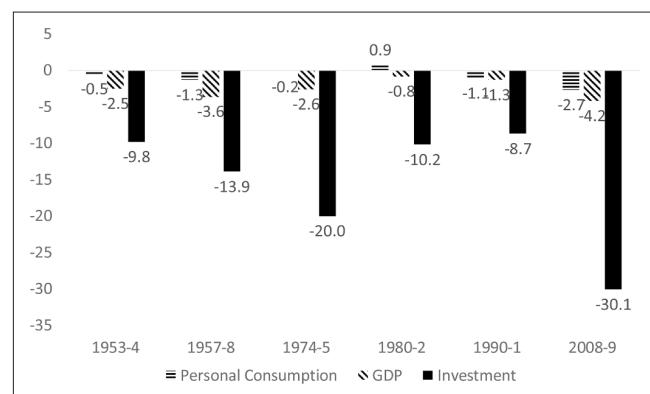


Figure 1. Percentage change in US real personal consumption (PC), investment and GDP.

Source: US BEA NIPA tables, author's calculations.

then all value production in the chain disappears. (Harvey, 2018b)

Having denied that he has an underconsumption theory of crises, DH then offers one. Of course, if consumers stop buying autos, then the profits of the auto manufacturers would fall or disappear. But this scenario implies that 'consumers' are some external force of 'effective demand' separate from being workers in employment. Consumption falls when wages stagnate and/or unemployment rises. But that happens only when capitalists stop investing and employing labour. And that happens when profits fall. The sequence is not from consumption to investment but vice versa.

This is shown in the second fact. If we analyse the changes in investment and consumption prior to each recession or slump in the post-war US economy, we find that consumption demand has played little or no leading role in provoking a slump. In the six recessions since 1953, personal consumption fell less than GDP or investment on every occasion and does not fall at all in 1980–1982 (Figure 1). Investment fell by 8%–30% on every occasion.

The third fact relates directly to wages and DH's claim that raising them would help capital. Carchedi (2018) finds that of the 12 post-WWII crises, 11 have been preceded by rising wages and only one by falling wages (the 1991 crisis). This confirms Marx's view in the note in Volume 2 above.

I conclude from DH's short paper that he aims to establish an argument that class struggle is no longer centred or decided between labour and capital at the point of production of surplus value. Instead in 'modern' capitalism, it is to be found in other phases of the 'circuit of capital' that he presents in his latest book and in various presentations globally. For DH, it is at the moment of realization (of rents, mortgages, price gouging by pharma firms, etc.) or in the distribution of income (its allocation through taxation, public services, etc.) that the 'hotspots' of class struggle are now centred. The class struggle in production is now less important (even non-existent).

In his reply to my critique, DH says:

This does not mean I downplay, deny or refute all the work that has been done on the labour process and the importance of the class struggles that have occurred and continue to occur in the sphere of production. But these struggles have to be put in relation to struggles over realization, distribution (e.g. rental extractions, debt foreclosures), social reproduction, the management of the metabolic relation to nature and the free gifts of culture and nature.

In this reply, I think he does just that: ‘downplay’ the importance of the class struggle at the point of production in favour of his other ‘hotspots’.

In my view, to support his view of modern class struggle, DH presents a series of theoretical confusions in this paper. First, Marx did not have a *labour* theory of value. Second, value is only created in exchange (in realisation). Third, the rate of profit (or even profit alone) is irrelevant to crises: what matters is the driving down of the value of labour power to the minimum (or even zero!) so that workers are unable to meet their ‘wants, desires, etc’. Despite his denials, in my view, this becomes a crude underconsumption theory – cruder even than that of Keynes.

Marx’s theory of crisis (based on insufficient surplus value creation) is replaced, in the hands of DH, with insufficient use values for workers as consumers. Overaccumulation of capital is effectively replaced by underconsumption of goods and services. The class struggle becomes one not between workers and capitalists, but one between consumers and capitalists, or between taxpayers and governments. This is not Marx’s view. But more importantly, the whole approach is confusing to a class analysis and to developing a strategy for the working-class struggle.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. A version of this opinion piece was first self-published in the author’s blog: thenextrecession.wordpress.com.
2. See <http://davidharvey.org/>

References

- Carchedi G (2018) The old is dying but the new cannot be born: on the exhaustion of western capitalism. In: Carchedi G and Roberts M (eds) *World in Crisis*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
- Harvey D (2006) *Limits to Capital*. London: Verso.
- Harvey D (2017) *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey D (2018a) Marx’s refusal of the labour theory of value. Available at: <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/harvey-paper-2/>
- Harvey D (2018b) The misunderstandings of Michael Roberts. Available at: <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2018/04/02/marxs-law-of-value-a-debate-between-david-harvey-and-michael-roberts/>
- Marx K (1971) *Grundrisse: the foundations of the critique of political economy*, Mclellan D ed. London: MacMillan.
- Marx K (1977) *Capital Volume One*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Marx K (1978) *Capital Volume Two*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Roberts M (2018) Marx’s law of value: a debate between David Harvey and Michael Roberts. Available at: <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2018/04/02/marxs-law-of-value-a-debate-between-david-harvey-and-michael-roberts>
- Smith M (2019) *Invisible Leviathan: Marx’s Law of Value in the Twilight of Capitalism*. Historical Materialism, Haymarket.

Author Biography

Michael Roberts is author of *The Great Recession* (Lulu, 2009); *The Long Depression* (Haymarket, 2016); co-editor of *World in Crisis* (Haymarket, 2018) and *Marx 200* (Lulu, 2018). He holds degrees as BA in Economics, University of Sussex and MA in Economics, University of British Columbia and has been visiting lecturer at UNAM, Mexico City, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and SOAS, London.

HG's February 2020 Art Contest Results

Human Geography
2020, Vol. 13(1) 99–105

© The Author(s) 2020

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/1942778620913190

journals.sagepub.com/home/hug



Image from "Agriculture: The World's Basic Industry and Its Workers" (Pamphlet, 1920s). Franklin and Penelope Rosemont Collection of IWW Publications. Newberry Library, Chicago.

We are proud to announce and showcase the winners of our most recent art contest. Fourteen different artists and collaborative teams submitted many excellent pieces this February. The terms of the contest were very open, and we are thrilled with the number, quality, and varied format of the pieces we got. Paintings, woodcuts, performances, embroidery, collages, 3-D installations, video documentaries, and many other projects in wide-ranging media arrived in my inbox with excited notes from the artists.

All of the art submitted made radical political statements ranging from critiques of Trump's immigration policy, to war and violence in Syria, to working women, to racism and incarceration, and much more. And the work was made by artists from a variety professional levels. The categories correspond (mostly) to these: Undergraduate Student (two winners), Graduate Student, and Faculty. We are also featuring the two *cartographic projects* we received combining novel artistic techniques with scholarly research. Thanks to all those who submitted their fantastic work!

Many of the letters of submission expressed their gratitude for supporting art and building a forum to showcase it. And, for that reason, I hope we created a suitable setting to honor that energy. This is something I will be thinking about how to improve. We did not include video submissions, for instance, but we will post the excellent entries on the HG Facebook page. I hope to accommodate video submissions for future contests and showcases (at least). A great thanks to Waquar, Ipsita, and other editorial board members for their input and help, as well as to Jason Bulluck, MFA (Chicago/DC-based artist and educator) and Sidra Lawrence, PhD (Ethnomusicology, Bowling Green State University). And of course, thanks to those artists and agitators who inspire us to, in James Baldwin's words, "disturb the peace" and imagine a more radically beautiful world.

So, without further handwaving, please enjoy our February 2020 Art Contest Showcase!

—Clayton F. Rosati, Visual Interventions Editor

Cartography Spotlight

(Top)

Title: "Free The 350," Decarceration Map of Madison

Medium: woodcut print, 48 in. x 48 in. (2015)

Description: Madison, Wisconsin Capitol building, 4th of July. To print the images onto paper, the public walked 350 times over the woodblock to demand that Dane County eliminate racial disparities in the jail by immediately releasing 350 black people incarcerated for crimes of poverty.

Artists: Anders Zanichkowsky (artist, a.zanichkowsky@gmail.com) & Elsa Noterman (geographer, PhD candidate in Geography, University of Wisconsin-Madisonnoterman@wisc.edu)

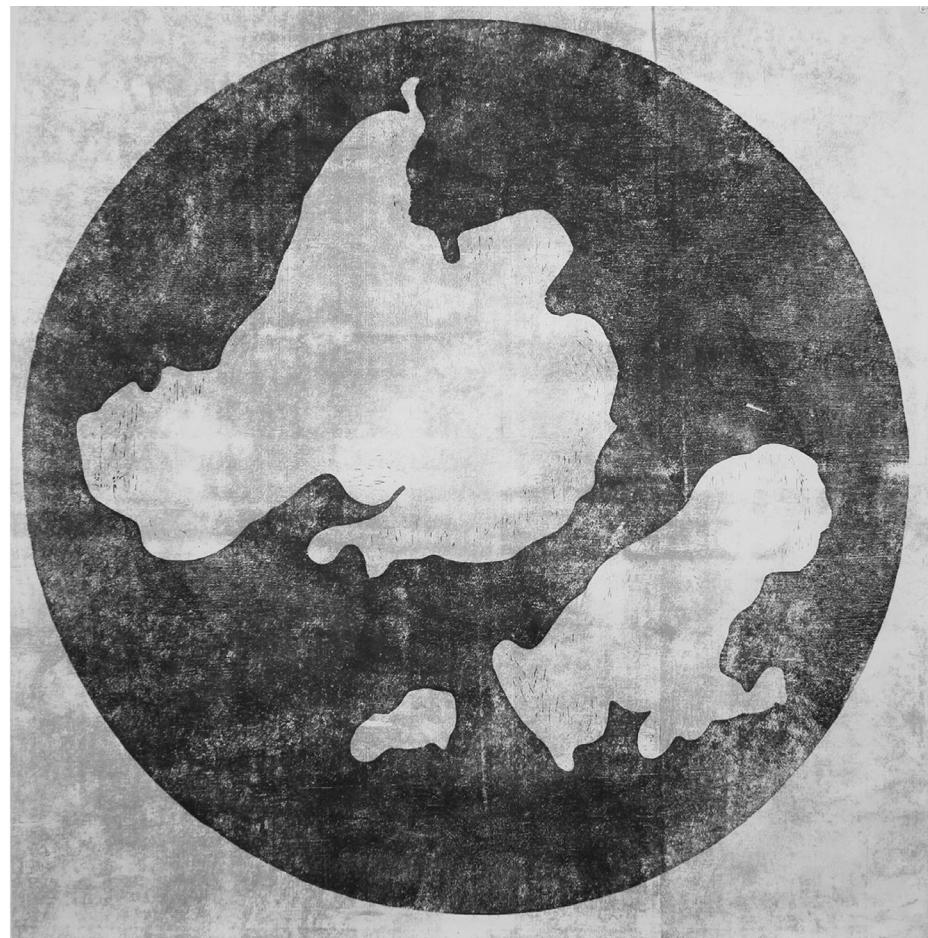
(Bottom)

Title: 210 Cities in San Diego

Medium: (2019), 210 ultraviolet-inkjet printed, vacuum-formed polystyrene panels, 15 x 15 x 4.5 inches each.

Description: This installation is a cartographic exploration of distance, difference, and discrepancy. Culled from an investigation of employment statistics, including over 430,000 unique commuters, the work illustrates the variety of boundaries that delineate individual opportunity, set against the uneven landscape of combined experience. Each panel describes the singular and the whole, drawing out the many edges within any city and redefining access as a function of relationships between multiple locations and vectors.

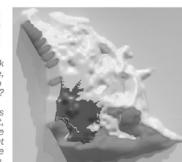
Artist: Leah Meisterlin (Assistant Professor, Urban Planning Program, Columbia University GSAPP, leah.meisterlin@columbia.edu)



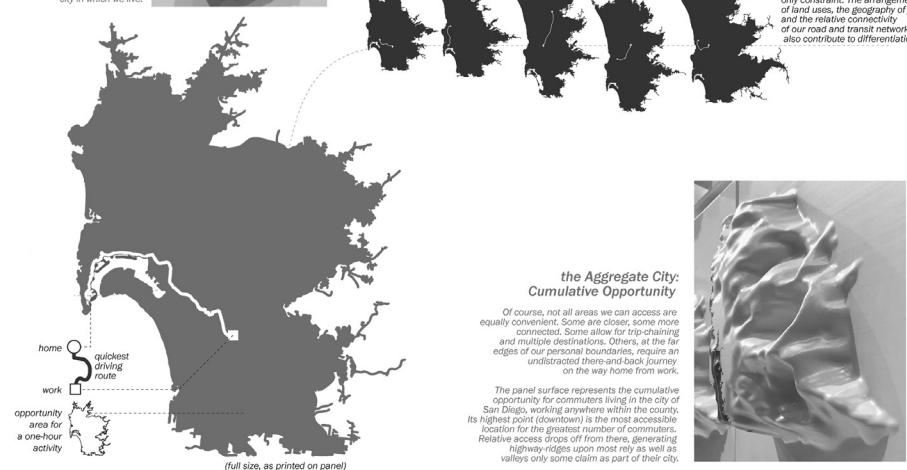
With the time left in the day:

Assuming 8 hours at work, and 12 hours at home, how far can one go to spend an hour?

Whether running errands or having a night out, the city of San Diego has many access within the city in which we live.



While significant, the time spent commuting is not our only constraint. The arrangement of all nodes, the density of job and the relative connectivity of our road and transit networks also contribute to differentiation.



Faculty/Professional Winner**Title:** *This is home***Medium:** Collage, photographed by Jacek Pilarski, 2018.**Description:** I left Syria in 2011 and have never been able to return since. These objects I brought with me from home remind of past times and places.**Artist:** Dr. Ammar Azzouz (Arup, ammar.azzouz@bath.edu)

Graduate Student Winner**Title:** *Now You Are Free.***Medium:** Digital Painting**Description:** The artwork is created by inserting images and reconfiguring the composition of a miniature. It is a satire about the tensions inherent in invasion and occupation in the name of freedom.**Artist:** Özlem Ayse Özgür, (PhD Candidate, School of Geography and Development, University of Arizona)

Undergraduate Student Visual Art Contest Winner #1**Title:** Women Weaving**Medium:** Fudepen and ink**Caption:** Women weaving the fabric of history, dreams, and a fate freed from all systems of oppression.**Artist:** Samina Sirajuddowla (History, The City College of New York, CUNY, saminasirajuddowla@gmail.com)

Undergraduate Student Visual Art Contest Winner #2**Title:** *Leaving is a bit like dying***Medium:** Collage**Description:** This collage piece centers around the migrant's prayer. Its words conjure the way in which death is always present in the journey of the migrant and the inability to ever truly arrive.**Artist:** Valeria Sibrian (Bennington College, vsibrianquijada@benningtoncollege.edu)

