

Global Lives of Extraction

Les vies globales de l'extraction

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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/poldev/5959>

ISSN: 1663-9391

Publisher

Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement

Printed version

ISBN: 978-2-940600-48-9

ISSN: 1663-9383

Brought to you by Geneva Graduate Institute



Electronic reference

Filipe Calvão, Matthew Archer and Asanda Benya, "Global Lives of Extraction", *International Development Policy | Revue internationale de politique de développement* [Online], 15 | 2023, Online since 12 June 2023, connection on 11 January 2024. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/poldev/5959> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.5959>

This text was automatically generated on October 23, 2023.



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The guest editors wish to thank all the contributors to this thematic volume. We are deeply indebted to the anonymous reviewers and the discussants that offered their time and generous feedback during the authors' workshop: Philippe Le Billon, Jerry Jacka, Marc Hufty, Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt and Muriel Côte. Our gratitude is extended particularly to the editorial board of International Development Policy, to Dave Brooks, and for the indefatigable work of Marie Thorndahl.

1. Introduction

- 1 The extractive industries are at a critical juncture. The commodities super-cycle of the early years of the twenty-first century led to a marked spatial expansion of extractive frontiers but also to the diminishing availability of high-grade ore veins for key minerals alongside imminent peak production for other resources. The violence and undelivered promises of 'neo-extractivist' policies, mostly hailing from Latin America (Gudynas, 2009; Burchardt and Dietz, 2014; Svampa, 2019), have been met by a growing focus on risk awareness and by new corporate policies and practices that seek to enact community-based trust, legitimacy and environmental justice. If the extractive industries are one of the main forces of dispossession and conflict and a driver of social and environmental damage to land, water, air and biodiversity, they are also positioned as indispensable to a post-carbon and electric-powered future. Critics perceive this global shift towards principles of sustainability and responsibility as paradoxical, fraught, or inconsistent.
- 2 Scholarship in political ecology and human geography (Bebbington et al., 2018; Bridge, 2010; Krause, 2020), anthropology (Richardson and Weszkalnys, 2014; Ødegaard and Andía, 2019; Ferry, Vallard and Walsh, 2019; Calvão, Bolay and Bell, 2021; Jacka, 2018; D'Angelo and Pijpers, 2022) and development economics (Acosta, 2016; Arboleda, 2020)

has paved the way for a relational and material understanding of natural resources that directly implicates the human and social experience of extraction. This has been accompanied by an expanded notion of extractivism that seeks to encompass other value-extracting activities such as financialisation or data mining, plantation agriculture, and industrial forestry (Alonso-Fradejas, 2021; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2019; Calvão and Archer, 2021), going beyond spaces of production and challenging the binaries and logics that sustain extractivism as a system (Rodriguez Castro, 2021; Lupo, this volume). These theoretical developments and expanded conceptions can inform urgent research on how extractive industries may partake in the transition to more sustainable, just, and equitable societies. At the same time, industry-led approaches to green extraction, community engagement, and a post-carbon future (see, e.g., Dunlap and Jakobsen, 2020), as well as the creative responses of those bearing the brunt of extraction, warrant further investigation regarding the durability of corporate extractivism, heightened extractive violence, and the new forms of resistance the latter engenders (Turner, 1995; Shapiro and McNeish, 2021; Menton and Le Billon, 2021).

- 3 Reflecting on these debates, and on the growing public scrutiny and policy intervention that energy and extractive industries have been subject to, this thematic volume of *International Development Policy* mobilises and draws attention to longstanding concerns in the extractive sector, from formalisation, to local community participation, gender inequality, resource management, and North–South natural wealth distribution. At the same time, the volume responds to ongoing calls to rethink the notion of ‘extractivism’ (Szeman and Wenzel, 2021; Ye et al., 2020) by studying the nature of extraction in multiple contexts and through multiple disciplinary lenses, taking heed of the gendered and lived experience of local communities, indigenous peoples, and workers.
- 4 As the consequences of extractive practices in a new age of ‘hyper-extractivism’ (Watts, 2021) continue to be felt globally, the need for new models and standards of extraction has become more pressing. Questions arise, however, as to how to reconcile the strengthening of local communities and environmental justice with the capital logics that foster continued extraction, particularly in the face of new trade agreements and development models. We ask: What are the pitfalls of seeking solutions for environmental protection and economic development through resource extraction in poverty-stricken contexts and in the global South more broadly? And can extractivism be ‘moderate’ in a way that foregrounds the lives of communities and workers? These issues, and the need to scale up and mobilise experiences of resilience, resistance, and activism to inform the aforementioned new models and standards, are at the forefront of debates on the lives and afterlives of extraction.
- 5 Natural resource extraction is a complex and multifaceted process that shapes the lives of individuals, communities, and ecosystems around the world. Along with uneven and poorly distributed economic benefits (Bond, 2017; Burchardt and Dietz, 2014), it generates social and environmental costs that are borne disproportionately by those who live and work in extractive economies throughout the world. While the extraction of natural resources has long been a contentious issue, sparking important conversations about its economic, social, and environmental impacts, these debates have often been limited by a narrow focus on economic outcomes and technical solutions, with little attention paid to the social, cultural, and political dimensions of extraction. This thematic volume seeks to contribute to these discussions by exploring the diverse ways in which communities, social movements, and organisations are

responding to the challenges of extractive practices and are envisioning alternative futures. By adopting a critical perspective on the study of extraction, we explore diverse genres, scales, and ways in which extraction intersects with social, cultural, and political dynamics, from the local to the global.

- 6 Through the lived experiences of those who are most directly impacted by these industries—workers, indigenous communities, and other groups who call these places home—this volume contributes to the profusion of academic and policy research on extractivism by challenging prevailing predominant economic theories and technical approaches and by connecting the localised experiences of communities, identities, and places with global mechanisms and chains of extractive networks. This first volume on the lives and afterlives of extraction seeks to counter the marginal role assigned to these actors by mapping out the complex and dynamic relationships between extractivism, social life, and politics. Rather than treating these actors as passive recipients or mere bystanders to the impact of extraction, the volume shows how the lives and afterlives of extraction can be actively mobilised to shape the contours of extractive industries, and to oppose and contest the negative effects of extraction.
- 7 This introduction sets out a research agenda for the study of extractive processes, in theory and practice. First, we introduce the main debates and limitations surrounding resource development and the ‘resource curse’ thesis. We follow this discussion by our conceptual approach to identities, communities, and the politics of place.

2. Resource Development and the ‘Madness’ of Extractivism

- 8 ‘Look at this madness.’ Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo, Venezuela’s oil minister in the early 1960s, was one of the first to call attention to the oil curse, back in 1975. Oil, the minister said, was not black gold, it was the ‘devil’s excrement’. ‘I call petroleum the devil’s excrement. It brings trouble... Look at this locura—waste, corruption, consumption, our public services falling apart. And debt, debt we shall have for years.’¹
- 9 The skewed and enclaved effects of both concentration and dependency on exports have been thoroughly identified and documented. The mismatch between oil money and development—the ‘locura’, or madness, alluded to in Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo’s prescient admonition—became increasingly salient from the 1970s onward in the new capital-intensive, oil-exporting ‘petro states’, when the economic benefits, mostly by way of rents and royalties, did not lead to sustainable and lasting social and economic benefits for the population. Various anthropologists, historians and political scientists have uncovered elements of this *locura*: Fernando Coronil, in his magisterial 1997 study, showed how oil ‘sowed’ this illusion of growth and national development in Venezuela. Andrew Apter (2005) and Michael Watts (2004) both eloquently presented the maddening contours of this contrast on the African continent, between a time of exhilarating optimism and opportunity and an era of austerity and violence born out of the oil boom of the 1970s.
- 10 The conflicts associated with rent distribution, power concentration and property relations, the stamping out of comparative advantage, and the forms of dependency—including on foreign exchange and mono-exports—that accrued out of these processes have been lumped together under the so-called resource curse. As the truism goes,

what is meant to be a blessing of prosperity instead becomes a curse, condemning entire nations to underdevelopment not *despite* their hydrocarbon and mineral wealth but *because* of it.

- 11 The resource-curse thesis is one of the most overused and overstudied topics in natural resource management and extraction. It describes how resource-rich countries become trapped in slower growth rates than those of countries that do not rely on the export of minerals and raw materials, and how their reliance on natural resource exports leads to poorer performance or even to underperformance in economic, social and political terms.² It has been long shown that issues emanating from resource extraction can manifest in violence and conflict, environmental concerns, and a tendency towards anti-democratic authoritarian regimes (Le Billon, 2001; Peluso and Watts, 2001). The challenges of managing, investing, and distributing resources and the wealth derived from their extraction for the common good inevitably leads to stagnating social development and poverty, internal tensions, human rights abuses, and civil and military conflict at the national level. The conventional economic argument linking wars and resources, whereby there is an increased risk of conflict in countries with a significant proportion of their GDP tied to natural resource extraction, is perhaps the most hotly contested manifestation of the resource curse, and the one that has elicited most criticism. From Richard Snyder's (2006) call for a more encompassing lens of multiple modalities of extraction to David Keen's (2012) more textured understanding of the 'greed' vs. 'grievance' debate, which probes further into the history of prior conflicts and the role of ideological and ethnic grievances, this concerted effort has repositioned the importance of capturing the lived realities of conflict without flattening the nuances required if we are to understand the full range of factors that explain why and how certain groups take up arms. But despite these efforts, as the present volume demonstrates, the resource curse remains woefully inadequate and incomplete as an explanatory framework.
- 12 Extractive economies are characteristically non-renewable and do not foster long-term, sustainable economic growth and development without the diversified and forward-looking investment of resource revenues. The volatility of exported commodities coupled with a sudden influx of money—it has also been widely demonstrated—tends to stunt the growth of other productive sectors. But there is, in fact, a much wider constellation of factors not built into this framework by design.
- 13 Consider the tragic events that took place in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, between 2015 and 2019 (for a discussion of these events, see Zhouri et al., 2017, and Milanez, Ali and de Oliveira, 2021). Mariana is a city of 60,000 inhabitants and the site of a joint mining venture between BHP and Vale. It is surrounded by upwards of 15 dams that hold the mining sludge or waste tailings from the nearby mines. When one of the dams burst in 2015, an estimated 43 million cubic metres of waste mud spread over 600 km, flooding downstream villages and contaminating with heavy metals and other toxic substances the nearby Rio Doce (sweet river), a source of fresh fish and livelihoods for river communities. Nineteen people died, hundreds more were displaced, and the pollution eventually reached the Atlantic seaboard, and the important biodiversity ecosystem of the South Atlantic Ocean, some three months later. 'Never again', the CEO of Vale was purported to have said at the time about what was to become one of the worst environmental disasters in history. But—'first as tragedy, then as farce'—not four years had gone by when a new dam collapse took place some 120 km away in the town

of Brumadinho, killing over 300 people and flooding local rivers with 11 million cubic metres of tailings discharged downstream.

- 14 With upwards of thousands of mining sites and tailing dams, often uphill from poor residential communities, limited monitoring and faulty upkeep were an accident waiting to happen. Regardless of how communities may seek redress for the violence of this injustice, already inscribed in the historical landscape of colonial mining, the rules of the system are set in such a way to preclude any meaningful change. So much so, in fact, that the very corporate entities directly responsible for this infrastructure continue to be the region's biggest employers and taxpayers, sponsoring social services from education to health.
- 15 What do these accidents have to do with the resource-curse thesis? It bears mentioning that the environmental burden of mining is only now starting to be contemplated in this framework. But the present thematic volume suggests a deeper, and more meaningful, change of paradigm.
- 16 First, the mine does not end at the mining site. In contrast to a constricted view of the space of mines, the temporal and spatial effects of extractivism extend beyond the confines of extractive operations or the life expectancy of mining projects (see Arboleda, 2020). In the case of decommissioned mines or of mining infrastructures—including pipelines and shipping containers—carrying ore-rich sludge over hundreds of kilometres, the potentially adverse effects of mining are not limited to the immediate vicinity of extraction. Second, while the effects of mining are widespread, they are not necessarily felt equally, or by the same people everywhere. In fact, these 'accidents'—and the burden of hazardous waste, contamination, and polluting substances—disproportionately affect the poorest and minority communities, with a notoriously unequal distribution of risks and benefits. Lastly, these accidents are often presented as 'negative externalities', deemed impossible to mitigate and the inevitable cost of extractive activities. Here again, the resource curse offers only unsatisfactory responses to the question of who has responsibility for these effects and who can be held responsible—from the corporate entity to the state to global financial institutions—and through what means of redress, be it self-regulatory regimes, voluntary mechanisms, or post-factum compensation.
- 17 Several approaches can be adopted to mitigate the resource curse, including responsible integration, local content programming, and proper resource management. Though seen by some as palliative measures that do not address the structural effects of extractivism, some countries have curbed the worst effects of the resource curse by slowing down expenditures and using extractive revenues to diversify their economies. Added attention should be given to the specificity of institutional vehicles and partnerships, in particular those developed in Chile and Botswana, where the state is bypassed by the striking of partnerships between companies and local constituencies. In response to the problem of enclaving and the lack of linkages—backward, forward (Hirschman, 1958), or otherwise—new mechanisms have been proposed to ensure connections between the state and communities, strengthen local capacity, and implement local content policies (Tordo et al., 2013; Ovadia, 2016). Multinational corporations have been pressured to be more transparent about their contracts, investments, tax payments and revenues, and multilateral approaches and disclosures can be adopted. Commodity-specific strategies can be developed to provide incentives, sanctions and other advocacy approaches that are effective, proportionate and

dissuasive (Carbonnier, Brugger and Krause, 2011). Initiatives such as Publish What You Pay and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) or litigation can help promote transparency and accountability. But the study of extractivism calls for a renewed engagement with the underlying causes and effects of resource extraction, in theory and in practice.

3. The Politics of Extraction: Theory and Practice

- 18 We propose a more fundamental engagement with the resource-curse theory, echoing calls for a critical reassessment of its effects on multiple scales (Gilberthorpe and Rajak, 2017; Appel, 2017). We do so at three different levels: thematically, conceptually, and methodologically. Thematically, we propose moving beyond conventional domains of research associated with the resource curse, including violence and conflict, corruption, dependency, and a lack of diversified economies. This volume contributes to these debates by focusing on the diverse and complex range of factors that influence resource extraction and distribution. In this, we move away from the macroeconomic effects of natural resource extraction and the ill-defined and ahistorical relation between material substances and the condition of need and greed, highlighting the importance of poor governance effects to the detriment of economic growth. We are particularly interested in extending the study of these effects into unexamined domains such as job quality, the environment, and indigenous movements.
- 19 Conceptually, research on the effects of extractivism should provide a clearer definition of their building blocks, such as the spatialisation of uneven development, the global division of labour, structural conditions of domestic markets, and resource-based processes of peripheralisation (Smith, 2008). Rather than being seen as a paradigm in abstract, we embed the resource curse in situated practices and temporalities of extraction (Gilberthorpe and Rajak, 2017, Ferry and Limbert, 2008; Breglia, 2013), including those emerging before resources are extracted and exported—as a result of self-perpetuating hype and anticipation—or in the aftermath of extraction and export (Weszkalnys, 2015; Ferguson, 1999; Frynas, Wood and Hinks, 2017).
- 20 Methodologically, we foster comparative research to strengthen our understanding of the dynamics of resource extraction across different countries and regions. What is taken as the single causal impact of wealth flows and their link with conflict needs to be examined through a more expansive lens and employing multiple variables. Additionally, our inquiry is anchored beyond national economies and oriented towards transnational flows and institutions. Broadening the purview of the resource curse beyond the global South to include instruments of governance and the global circulation of capital it would be possible to focus on the effects of the resource curse on members of the labour force and their dependents. Here we are particularly attentive to a rise or decline in mine workers' living standards, and to the welfare impact across extractive economies, from the influence of global mineral prices to the productivity of labour.
- 21 We contribute to a critical reassessment of the resource curse thesis and its underlying theories and assumed effects in three main areas of scholarly research: a relational approach to identities and resources, the entanglement of production and reproduction in communities of extraction, and the global networks shaping the politics of place.

4. Becoming: Identities and the Matter of Extraction

‘... resources do not do anything by themselves but through the social relations that make them significant’ (Coronil, 2011, 243).

- 22 One of the challenges in the study of extractivism is tracing the interconnections between global and local actors across the different levels of commodity chains. According to modernisation theorists, the world is divided into modern, transitional, and traditional societies, which blocks and denies an effective understanding of the relationships between them. Similarly, the global supply chains of minerals and metals transcend individual cases, but still tend to be treated as disconnected or static. And the study of these interconnections is not the only challenge we are facing: understanding extraction also requires we pay attention to the materiality and substance of resources, which is to say the social and political processes that turn them into commodities. Rather than taking resources for granted, this volume proposes we look at specific moments that make, represent, and transform nature, and with it the human and non-human identities of those implicated in extractive processes.
- 23 Drawing from research on how meaning-making practices and power intersect in the production and circulation of natural commodities (Mintz, 1985) and on the social configurations enabled by resource extraction, we approach identities and resources as a dual process of relationality and becoming (Bridge, 2010; see, also, Zimmerman, 1933) grounded in political, epistemological, ecological and social conditions. Rather than taking identities or indigeneity as the sole purview of autochthonous local formations, we approach them through the critical lens of becoming, as a matter of resource-making. Just like the materiality of resources, identities too are made through complex arrangements of labour and knowledge, agencies, and histories, at times produced in the encounters between indigenous and corporate actors (Golub, 2014), territory, and mining (Lorca et al., 2022).
- 24 Similar approaches have been formulated under the guise of assemblage theory (Richardson and Weszkalnys, 2014), allowing researchers to define which elements comprise a given system and which do not. In the assemblage of ontologies, epistemologies, infrastructures and experiences, we preclude an approach resting on the isolated existence of identities or resources. Instead, we privilege the cluster of relations between objects, places and actors, from the molecular level to the national space, and the connections between commodity, corporate form, state and infrastructures. In the assemblage of identities and resources, we can bring into view the materials, ideas and labour that compose them, as well as the different scales and value transformations involved in their creation. Dispersed in time and space and integrated into a matrix of human and non-human actors, we can better assess their contested processes of representation, commodification, and recognition.
- 25 Ultimately, the relational and material world of being and becoming should call our attention to the complex arrangements of natural and human environments. Rather than being an attempt to stabilise these arrangements, this approach sheds light on the unstable properties of matter and life in the current moment of heightened extraction, energy production, and consumption.

5. Communities of Production and Reproduction

- 26 The lives of workers and the communities to which they belong have long been a staple in the extractivist literature, mainly focusing on the empowerment of local communities and how mining livelihoods can contribute to poverty alleviation. Under the guise of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines for most extractive industry associations, the world of mining labour has undergone significant changes over the last ten years, touching both subcontracted and outsourced corporate-industrial workforces and the plight of millions of informal workers in the artisanal small-scale mining (ASM) sector, who are subject to human insecurity and social inequality (Rubbers, 2019).³ These changes have mainly called for an articulation between the artisanal sector and corporate actors across sites of production, seeking to formalise the ASM sector and create fairer and more accountable global supply chains, be it to avoid the reputational risks of ‘contamination’ or to avoid the business costs of brewing social conflicts.
- 27 These are momentous changes in the world of labour, with far-reaching consequences that go beyond the lives of those who work and depend on mining. Rather than looking at ASM as merely a subsistence economy, there is now recognition that it constitutes an integral part of the global supply chain, from cobalt to gold, in which a significant share of various commodities is guaranteed through artisanal means. The integration of ASM supplies into corporate supply chains within a formal and legal framework has been encouraged, and these artisanal sources are increasingly seen as a way of generating added revenue for state and national elites and not simply as a source of livelihood for mining communities.
- 28 The present thematic volume does not seek to make an explicit contribution to the vast, rich and abundant literature on ASM formalisation. ⁴We echo those who have drawn attention to the various modalities of a flexible labour force and the power mechanisms at play in these new arrangements of work and production, and the oversimplicity that comes with a strict dividing line between informal and industrial, artisanal and waged work. Along with a lack of reliable numbers with regard to the fluctuating population that takes on seasonal work, there is also no universal definition of what constitutes formal and informal jobs. These supply chains are also highly interconnected, a fact made clear thanks to an accumulation of research on the interactions between industrial and artisanal actors, be they in the form of ‘co-existence’ (Hilson, Sauerwein and Owen, 2020), ‘cohabitation’ (Pijpers and Eriksen, 2019) or ‘interface’ (Kemp and Owen, 2019). However, formality and waged work is not necessarily a desirable condition from the perspective of artisanal miners, in part due to the hidden costs of licensing and formalisation and the loss of bargaining power, access to mobile spaces, and opportunities for upward mobility that accompany top-down formalisation strategies. We also recognise the risks of perpetuating forms of corporate dependency and co-option (Sawyer, 2004; Kirsch, 2014) and the various conflicts surrounding ASM that come with the transition from being ‘tolerated’ to being ‘integrated’ (Fisher, 2007; Katz-Lavigne, 2019). Miners are recast as marginal, illegal, or criminal actors when new concessions are issued, and violent attempts are made to seize their equipment and clear mining sites, even if miners do at times attempt to invade large-scale mining concessions (see Mujere, this volume).

- 29 Building from these insights, we approach the problem of formal and informal mining work and the growing interconnections between ASM and large-scale industrial spaces in two related ways. First, we recognise that attempts to formalise ASM, and the indirect push for mechanisation, often come at the expense of the devaluation of labour. As productivity and revenue gains take precedence over the personal and human security of miners and more equitable access to, and distribution of, wealth, work becomes undervalued and underutilised. We draw here on the important lessons of feminist and social reproduction scholarship, which has sought to place gender and social reproduction as entangled with and central to productive processes, and increasingly to the study of extractivism as well. While the expansion of extractivism requires the appropriation and undermining of the unvalued elements of the ‘web of life’ (Moore, 2015)—from unpaid and invisible work that reproduces labour power and thereby surplus value, to the destruction of the environment and all other ‘background conditions’ (Fraser, 2022)—our approach reaffirms kin relations and the communities of labour built around processes of production and social reproduction. It is well known that women are often responsible for the care and maintenance of families, communities and landscapes in extractive economies, and that this has a profound impact on women’s roles and responsibilities with regard to social reproduction, care giving and subsistence. Conversely, in addition to reproductive work scholars have documented how women are increasingly integral to productive processes themselves (Benya, 2015). Additionally, and as documented by feminist economists, this labour—often disguised and naturalised as labour of love by drawing on gendered tropes—also contributes directly to surplus value creation, which benefits capital. It is, therefore, labour that is necessary not only for the *general* reproduction of ‘communities’, but also for the expansion of extractive economies.
- 30 Just as extractivism can exacerbate existing gender-based violence and discrimination, including the sexualisation and objectification of women’s bodies, women are also often at the forefront of resistance and mobilisation against extractive industries, drawing on their experiences in social reproduction to articulate alternative visions of development and sustainability.⁵ A gender-sensitive recognition of the complex interplay between gender, social reproduction and extractive industries can inform strategies for promoting gender equity and social justice in extractive regions and offer a richer and more textured appreciation of what constitutes an extractive community. This would mean communities, framed around gendered dimensions of labour and production, capable of challenging dominant narratives that characterise extraction as strictly masculine and technocratic.
- 31 Our second way of approaching the problem of formal and informal mining work and the growing interconnections between ASM and large-scale industrial spaces involves our aim to have a more inclusive view of what constitutes the production of value in extractive economies, beyond the simple dichotomy of direct and indirect and skilled and unskilled jobs. To this end, we offer a more encompassing understanding of mining communities, denoting not only local arrangements of culture and power, usually born out of formally sanctioned customary formations, but also the broader institutional actors that interact with them—namely, mining companies. Following Anna Tsing’s definition of ‘friction’ (2005), we recognise the various unequal and heterogeneous encounters in the making of a resource frontier, and the alliances and clashes—some expected but others unanticipated—that come into being in the realm of friction. As we

understand them in this thematic volume, we deploy the notion of communities to characterise the immediate sites in the vicinity of extractive processes but also the interlocked experience of making home away from home (see Nkomo, this volume). This includes the conceptual and empirical differences—representational, discursive, and practical—between being at once remote but also integral to capitalist mechanisms of value creation. We are therefore particularly attentive to the tactics and techniques deployed by corporate actors to appropriate and discipline local communities (Kirsch, 2014; Frederiksen and Himley, 2019; also see Lupo; Nikolaeva; Petrakos in this volume), as well as to the processes that turn indigenous actors into entrepreneurial subjects, as in the case of the communal enterprises in the Amazon examined by Doris Buu-Sao (2021).

- 32 Our definition of communities of extraction is deeply wedded to the value embedded in local cultural and economic systems. Much like the unrecognised and undervalued work of social reproduction, these communities are informed by local knowledge and richly textured social networks, and can thus contribute to the development of more sustainable and equitable models of resource governance. These communities are not simply on the receiving end of the interests of global capital or at the mercy of the more destructive social and environmental impacts of extractivism. Rather, they are prominent and active agents in productive processes of extraction and a vital node in global supply chains. Communities are at the forefront of extractivism and hold the key to its upheaval. But rather than adopting a parochialised view of these communities, we suggest that miners, migrants, women, indigenous groups, corporate agents and state authorities partake in a field of action that is far more organised, intersecting and structured than has previously been suggested.

6. Global Extractive Networks and the Politics of Place

- 33 Extraction is a spatially uneven process that creates a plethora of distinct spaces and scales of resource production and consumption, from households, mining compounds and company towns to extractive enclaves and special economic zones and corridors. These spaces and scales are shaped by a complex network of power relations that extend far beyond the boundaries of any one extractive site and include negotiations over land and resource ownership, distribution, and access, the development of refining and transportation infrastructures, the management of labour markets, and technological developments. It is on the basis of these broader power networks and infrastructures that extractive industries operate and are contested.
- 34 The relationship between localised economies and global dynamics is a central theme in the anthropological and sociological literature on extractivism (Verbrugge and Geenen, 2020). By recognising the interconnectedness of local struggles and global forces, we can gain a stronger appreciation of the complex power arrangements that shape the lives of workers and communities in extractive regions and of the challenges of, and opportunities for, social and environmental justice. To capture this intersection of local and global dynamics and the interconnectedness of various actors, processes and discourses, we draw on the analytic of ‘global extractive networks’. These global networks of extraction illuminate the forms of mediation between global and local actors in commodity chains, as well as the politics of resource-making in concrete places, including transnational corporations and international financial institutions,

but also labour markets, state policies, social movements and asylum claims (Morris, this volume).

- 35 Extractive operations are not simply technical or economic endeavours. They are also deeply intertwined with the social and cultural fabric of the localities in which they are located or have percolated into, born out of embodied and narrated practices (Raffles, 1999; see also Hoff, this volume). By our use of ‘politics of place’, we highlight the importance of these specific social, cultural, economic and environmental contexts in which an extractive operation takes place, and the resistance and organising efforts of the communities most directly impacted by extractive projects. We emphasise the agency of local actors as active participants in everyday communities and struggles, from workers contesting or negotiating with transnational corporations over labour conditions and wages to community activists opposing extractive projects. Conversely, global economic forces can structure and constrain local agency in an ‘extractive imperialism’ (Veltmeyer and Petras, 2014) of control exerted over natural resources and extractive industries in developing countries, leading to a range of social and environmental impacts, including the displacement of indigenous communities, the degradation of local ecosystems, and the flattening of local cultures and identities.
- 36 To navigate these complexities, the present volume emphasises the need for a ‘multi-scalar’ approach that recognises the multiple scales at which extractive industries operate, from the local to the national and the global. This approach recognises that the impacts of extractive industries are felt most acutely at the local level, but are shaped by global economic forces and political structures. By examining the ways in which these different scales intersect and interact, scholars can better understand the complex multidimensional relationship between localised experiences and the global dynamics that shape the lives of mining workers and extractive communities across the world.

7. Volume Overview

- 37 The volume is organised into three sections, each taking a distinct perspective on lived experiences of extraction and offering a novel viewpoint from which to examine how labour, social identities and relations shape and are shaped by extractive activities. Collectively, these chapters show that extractive industries are not solely driven by abstract market forces, but are also deeply entwined with social practices, political imaginaries and forms of resistance. Corporate narratives and imaginative practices are central to expanding extractive frontiers, but also offer alternative stories to pave the way for possible counter-mobilisations and future changes.
- 38 ‘Community, Labour, and Social Life’ explores how extractive industries shape social relations, cultural identities and labour practices in communities of extraction. From mining cooperatives to women’s promotion groups and indigenous and migrant communities, each chapter works through specific and granular intersections of race, gender and class in extractive processes, paying heed to the intersection between global forces and local power dynamics in reshaping the lives of those on the front lines of extraction.
- 39 Melusi Nkomo’s chapter, for example, looks at ‘mundane’, everyday, intimate actions that migrant mineworkers in the informal settlement of Marikana engage in in order to

make their presence felt. Nkomo unpacks the ways in which these individuals position themselves socially, politically and culturally to navigate the deprived living conditions of this South African town. These workers share a common repertoire of values, traditions and interests and are embedded in rural networks that foster solidarity, collective morality and political presence, all of which complicate their marginal status as migrants. He argues that informal settlements, while on the margins, are critical sites for ‘claim-making’ by migrants with regard to the state and mining capital. These spaces have the potential to create new networks and strengthen old networks, which could facilitate consequential political and social action by migrant mineworkers. Nkomo thus suggests that policy makers consider the ‘political space and structures created in informal settlements [...] for progressive political communication and deliberations aimed at improving the lives of poor people’.

- 40 Joseph Mujere unpacks the transition from tribute mining contracts to artisanal and small-scale mining and the effects of liberalising mineral resource extraction in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Drawing on the experiences of members of small-scale mining cooperatives and artisanal miners, he shows how the liberalisation of the chromite mining sector in Zimbabwe and the establishment of mining cooperatives run by artisanal and small-scale miners initially contributed to the creation of opportunities to alleviate poverty and to strengthen rural livelihoods for peasants. However, a moratorium on the export of unprocessed ore and later an outright export ban to promote local beneficiation⁶ subsequently led to artisanal and small-scale miners being adversely affected. This eventually created a space for Chinese companies to partner with small-scale and artisanal chromite miners. What Mujere effectively demonstrates is that the asymmetrical and exploitative relations that existed between large-scale chromite mines and other miners prior to independence have been reproduced in the presence of new, Chinese actors. While miners may have been liberated from tribute mining arrangements, they are increasingly tied into ‘new’ exploitative arrangements without the protection of the state. This has increased the vulnerability of chromite mining cooperatives and small-scale miners and contributed to the deepening of poverty in rural communities.
- 41 Like Melusi Nkomo, Luisa Lupo notes the gendered contours of resilience and solidarity around sites of extraction. Using a social reproduction lens to make sense of extractivism, Lupo highlights connections between women’s promotion groups (responsible for making soap and for cloth dyeing activities) and bauxite refining in Fria, Guinea. Lupo draws our attention to connections between productive and reproductive spaces, and through her emphasis on spatial entanglements she not only demonstrates the ways in which extractivism externalises social reproduction to the household by way of which women subsidise extractive operations in times of crisis and closures, but also that women rely on it for livelihoods. She paints a paradoxical picture of women’s groups that are shaped by, sustain, and depend on the bauxite industry, even as they are harmed by it. This is a counterintuitive process of ‘mutual constitution’ where the bauxite mine, on the one hand, connects women and is implicated in their livelihood strategies through company CSR activities, and, on the other, is indirectly and twistedly incriminated in the relations of solidarity, resilience and sociality that women forge.
- 42 Focusing on indigenous communities in Australia, Liz Wall and Fiona Haslam-McKenzie look at the extent to which benefit sharing agreements are delivering on the

expectations and aspirations of affected communities, where community is homogenised without due consideration of differences. In making their assessment, they are critical of ‘sustainable benefits and opportunities’ discourses that do not properly consider the experiences of mine-hosting communities. They suggest that only at the point of mine closure can a proper assessment be made. In assessing the success of benefit sharing models, they argue that there is a need to go beyond ‘utilitarian concepts of income and possession of commodities’ and economic growth indicators. Instead, they draw our attention to whether the relationship has been mutually beneficial, the well-being of people ‘improved’, and, most importantly, to whether indigenous voices, views, ontologies, cultural practices and autonomy have been respected and maintained. They also caution against the rush to find a broad, all-encompassing approach that can be applied universally, emphasising instead close collaboration with affected communities so that outcomes reflect their values and priorities.

- 43 The pace of extraction is often out of sync with the rhythms of local communities and ecosystems, and extraction can create new and multiple temporalities that disrupt and reshape existing social and cultural practices. In ‘Scales of Space and Time’, authors examine the historical and contemporary connections between global extractive networks, long-standing processes of colonialism and imperialism, and the intricate spatial and temporal dynamics of extractivism, from corporate practices to state policies. As extractive activities are spatially configured across borderlands and in the transnational flows of people, capital and resources, these authors examine the contested and fluid nature of territorial boundaries and the political struggles that arise around them.
- 44 Like the Australian case examined by Wall and McKenzie, Diana Ayeh is also concerned with benefit distribution, but in Burkina Faso’s gold mining sector. She unpacks the global mushrooming of ethical norms, practices and policies that are, in theory, purported to strengthen local communities. Based on research in Burkina Faso, Ayeh demonstrates how newly promulgated policies aimed at decentralising revenue allocation had a paradoxical effect, on the one hand opening space for local government to exert control over mining revenues while at the same time allowing corporates to abdicate some of their responsibilities. Simultaneously, these policies became a technology for engineering community consent, disciplining dissenters, preventing opposition and thus enabling unabated extractive expansion. While Wall and MacKenzie suggest that ‘benefits’ need to be defined using local conceptions, considering local traditions, values and voices, Ayeh demonstrates that even when local interests are considered there are multiple competing actors on the ground who may direct benefits in ways that may not necessarily lead to their broad redistribution. Underlying these chapters is a critique of the notion of ‘benefits’ in light of environmental, social and cultural devastation.
- 45 The chapter by Eveline Bingaman looks at the ‘rightful resistance’ (O’Brien and Lianjiang, 2006) of villagers and of artisanal and small-scale gold miners who were displaced from mining and whose livelihoods were destroyed by a large, Hunan-based multinational gold mining corporation. The corporation damaged the local river, leading to a full-scale uprising led by artisanal miners. The protest eventually succeeded in stopping harmful industrial mining activities. Through the story of Eagleback village, Bingaman demonstrates how a group of locals in a marginalised

community took a firm stand and opposed the plans of the state and a powerful multinational that had the support of the government. This pushback by Eagleback villagers was significant considering how the Chinese state is often viewed as all-powerful, even if, as, Bingaman notes, it was directed at lower-level municipal officials and not at the system or the central Chinese Communist Party.

- 46 Looking at Greece and Romania, Konstantinos Petrakos demonstrates the workings of the corporate–state–mining complex in facilitating the expansion of extractive frontiers. Here we see how the state adopts a range of neo-liberal strategies and introduces and modifies legal frameworks regarding land use and resource exploitation and environmental and spatial planning policies, at particular economic junctures (the financial crisis and indebtedness of the state), to facilitate and simplify ‘new’ processes of primitive accumulation. By the same token, we see how corporations adopt the ‘biopolitical control of the population’ and ‘quieter registers of power’ that involve the manipulation of people by promising them jobs and ‘development’. Aided by the state, corporations also generate and amplify narratives that are meant to legitimise extractive projects and to manufacture consent, even as they generate dissent and discord among the locals. To manage dissent and resistance to dispossession and expansion, violence is co-deployed, at times involving the police. In response, local actors, in some instances led by women, have adopted creative tactics and resistance strategies that have helped them cement victories while building solidarity globally.
- 47 Jesse Jonkman and Eva van Roekel complicate the linear assumptions in temporal conceptions of resource extraction and suggest a muddling of time to indicate temporal porousness, the coexistence of, and entanglements between, social and economic lives, and overlapping resource cycles and potentialities. Using two cases, respectively from Colombia and Venezuela, they show that linearity is not how people in mine sites conceive of time or their lives in relation to extractive industries. Seeking to highlight and perhaps negotiate their vulnerability, people work with a ‘muddled temporality’. By thinking of the ‘extractive present’ as distinct from the past or the future, they emphasise connections, or an ‘afterlife’ or ‘a thing of the past’ tied to or parallel to future pursuits. The authors, therefore, suggest that we consider present booms, lives, and policies alongside their histories and futures. The present thus has within it residues of the past and seeds of the future, in that ‘one frontier’s life is another frontiers afterlife’. Jonkman and von Roekel conclude by advocating for multiple temporalities and circularity, and not the finality of mining cycles that ‘afterlife’ might suggest. This reading of time challenges the temporary logics undergirding some of the studies presented in this volume, including those imagining finality, ‘closures’, and ends.
- 48 Finally, ‘Extractive Frontiers: Narratives and Discourses’ takes on the narratives that shape and are shaped by broader political and economic forces. Each chapter unfolds space-making and border-defining perceptions and representations of extractivism, and how indigenous peoples, racialised economies and other marginalised communities creatively resist, are swept into, or assert their own narratives and visions of their future. As corporate narratives, imaginative practices, and discursive constructions are weaved in and around extractive industries, these chapters examine what such representations can tell us about extractive activities, their relationship to communities, and the mobilisation of opposition to them, from refugees and displaced peoples to rumours and other forms of gossip.

- 49 Anneloes Hoff looks at how corporate discourses, performative practices of storytelling, imaginings and myth-making unfold and render exploration and ultimately the expansion of mining possible. In other words, how narratives produce and maintain mining frontiers and engender professional subjectivities that reproduce and sustain myths and investor interest. Focusing on AngloGold Ashanti in Colombia, Hoff looks at the inward- and outward-oriented narratives that facilitated the entrance and expansion of (and resistance to) this ‘new’ mining frontier, also known as the ‘last Andean frontier’. The outward-oriented narrative targeted and managed investor and shareholders imaginations regarding the benefits and risks involved in gold mining in Colombia. The inward-oriented storytelling and practices were able to produce professional subjectivities and corporate identities that could be mobilised to sustain the narratives that made ‘exploration success tangible’. Hoff notes how this mythmaking process is gendered and centred around a male hero figure who valorises particular masculine traits, while women in turn downplay femininity.
- 50 Moving outwards to the international refugee regime, Julia Morris extends the logics of extractive capitalism to include the experience and economy of human (im)mobility. Based on research on the Pacific island of Nauru and in Jordan, the lens of extractivism is applied here to examine the refugee industry as a practice of ‘frontiering’. Morris’s chapter draws our attention to the extractive economies governing human mobility in the processing and resettling of refugees, and to the power imbalances that come with the extraction of value from humans as resources. This is a stark reminder of the forms of human objectification and commodification associated with extractivism, and of the inherent violence of the extractive practices present in the process of incorporating migrants and asylum applicants into migration governance regimes.
- 51 Finally, Sardana Nikolaeva looks at how the villagers of Djelinde in a far north-eastern region of the Russian Federation used rumours to negotiate their marginality and precariousness and to articulate resistance to an extraction project. Nikolaeva first unpacks how rumours are generated and how they circulate and help people make sense of, and respond to everyday experiences of anxiety and collective uncertainties in the context of extractivism. In this instance, Nikolaeva reads rumours as a covert psychological tactic that facilitates the rejection of the hegemonic ideologies of development that legitimate extractivism. While she underscores the political potentialities of rumours, she also points to the contradictory effects of rumours and rumouring, and argues that while rumours can be used to process experiences and resist, they can also be fuelled by those in power, and ultimately co-opted into registers of control and intimidation. In other words, rumour can be ‘strategically instrumentalised by the government’ to bolster its power.
- 52 As this volume demonstrates, the processes and impacts of extraction are multifaceted and complex, affecting communities, labour, social life and identities in various ways. The contributors provide a critical and nuanced understanding of the social, cultural and political dimensions of extraction as deeply social and shaped by practices of storytelling, imagination, social practices and relations. These dimensions are crucial in making extraction possible and for sustaining its expansion into new domains, but likewise for identifying opportunities for resistance and for paving the way for alternative future post-extractive communities and economies.
- 53 The accompanying volume, *The Afterlives of Extraction: Alternatives and Sustainable Futures* (Calvão, Archer and Benya, 2023), weaves futures narratives that emerge in the

face of extractive industries, and how we might move beyond the extractive paradigm towards alternative conceptions of sustainability and justice. Together, these volumes offer a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities presented by extraction, and provide a foundation for thinking about the conditions of possibility for creating more equitable and sustainable relationships with the earth's resources.

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NOTES

1. Pérez Alfonzo's words have been widely reported. See, e.g., The Devil's Excrement, *The Economist*, May 22, 2003. Pérez Alfonzo, a founder of OPEC and later a critic of Venezuela oil

policies post-1973, authored the book *Hundiéndonos en el excremento del diablo* (1976), Editorial Lisbana, Caracas. For an extended discussion of his role in Venezuela, see Coronil (1997).

2. Despite earlier references to an oil ‘curse’ (e.g. Gelb, 1988), the resource-curse thesis was first proposed by British economist Richard Auty in 1993 (Auty, 1993), and strengthened by subsequent analysis of lower growth rates in resource-rich developing countries (Sachs and Warner, 1999; Karl, 1997). A full overview of the vast literature on the resource curse—from its overheating effects on undiversified economies and the ill-planned accumulation strategies and rent seeking behaviour of the state to the anti-democratic effects of unaccountable government spending or corruption (Ross, 1999), the enclaving, enclosure, and land grabbing mechanisms associated with it, or the resource wars argument and the net increase in the risk of civil wars (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon, 2005)—is beyond the scope of the present volume.

3. See Calvão et al. (2021) for an overview of human insecurity in the extractive industries. We return to the effects of the OECD’s guidelines on the industry’s sustainability and responsibility initiatives in the accompanying volume (Calvão, Archer and Benya, 2023), but suffice to say here that the World Bank, with support from the International Council on Mining and Metals, has actively promoted an engagement with artisanal mining under the motto ‘governance is cheaper than defense’ (World Bank, 2009).

4. We cannot do justice, within the constraints of the present volume, to the vast and rich literature on ASM formalisation. Important works on the subject include those of Geenen (2012), Hilson et al. (2017) and Maconachie and Hilson (2011). Calvão, McDonald, and Bolay (2021) have extended this conversation to include the ‘outsourcing of responsibility’ associated with the integration of artisanal sources by transnational corporate actors in partnership with non-governmental organisations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Bolay and Calvão (2022) examine specifically the new-found wageless condition of these miners.

5. There has been important advocacy research on this issue reaffirming the particular forms of exclusion and risk that women and activists face, and their organised responses to extractive activities. See, e.g., the Association for Women’s Rights in Development and the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition’s report, *Women Human Rights Defenders Confronting Extractive Industries: An Overview of Critical Risks and Human Rights Obligations*, https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/whrds-confronting_extractive_industries_report-eng.pdf (accessed on 22 May 2023) or South Africa’s groundWork, Centre for Environmental Rights, Earthjustice, and Human Rights Watch report, *We Know Our Lives are in Danger: Environment of Fear in South Africa’s Mining-Affected Communities*, <https://cer.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/CER-gW-HRW-EJ-Report-on-EDs-16.4.2019.pdf> (accessed on 22 May 2023).

6. *Beneficiation*: the treatment of a raw material in order to improve its properties.

ABSTRACTS

Extractive frontiers are expanding rapidly as demand for minerals and metals continues to increase, often driven by—and despite—concerns about sustainability. This introduction brings theories of the resource curse and extractivism into conversation with materiality and social reproduction to account for the multiple scales and dimensions in which extractive industries operate, taking heed of the gendered and lived experience of communities, indigenous peoples and workers. We highlight the global resonance of these diverse experiences to illuminate the

making of frontiers, forms of belonging, and accumulation logics that produce, enable, and potentially undermine the expansion of extractive industries.

Les frontières de l'extraction s'étendent rapidement à mesure que la demande de minéraux et de métaux continue d'augmenter, souvent motivée par – et malgré – les préoccupations relatives à la durabilité. Cette introduction met en relation les théories de la malédiction des ressources et de l'extractivisme avec la matérialité et la reproduction sociale afin de rendre compte des multiples échelles et dimensions dans lesquelles les industries extractives opèrent, en tenant compte de l'expérience sexuée et vécue des communautés, des peuples indigènes et des travailleurs. Nous soulignons la résonance mondiale de ces diverses expériences pour éclairer la création de frontières, les formes d'appartenance et les logiques d'accumulation qui produisent, permettent et sapent potentiellement l'expansion des industries extractives.

Las fronteras de la extracción se están expandiendo rápidamente a medida que aumenta la demanda de minerales y metales, a menudo impulsada por –y a pesar de– la preocupación por la sostenibilidad. Esta introducción pone en relación las teorías de la maldición de los recursos y el extractivismo con la materialidad y la reproducción social para dar cuenta de las múltiples escalas y dimensiones en las que operan las industrias extractivas, teniendo en cuenta la experiencia de género y vida de las comunidades, los pueblos indígenas y los trabajadores. Destacamos la resonancia global de estas diversas experiencias para iluminar la creación de fronteras, las formas de pertenencia y las lógicas de acumulación que producen, permiten y potencialmente socavan la expansión de las industrias extractivas.

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Keywords: extractivism, frontiers, green economy, inclusive development, sustainability, resource-curse theory

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