

# Interdisciplinary Conference on Extraction and Exclusion

## Conference Sessions & Abstracts

*Thursday, October 19, 2017*

**9:00-10:40**

### **A) Discourse, Policy, Governance, and Exclusion**

**Chair: Samuel J. Spiegel (University of Edinburgh, UK)**

*Ideas, Ideals and Inclusion: Discourses of Petroleum Resource Governance*

*The impacts of Chinese foreign lending and investment on development policy creation in Ecuador*

*A material genealogy of the possibility of violence: Politics of strata in the Republic of Congo*

*The 'coal mafia' of North Karanpura: The local state, Maoists and criminal gangs collaborating over resource rents in a coal mining region of eastern India*

*Greenland's C169 paradox: International tripartism and indigenous unionisation in an evolving Arctic labour market*

**11:00-12:00**

### **B) Enchantment and witchcraft in extractive zones**

**Chair: Thomas Hendriks (University of Oxford, UK)**

*Contestation between Mining and Agrarian Values: Miners, Witchdoctors and Albino Murders in Tanzania's Artisanal Gold Fields*

*Witchcraft and 'Development-Induced Violence'*

*The arts of oil: dis/enchantment and popular culture in Port Harcourt*

**13:00-14:00**

### **C1) Impacts, Dispossession and (re) Distribution of Benefits from Extractive Projects**

**Chair: Patricia Daley (University of Oxford, UK)**

*Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Mining Minerals and Money*

*Dispossession and extractive led development*

*Superfluous jobs in extractives: working on inclusion or (re)producing exclusion?*

**13:00-14:00**

### **D1) Local Involvement in Knowledge Production and Decision-Making**

**Chair: Mark Nuttall (University of Alberta, Canada)**

*The role of online resources on local participation in decision-making on shale gas, Lancashire UK*

*Voting Against Extraction: Local Responses to Exclusion from Decision-Making on Mining*

*Cane & Able: Agrarian Settlement and Mining Conflicts in Northwestern Ecuador*

**14:10-15:30****E) 'New' Imperialisms and the Creation of Extractive Subjects****Chair: Vinita Damodaran (University of Sussex, UK)***The Optimal Native – the Making and Unmaking (Natural) Capital in Ruptured Landscapes**Tactics of Dispossession in the Extractive Sector: Accumulation, Power and the 'Extractive Subject'**Residential Tourism as Extraction: A postcolonial feminist reading of tourism as a development strategy in Panama**'America owns Wollar!': conquest and contestation within rural spaces***15:50-17:10****F) Politics of Nature, Science, and Knowledge Production****Chair: Gavin Bridge (Durham University, UK)***Something out there in the water: Local responses to resource exploration in Northwest Greenland**All at Sea? Deep Sea Mining and the politics of exclusion in Papua New Guinea**Extracted Resources, Exposed Bodies**EIAs, Power and Political Ecology: Resource Struggles and the Techno-Politics of Small-Scale Mining***Friday, October 20, 2017****9:00-10:20****G) Innovative methodologies for researching exclusion-inclusion and extraction****Chair: Amber Murrey (The American University in Cairo, Egypt)***Testimonies of environmental transformation through oral history: evidence of the excluded?**Understanding cumulative land grabs: Incremental dispossession leading to territorial transformation in India's North Karanpura coalfields**Andean Women Visualising Development: Exploring Participatory Photography in the Context of Resource Extraction**Enduring discourses and everyday contestation: Introduction to special section on 'Discourse and resource conflict in extractive zones of India' to be published in 'South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies' in December 2017***10:40-12:00****H) Artisanal, Small-Scale, and Informal Mining – Beyond Dichotomies****Chair: Deborah Fahy Bryceson (Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, UK)***Resources and the politics of sovereignty: The moral and immoral economies of coal mining in India**Exclusion, Migration and Artisanal Small-scale Mining in West Africa: How is Informal Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Helping Vulnerable Communities Build Resilience to Social Insecurity in Guinea and Niger?**Social and Environmental Costs of Unregulated Stone Mining in the Sylhet Region of Bangladesh*  
*Artisanal mining in South Africa and Zimbabwe: Regional patterns of exclusion/inclusion*

**13:00-14:00**

**C2) Impacts, Dispossession, (re) Distribution of Benefits from Extractive Projects**

**Chair: Ariell Ahearn-Ligham (University of Oxford, UK)**

*Bringers of light: performing resource revenue transparency in Liberia*

*Transparency as a solution?*

*Natural Gas revenues distribution in the Andean countries: Do Territorial projects matter for fostering regional economic change?*

**13:00-14:00**

**D2) Local Involvement in Knowledge Production and Decision-Making**

**Chair: Mark Nuttall (University of Alberta, Canada)**

*Local knowledge production in Uganda's early oil exploration phase*

*Landscapes of Extraction: The Convergence of Extractive Interests and Heritage/Resources*

*Policy along the Resource Frontier*

*Community heritage, trust and uncertainty: the troubled reopening of the Riso-Parina Valley zinc mines*

**Thursday, October 19, 2017**

**9:00–10:40**

**A) Discourse, Policy, Governance, and Exclusion**  
**Chair: Samuel J. Spiegel (University of Edinburgh, UK)**

*Ideas, Ideals and Inclusion: Discourses of Petroleum Resource Governance*  
Hege Sorreime (University of Oslo, Norway)

A broad variety of actors are eager to share their experiences and policy advice on how to best govern petroleum resources in order to achieve economic and social development with poor, inexperienced, petroleum-resource abundant states. However, for post-colonial African states, policy space is highly valued, stressing the need for homegrown and context-specific extractive resources governance. Contributing to debates over how and why petroleum resource governance regimes develop and change, this article illustrates why attention to context is important in explaining such changes. Taking the recent experiences in Tanzania with developing its petroleum governance as a case study, the article explores how competing discourses from different scales influence policy formulation processes and foster change. The aim is to move the discussion beyond the issues of quality of formal institutions and particular institutional setups and towards an understanding where the broader contextual factors are also taken into account. One potential policy implication is for donors and others to engage in more difficult and politically charged conversations where concepts such as ‘capacity building’ and ‘institution building’ are coupled with more fundamental questions concerning both energy-society and state-society relations, where processes of governance and policy formulation are as valued as specific policy outputs.

*The impacts of Chinese foreign lending and investment on development policy creation in Ecuador*  
Max Nathanson (Department of International Development, University of Oxford, UK)

Contemporary research has explored burgeoning Chinese lending and investment in Latin America, mainly focusing on uncovering numerical financial estimates and documenting the environmental effects of infrastructure projects. Concurrently, recent studies of Latin American environmental governance have focused on post-Washington Consensus politics and the tensions that exist in the region between the aims of economic development, social inclusion, and environmental conservation. However, little work has examined the influence and effects of Chinese investment on Latin American development in a holistic, interdisciplinary, and empirical fashion. This research will critically evaluate the political, economic, and ideological impacts of Chinese investment on development policy creation in Latin America through a case study of Ecuadorian national development plans. Drawing on theories of the developmental state, neo-extractivism, and governmentality, it argues that

infrastructure investments and discourses of sustainable development can be used to further state objectives. As such, Chinese lending and investment must be understood not only in terms of technology transfer and soft power expansion, but also in terms of its role in shaping domestic political rhetoric and industrial policy creation. In Ecuador, Rafael Correa's Citizen's Revolution (2007–2017) simultaneously demonized Western lending and attempted to codify Buen Vivir (Sumak Kawsay) ideas of alternative development and sustainability into national law and public policy. However, despite optimistic rhetoric emphasizing eco and social sustainability and state sovereignty, the Chinese model seems to refute the essence of Buen Vivir on three levels: care for the environment, recognition of indigenous rights, and state sovereignty/self-determination. This research seeks to understand the policy mechanisms and rationale behind these contradictions: why they exist and how they came to be.

*A material genealogy of the possibility of violence: Politics of strata in the Republic of Congo*

*Pierre-Louis Choquet (School of Geography and Environment, University of Oxford, UK)*

In this talk, I suggest that an accurate analysis of the dynamics of oil extraction in the Republic of Congo can lay the foundation to an in-depth discussion about the conditions of possibility of Max Weber's famous claim that the state is "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (Weber, 2004 [1919]). By offering an insight of the recent history of this long-time petro-state and by shedding light on the processes through which it continues to maintain its domination, I aim to demonstrate that it is largely through the articulation of a "politics of strata" (Clark, 2017) (i.e., of a specific type of interaction between human collectives and geological formations) that the Congolese state apparatus has made itself nearly irreplaceable - with the tacit support of other actors, chiefly multinational oil & gas firms. The lock-in of the political system and of the oil rent to the benefice of the ruling elite have indeed stirred up tensions, which have been in turn largely instrumentalized: the presidential clan willingly legitimates its brutal exercise of power as the last safeguard to the (not so unreal) threat of a possible deluge of violence. The core of this talk will therefore consist in highlighting the extent to which social domination "above the surface" can be interpreted as a derivation from specific socio-technical arrangements that are negotiated with the hydrocarbon deposits that lay in the deepest parts of the lithosphere.

Clark, N. (2017). Politics of Strata. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 34 (2-3), 211-231.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416667538>

Weber, M. (2004 [1919]). *The Vocation Lectures*. (D. Owen & T. B. Strong, Éd., R. Livingstone, Trad.). Indianapolis

*The 'coal mafia' of North Karanpura: The local state, Maoists and criminal gangs collaborating over resource rents in a coal mining region of eastern India*  
Nikas Kindo (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India)

This research will investigate state society relationship, state– capital motive for resource extraction and people’ s struggle to hold state institution accountable as these align with extremist groups. It follows the theoretical lines of the ‘resource curse’ , everyday state structural violence’ and ‘rentier state’ that suggests control over resources by powerful politicians, ruling elites, bureaucrats and dominant sections of the local community are practiced primarily to extract rent. Moreover it has been evident that extremist groups and criminal gangs fight with each other to establish control over resources for rents and to expand their regional dominance. This study is located in the North Karanpura Coal mining region– a resource rich tribal dominated region in Jharkhand state which produce a significant amount of coal to feed the burgeoning needs of the energy sector. Through ethnographic fieldwork carried out in 2015 and 2016 this research will examine the everyday violence and exclusion of local population by extremist groups and state– led security forces. As finding suggests that the rent gathering and its distribution among various agencies such as extremist groups and local state have strong nexus within.

*Greenland’ s C169 paradox: International tripartism and indigenous unionisation in an evolving Arctic labour market*  
Michael Jonathan Dangerfield (University of Oxford, UK)

As the last vestige of the League of Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO) remains the only international tripartite body which for almost a hundred years, has maintained a vital role in the field of indigenous rights. The ongoing articulation of this legacy remains the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), the world’ s only binding convention on indigenous rights. In 1996 the Danish Kingdom and Home–Rule Government of Greenland ratified C169 on behalf of its largely Indigenous Inuit population. Critical to the convention’ s application in Greenland remains its synergistic relationship with the ILO’ s Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations (CEACR). Given the tripartite constitution of the ILO however, cases of state malpractice may only be submitted to the CEACR through tripartite representation, be it government, union or employer. As such, a paradox exists whereby while C169 is intended to ensure the broadest application across indigenous communities, the convention’ s judicial mechanism necessitates that said communities are employed and unionised. This paper explores that paradox in the context of Greenland’ s increasing Foreign Direct Investment and large–scale extractive projects, as well as first–hand data that indicates levels of unionisation among indigenous workers in Greenland remains troublingly low.

11:00–12:00

**B) Enchantment and witchcraft in extractive zones**

**Chair: Thomas Hendriks (University of Oxford, UK)**

*Contestation between Mining and Agrarian Values: Miners, Witchdoctors and Albino Murders in Tanzania's Artisanal Gold Fields*

*Deborah Fahy Bryceson (Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, UK)*

Since the early 1990s, an escalating artisanal gold rush has catalyzed processes of capitalist accumulation and impoverishment in the Tanzanian countryside. The moral economy of a country known for its ujamaa philosophy of African socialism and the egalitarian division of wealth has undergone fundamental upheaval. Local people have seen the influx of miners as a ready market for their agricultural produce. In turn, miners have developed relational ties with the local population. But a sequence of tragic sacrificial murders of approximately albinos, arising from local waganga healers-cum-witchdoctors' sale of fetishized 'lucky charms' to success-seeking miners, poses a number of enigmatic issues. This presentation outlines the circumstances under which the lucky charm fetish has appeared and probes the plight of the albinos in relation to the motives of the actors involved, notably the miners, healers, and middlemen killers. Tribal primitivism is blamed in the international press, while locally waganga have been put on the firing line by the Tanzanian government. Tracing the simultaneous clash and convergence of seemingly dichotomous cultures of Tanzanian egalitarianism and global capitalist profit-seeking offers a more nuanced interpretation of this interactive arena of economic ambition and ambiguous social status.

*Witchcraft and 'Development-Induced Violence'*

*Amber Murrey (The American University in Cairo, Egypt)*

Witchcraft epistemologies are, at times, a means through which people engage with and articulate experiences of violence and inequality associated with development practices and ventures (i.e., 'development-induced violence'). While cultural anthropologists have focused on the connections between modern capitalist practices and shifting witchcraft practices, social historians have traced the links between earlier forms of modernity, among them enslavement and colonialism, and witchcraft. Considering these two literatures side-by-side is evocative in a consideration of violence: it suggests that witchcraft has a long history of interpreting and interacting with varying forms of socio-political violence throughout history (from colonial to post-colonial developmental violence). Drawing from an ethnographic case study of the Chad-Cameroon Oil Pipeline, this article supplements a comprehensive review of the literature on the relationship between witchcraft, violence, and development with ethnographic reflections on the ways in which the dispersed and sometimes violent practices of large-scale developmentalism reinforce and/or transform witchcraft discourses and practices in Central and West Africa.

*The arts of oil: dis/enchantment and popular culture in Port Harcourt*  
David Pratten (University of Oxford, UK)

How do the popular arts reflect a dialectic of enchantment and disenchantment with the Nigerian petro-state? In what ways do the popular arts celebrate its profits and politics, and critique its inequalities and injustices? This research engages directly with the emerging field of 'oil culture' or 'petro-culture' studies (Barrett & Worden 2014). It aims to make visible the conspicuously invisible role of oil in everyday life and culture, and to do so by examining the cultural history of Port Harcourt – a symbol and a catalyst of Nigeria's incorporation into the global economy of energy capitalism.

Enchantment and disenchantment offer multivalent concepts from art, religion and politics with which to frame an investigation into the anthropology of Nigerian arts. The conceptual dialectic of enchantment and disenchantment plays across a number of registers – enchantment in relation to the oil economy operates in terms of the magical state, to the fetishistic qualities of oil and to the 'technologies' of artistic production. Disenchantment too is multivalent. In addition to its association with rationalisation it can stand for critique, protest, and violence. It can mark a temporal moment – after-enchantment, post-boom, post-oil, eco-criticism.

This contrast between enchantment and disenchantment finds a particular resonance in the study of popular arts shaped by the logics of an oil economy. This paper is based on historical insights across music (from Rex Lawson to Duncan Mighty), literature (from JP Clark to Kaine Agary), and art (from Sokari Douglas-Camp to Diseye Tantua). How do the popular arts interrogate the spectacle, illusion, corruption and violence associated with the political economy of Nigeria's major oil city, Port Harcourt? Is the popular culture of oil a protest culture? Can we demonstrate the role of political ecology on cultural creativity?

**13:00–14:00**

**C1) Impacts, Dispossession and (re) Distribution of Benefits from Extractive Projects**

**Chair: Patricia Daley (University of Oxford, UK)**

*Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Mining Minerals and Money*  
Terence W. Garde (Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, UK)

The paper discusses the larger universe of mining, economic growth and economic development, in which artisanal miners and their theologies of economic justice will ultimately be located. The mining industry is divided into two sectors, financed and non-financed (artisanal) mining. After a review of the history of mining in the development of human society, the paper then shows how the five stages in the life of a mine are driven by financial capital and that the financed mining sector is beholden to

its investors. Expected returns on investment (capital growth) are based on the risks involved, and these expectations are analogous to a hard place.

The financed mining sector, if seeking to operate in a foreign territory, must convince the host nation where the ore deposit is located of the positive economic development arising from mining activities. These create another set of expectations in the host nation and local community as their natural resources are exploited regarding environmental, ecological, social, political and economic development. Bitter criticism is raised over the performance of the mining industry in these respects, including the Church, based on liberation theology. These matters are collectively analogous to the rock against which the industry has to struggle as it wins ores from the surface of the planet, wherever mining is practiced.

The financed mining sector is thus under unavoidable pressure between local impacts and promises made to meet local and host nation expectations, and promises to financial investors. Beyond this paper, further research arising from this review of secondary sources will ask whether or not the non-financed (artisanal) mining sector can avoid the dilemmas facing the financed sector. Could the insights of East African artisanal gold miners be brought to engage with advocates, critics and Christian theologians regarding mining as economic development?

*Dispossession and extractive led development*

*Charles Roche (Murdoch University/ Mineral Policy Institute, Australia)*

Inspired by questions from local communities about the impacts of extractives, I explore the relationship between the global extractive industry and semi-subsistence communities. A place where subaltern communities on the edge of capitalism seek to secure their share of benefits from an industry predominantly based in, funded by and controlled from the core. Seeking transferable knowledge that could preempt the unknown specificity of various impact assessments, international experience is used to examine extractive led development. Following Harvey (2006) and Holden, Nadeau, and Jacobson (2011), I assess extractive impacts and outcomes in Papua New Guinea (PNG) through the lens of dispossession. Applying and extending their work to PNG, to formulate a theory of extractive, or development dispossession which provides a closer, recipient view perspective, than those from economic, CSR or northern development approaches. The outcome is a conceptual theory to understand how deeply felt polarised understandings of development produce the well documented, sub-optimum outcomes from the extractives industry, not just in PNG but elsewhere. Providing a lens from which to answer community questions about what they can realistically expect from living with extractive industries. In sum, extractive led development is presented as complex and inherently contradictory, where cultural values both set development goals and obscure the lived experience of extractive led development.

*Superfluous jobs in extractives: working on inclusion or (re)producing exclusion?*

*Mollie Gleiberman (University of Antwerp, Belgium)*

*Sarah Geenen (Institute of Development Policy and Management, University of Antwerp, Belgium)*

Job creation has become central to the global development agenda, which has converged on employment as the key to inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction. Extractive industries (EIs) in particular highlight employment opportunities for the host communities in which they operate through direct, indirect, and induced jobs. However, many of these jobs are low-wage and low-skill, prompting critical scholars to voice concern about the efficacy of job creation as an inclusive development strategy. In this paper we look at superfluous employment—jobs that serve little purpose beyond meeting demand for wage-work—in the context of EIs and connect this to wider debates about corporate social responsibility (CSR). Are superfluous jobs merely patronage (charitable creation of unnecessary jobs to placate a host community that was promised employment) or sustainable development (nascent linkages leading to opportunities beyond the EI)? Using evidence from a gas/mineral resource boom in Mozambique and a large-scale gold mine in DRC, we ask whether redistribution via superfluous employment constitutes inclusion into the extractive industry value chain, or if it compounds the marginal position of local actors, thereby reproducing existing—and creating new—forms of exclusion.

**13:00–14:00**

### **D1) Local Involvement in Knowledge Production and Decision-Making**

**Chair: Mark Nuttall (University of Alberta, Canada)**

The role of online resources on local participation in decision-making on shale gas, Lancashire UK *Imogen Rattle (University of Leeds, UK)*

*James Van Alstine (University of Leeds, UK)*

In 2016, the UK government granted permission for exploratory shale gas drilling in the Fylde, Lancashire, despite the affected communities conducting a sustained on- and offline campaign against the proposal. Online resources such as websites, e-consultation tools, and social media putatively offer improved inclusion by providing enhanced access to information, and lowering barriers to participating in the Environmental Impact Assessment and planning processes. However these avenues do not ensure the authorities will be responsive to local concerns, even when residents procure the necessary technical expertise to participate within the prescribed terms of the process. Research on community responses to shale gas abound, but there is little consideration of how the online world is shaping the local response. In this paper, I draw upon current and ongoing research in Lancashire to explore the social and political dimensions of the local anti-fracking movement's use of online resources. Through an analysis of actor accounts and social media data, I

argue that where once they promoted increased inclusion, online resources are now polarising and amplifying the debate. Disillusioned by the government's failure to respond to their concerns, Fylde residents are using these tools to engage in alternative methods of public involvement, including direct action.

*Voting Against Extraction: Local Responses to Exclusion from Decision-Making on Mining*

*Anneloes Hoff (Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford, UK)*

On 26 March 2017, inhabitants of Cajamarca, a small campesino village in the Colombian Andes, decided in an unprecedented community vote that they did not want mining activities in their municipality. Their vote took the mining company and the Colombian government by great surprise, as the village is home to one of the largest, unexploited gold deposits in the world, and during its ten-year long presence in the village the company had extensively wielded its economic and political power, investing millions of dollars in community relations. Cajamarca's referendum may be interpreted as a local response to the exclusion of local populations from the decision-making processes on the authorisation of mining in Colombia. This paper discusses Cajamarca's referendum on the basis of seven months of ethnographic fieldwork in the village, with unique access to both sides of the deeply polarised corporate-community conflict. It discusses the logics and strategies of corporate actors as well as grassroots activists in preparation of the referendum, and the consequences of the referendum at the local and national level.

*Cane & Able: Agrarian Settlement and Mining Conflicts in Northwestern Ecuador*

*David Kneas (University of South Carolina, USA)*

An ongoing issue within the social sciences of resource conflicts has centered on the dynamics of local opposition to, and local divisions over, the prospect or process of large-scale mining. A recurring question or problem for scholars in this field is how to explain and narrate the origins of opposition and local discord. Where we begin and end a story shapes in powerful ways that story tells. For many chronicles of resource conflicts, analysis begins with the arrival or onset of mineral exploration and extraction. In this paper, however, I situate a contemporary conflict over proposed copper mining in northwestern Ecuador in relation to histories of agrarian settlement. Though the prospect of mining first emerged in the early 1990s, I examine local divisions over mining in relation to the production of sugar cane and shifting relations of class and power that began in the 1950s. In doing so, I consider multiple registers of exclusion. I emphasize the agrarian histories and landscapes that are often ignored and obfuscated in standard narratives of resource conflicts. I describe social and material landscapes in motion, how local actors have generated the literal and metaphorical fields upon which the mining conflict has played out.

14:10–15:30

**E) 'New' Imperialisms and the Creation of Extractive Subjects**

**Chair: Vinita Damodaran (University of Sussex, UK)**

*The Optimal Native – the Making and Unmaking (Natural) Capital in Ruptured Landscapes*

*Wolfram Dressler (School of Geography, University of Melbourne, Australia)*

*Rob Fletcher (SDC, Wageningen University, the Netherlands)*

This article explores the global trend of promoting the value of natural capital in support of maintaining ecosystem services in devastated, ruptured landscapes. As a global governance enterprise, the ideology and practice of valuing natural capital aims to harness the economic value of conserved nature to generate revenue intended to incentivize local resource users to forego the opportunity costs of extensive agriculture and other extractive industries (mining, oil palm, rubber etc). This article shows that in order to do so, significant finances, labour and ideas are being poured into the idea of conserving natural capital as the basis of not simply improving, but also optimizing indigenous ways of life, livelihoods and landscapes through integrated approaches involving incentives and conditionalities. We show that as these interventions unfold a paradox emerges that is best understood by engaging neoliberalism as a form of biopower seeking to defend life by demonstrating its profitability and subsequent right to exist. This neoliberal biopower employs discourses and technologies of control to regulate and discipline those living in rural, frontier spaces in ways intended to optimize both economic and ecological 'returns'.<sup>2</sup> In this process, we demonstrate how in some cases, local people are not simply encouraged to conceptualize natural resources in terms of economic valuation and benefit–cost calculation, but most dramatically in terms of self–disciplining toward optimal, eco–rational behaviour. The peculiar nature of this scenario, however, is that agendas to optimize life to conserve natural capital through behavioural change, increasingly happens in devastated landscapes ruptured by extractivism with few 'ecosystem services' remaining to conserve. By drawing on a case from the southern Philippines, we examine how natural capital conservation that aims to value and conserve ecosystem services increasingly offers poor indigenous uplanders false hopes as they themselves negotiate and contend with making a living in barely liveable landscapes. We question the ethics of conserving natural capital amongst the poor in marginal, ruptured landscapes.

*Tactics of Dispossession in the Extractive Sector: Accumulation, Power and the 'Extractive Subject'*

*Tomas Frederiksen (University of Manchester, UK)*

*Matt Himley (Illinois State University, USA)*

This paper reviews work on dispossession in the extractive sector to explore the relationship between dispossession, techniques of power and socio–political stability. The review reveals a range of strategies deployed to achieve the dispossession of

land and resources upon which the extractive industry's development depends and address the socio-political tumult often generated. In contrast to a reputation for coercion and domination, dispossession in the extractive sector is increasingly stabilised through what John Allen calls 'the quieter registers of power' of negotiation, persuasion and manipulation. As a result of an overlapping matrix of strategies and tactics to stabilise dispossession, we suggest that those living in the shadow of large international extractive operations become extractive subjects – Homo extractivus. Through encounters with the logics, materiality and power of extractive industry political subjectivities are reworked and embedded within an inclusion/exclusion dialectic used to stabilise dispossession.

*Residential Tourism as Extraction: A postcolonial feminist reading of tourism as a development strategy in Panama*

*Sharlene Mollett (Department of Human Geography and the Centre for Critical Development Studies, University of Toronto, Canada)*

On the Atlantic Coast of Panama, the Bocas del Toro archipelago is home to a growing residential tourism enclave. Under the state's Master Tourism Plan, residential tourism development, based in part on the advance of foreign and elite land ownership, is touted as a poverty reduction strategy and supported by a broader development mandate underpinned by human rights. However, in this paper, I want to propose that like mining, oil and gas concessions, land appropriation for residential tourism, is an extractive practice that not only erases domestic forms of land control and natural resource access, but re-entrenches labour relations between foreigners/elites and domestic (poor) populations. Drawing from ethnographic and historical data collection in Panama and the subfield of postcolonial feminist political ecologies, I argue that extraction, as practice and mode of accumulation in the present, congeals with place histories and historical spatial formations of the past. I will show how foreign land accumulation in Bocas not only renders indigenous and Afro-descendant servitude necessary in the present, but also how their labour is constitutive of the *longue durée* of racial, gendered and carnal spatialities of extraction in Latin America.

*'America owns Wollar!' : conquest and contestation within rural spaces*  
*Hedda Haugen Askland (The University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia)*

We are deliberately wrecking this landscape and we are just doing it because there's a lot of greed and... we are not even mining this stuff! And we don't even own the land anymore. America owns Wollar! America!

With this quote as my starting point, I will in this paper explore how Wollar—a small, rural village in the Mid-Western Region of New South Wales, Australia—has become a place of conquest and contestation, expansion and exclusion, due to coal exploration. The village, which is surrounded by three open cut coal mines owned and managed by multinational corporations, has since 2006 been transformed into a ghost town. Today, less than 30 people remain in Wollar, with Peabody Energy—the mining

giant that owns the mine closest to the village—having obtained more than 90% of the land in the area. Whilst mining has been part of the region for over a century, privatisation of the energy market, intensification of extractive activities and moves to open-cut mining have altered both the physical and social environment. Situated within a landscape and history already marked by colonial conquest, Wollar is today subject to a new type of imperialism, which is intimately tied to questions of political access, power, class, representation and citizenship.

**15:50–17:10**

## **F) Politics of Nature, Science, and Knowledge Production**

**Chair: Gavin Bridge (Durham University, UK)**

*Something out there in the water: Local responses to resource exploration in Northwest Greenland*

*Mark Nuttall (University of Alberta, Canada)*

International energy and mining companies are increasingly interested in Greenland's subsurface resources, and extractive industry development is a stated aim of the Greenlandic self-rule government. In recent years, interest has grown in the possibility of developing mines as well as in oil exploration opportunities in offshore waters. The planning for—and desired expansion of—extractive industries involves certain and very specific political, volumetric and stratigraphic procedures and practices used to define, demarcate, lay claim to and regulate resource spaces. These spaces, though, are often constituents of a rich, lively world of past and present Inuit societies and intricate human-animal and broader human-environment relations. In impact assessments, however, they undergo a process of unmaking into empty spaces and frontier zones that consultants represent in reports and public hearings as being wilderness areas, low in biodiversity and empty of human presence, yet potentially rich in subsurface resources. In this presentation, and providing examples from research in the Upernavik and Melville Bay area that relate to a concern with shifting ice, seismic surveys, and mineral exploration, I draw on continuing ethnographic research examining the social, political and environmental dimensions of climate change and resource development. Much of this involves a consideration of the science and politics of and about the subsurface: how the subsurface is imagined, probed, and mapped, and politicized, and what happens at the intersection of the public and technical-political discourse surrounding subsurface geologies and resource development. This focus on Greenland, however, illustrates a broader process of the reimagining of the Arctic as a resource frontier, the way in which ocean depths and subsurface geologies are enrolled in geopolitical imaginaries and resource projects, and the anxieties and resistances this provokes.

*All at Sea? Deep Sea Mining and the politics of exclusion in Papua New Guinea*  
John Childs (Lancaster University, UK)

Deep sea mining (DSM) is quickly emerging as a new frontier for resource extraction. The world's first commercial operation is due to begin in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the early part of 2019, where high grades of copper and gold are scheduled to be extracted from a seabed sited 1600 metres under the surface of the Bismark Sea. By virtue of being 'at sea', it is argued by its proponents to have a minimal impact on society thus delineating it as a more progressive alternative to the exclusionary practices of terrestrial mining. However, based on original fieldwork in PNG, this paper argues that the political contention surrounding DSM coalesces around familiar debates concerning the merits of scientific versus indigenous knowledge. It does so by analysing the ways in which the materiality (the things that nature 'does') of the seabed and deep-ocean are used, packaged and explained by corporate and community interests in different ways. With an interdisciplinary focus that brings together insights from oceanography, political geography and resource anthropology, it is shown that the politics of DSM in PNG threatens to reveal processes and strategies of exclusion which have their parallels in the terrestrial mining imaginary.

*Extracted Resources, Exposed Bodies*  
Jennifer Lawrence (Virginia Tech, USA)

The problematic governance of extreme energy provides an opportunity to assess the double-edge of creative destruction that paradoxically provides for—and simultaneously erodes—environmental, economic, and health security of citizens living and working in/around sites of extraction. This paper assesses the environmental and health impacts of the clean-up efforts surrounding the Deepwater Horizon disaster, where remediation efforts were highly dependent on the use of toxic chemical dispersants. While those living in affected communities cite a range of environmental and health problems associated with the use of the oil dispersant Corexit, state-sanctioned scientific studies have largely failed to recognize the ongoing health crisis in the aftermath of the oil spill. The deployment of Corexit and other toxicants presents a complication for global (health) governance since there is no agreement regulating the usage of a product that has international implications. Further complicating knowledge/information around Corexit is the fact that public policy privileges knowledge generated by the state and devalues knowledge generated by local communities, creating a situation whereby the health effects of energy production appear predetermined and uncontested. From the molecular level and through the social body, the toxic loads necessary for oil production can be understood as part of the chemical regime of living but, a broader framework is needed for analyzing the toxic governance of extreme energy that requires certain populations and geographies to be resilient in the face of their own exploitation. Here, the conceptual framework of "bioextraction," is posed as a useful tool that raises critical questions about the ill-effects of extracting resources, labor, capital, and knowledge in an era of extreme energy.

*EIAs, Power and Political Ecology: Resource Struggles and the Techno-Politics of Small-Scale Mining*

*Samuel J. Spiegel (University of Edinburgh, UK)*

Political ecology lenses are increasingly used to unpack conflicts related to resource extraction. Yet, an area that remains under-theorised is how environmental impact assessments (EIAs) are embedded in politics and imagined as sites of power relations. Drawing on long-term fieldwork in Zimbabwe engaging small-scale miners, EIA consultants and government officials, this article examines the changing social significance of EIAs during and after a nationwide police operation. Among other articulations of dissent, small-scale miners associations protested that EIA enforcement rhetoric served unjustly as a rationale for halting livelihoods and extracting rent from miners in times of economic difficulty. The article explores how enforcement rhetoric was perceived in relation to coercion and criminalisation, expert environmental consultancy cultures and adapted legacies of colonial practice in contemporary dynamics of rule. Heavy-handed policing under the banner of enforcement impinged on livelihoods and had counterproductive effects in addressing environmental problems, while complying with expensive EIA report-producing requirements was far beyond the means of most small-scale miners. The article rethinks how technical EIA rhetoric becomes entangled in contentious politics, suggesting future directions in political ecology theorising in relation to extractive sectors, calling for careful attention to how multiple forms of hegemony are conceptualised and challenged.

**Friday, October 20, 2017****9:00–10:20****G) Innovative methodologies for researching exclusion–inclusion and extraction****Chair: Amber Murrey (The American University in Cairo, Egypt)***Testimonies of environmental transformation through oral history: evidence of the excluded?**Diana Salazar (Development Planning Unit UCL, UK)*

The process of environmental transformation taking place in Indigenous territories by the mining industry and its negative consequences on health, the local economy, social relations, etc. are difficult to prove. That is the case when local communities are searching for fair compensation or trying to stop the expansion plans of the mines. Paradoxically, the physical environmental alteration from which most negative impacts are derived is often evident to all, even by looking at a close up of the area in a satellite map. What can be the role of oral history in providing evidence of how such transformations impact on local communities when their knowledge is linked to their traditional beliefs and therefore not legitimised? I explore this topic with a case study of the Cerrejon mine in La Guajira, north of Colombia.

*Understanding cumulative land grabs: Incremental dispossession leading to territorial transformation in India's North Karanpura coalfields**Patrik Oskarsson (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden)**Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (Australian National University, Australia)**Patrick Wennström (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden)*

This article explains a contradiction in recent rural land debates in India: on the one hand explosive political contestation to prevent individual land grabs, on the other an unprecedented urban–industrial expansion that is appropriating rural land. To investigate this phenomenon, we put the coal mining tract of North Karanpura under a temporal study, combining GIS, land–use statistics and field visits. The results reveal a cumulative land grab of thousands of hectares from the 1980s to present day as agricultural fields and forests constitutionally reserved for India's tribal population are acquired in the name of national energy security. We identify the mechanisms behind this land grab, which to date has gone undetected, as consisting of three phases; the reservation of the land as a coalfield, the division of the coalfield into multiple mines, and the possibility for each individual mine to expand separately. In reality, the mines are placed in close proximity to one another leading to large overall land use change. The findings of this paper suggest that an aggregate analysis of land dynamics is needed to better place Indian land grabs within the international debate to better account for the dramatic territorial rearrangements of the Indian countryside.

*Andean Women Visualising Development: Exploring Participatory Photography in the Context of Resource Extraction*

*Katy Jenkins (Northumbria University, UK)*

This paper reflects on a participatory photography project conducted with 12 women anti-mining activists in the Cajamarca region of Peru. Over a three-month period, the women activists took photos capturing aspects of what Development means to them in the context of living with and contesting large scale mining projects. The paper reflects on the challenges and successes of using participatory photography in this context, and interrogates the extent to which such an approach enables grassroots women's perspectives to come to the fore. I critically analyse a selection of the women activists' photos and accompanying narratives, emphasising the importance the women place on portraying positive alternatives to mining and moving beyond images of environmental degradation and violence, re-imagining their daily lives through a hopeful lens and an optimistic exploration of what might be possible.

*Enduring discourses and everyday contestation: Introduction to special section on 'Discourse and resource conflict in extractive zones of India' to be published in 'South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies' in December 2017*

*Siddharth Sareen (University of Bergen, Norway)*

*Patrik Oskarsson (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden)*

This introduction to an upcoming special section makes a case for studying discourse in conjunction with practice to offer improved ways of understanding how resource conflicts are reproduced in institutions and through corporate and public organizational cultures over time even as they are played out in everyday processes. We extend earlier work that suggests that an attentiveness to discourse can reveal greater insights into movement-strategising and impact across networks of actors and assemblages of institutions linked to specific conflicts. Long-term forces that fuel conflict over inequitable outcomes, and a preference for urbanizing 'modern' cultures over other ways of living, are prevalent in India as elsewhere, and can be better understood through the nature of their portrayal and the subjectivities they engender. In deconstructing and re-assembling contested processes of resource utilisation, we can integrate the cultural and material basis of resource claims with political aspects of the manner in which resource-dependent development proceeds by probing concerns of marginalised groups and alternative understandings of resource extraction that tend to be sidelined in India's prominent growth narrative. Concurrently, we understand extractive zones as a concept that carves out space for an analysis of environmental conflict across scales. Here, the materiality of certain forms of resource extraction, considered alongside varying modes of governance and specific forms of cultural politics, provides entry points for analysing resource conflicts.

10:40–12:00

**H) Artisanal, Small–Scale, and Informal Mining – Beyond Dichotomies**

**Chair: Deborah Fahy Bryceson (Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, UK)**

*Resources and the politics of sovereignty: The moral and immoral economies of coal mining in India*

*Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (Australian National University, Australia)*

This paper analyses the socio–legal and political spaces within which coal is mined in India, and asks if it is possible to raise the ‘moral question’ where the state attributes an iconic status to coal. It deals with the extractivism of the poor that creates an untidy and chaotic world, a world that is difficult to accommodate in existing theories of mining and resource conflict. Mining has expanded within a national and global politics over resources—constituted by neo–liberal economic policies, based on the distinction between public and private property rights, and on unitary and stable ownership, based on the ‘fixing of values’. This politics allows us to understand easily ‘the constant negotiability of value and the unmapping of space’. The empirical evidence is from two indigenous–dominated states where community coal mining allows us to reinterpret the resource–development–conflict literature from the perspective of the politics of the poor. If the communities in Jharkhand exert a moral claim by mining coal illegally, those in Meghalaya exert a political claim of sovereignty by invoking the special status they enjoy in the Indian Constitution. This paper examines this grey zone in our understanding of resource conflicts and dispossession beyond straightforward distinctions between legal and illegal.

*Exclusion, Migration and Artisanal Small-scale Mining in West Africa: How is Informal Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Helping Vulnerable Communities Build Resilience to Social Insecurity in Guinea and Niger?*

*Penda Diallo (University of Exeter, UK)*

This presentation looks at the role of Artisanal and Small–scale Mining (ASM), focusing on the opportunities and contributions that ASM makes to communities often excluded from formal sectors in developing countries. With particular focus on diamonds mining in Guinea and gold mining in Niger, the focus of this presentation is on the role of ASM and how structural inequalities and exclusion have resulted in many people migrating to ASM sites. It discusses the reasons why those excluded from formal sectors including education and formal employment migrate to the ASM mines. The central argument the presentation advances is that rather than associating ASM with negativities because of its informality, it is crucial for stakeholders to focus on the positive contributions that ASM makes to the livelihood of vulnerable communities in West Africa. The presentation uses a resilience framework to analyse the socio–economic contributions of the ASM sector to the livelihood of miners. The presentation shows how although excluded, those who migrate to the mines use ASM as a strategy to build resilience to the exclusion from formal sectors and enter into a

network where they can be included in one of the many groups that exist on the mines.

*Social and Environmental Costs of Unregulated Stone Mining in the Sylhet Region of Bangladesh*

*Mohammad Jahirul Hoque (School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, UK)*

Unregulated stone mining, which can alternatively be defined as stone quarrying, became a major environmental and development issue for the north-eastern part of Bangladesh. This study aims to reveal the social and environmental cost of this unregulated stone quarrying against the financial gain of the government and alternative livelihoods opportunities of the poor people. This paper investigates how has unregulated stone quarrying caused the social and environmental processes of marginalisation of local indigenous peoples and environmental degradation. An intensive fieldwork was done in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh, which revealed that this small scale unregulated mining has instigated human displacement, environmental damage and silent humanitarian crises. This paper gives the policy makers and natural and mineral resource depletion academics and researchers an understanding of a social science perspective of unregulated and informal stone mining. The findings of this study suggest that lack of good governance, political corruption and changes of ‘bundle of rights’ of the local indigenous Khasi people promote this unregulated stone quarrying in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh. Finally, this work recommends policies to overcome the crises.

*Artisanal mining in South Africa and Zimbabwe: Regional patterns of exclusion/inclusion*

*Robert Thornton (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)*

In southern Africa—specifically Roodeport (West Rand, Johannesburg), Barberton (eastern Mpumalanga Province) and NE Zimbabwe—artisanal mining shows different patterns of exclusion and inclusion in a complex regional economy that involves skill and expertise, knowledge, movement of personnel, different legal regimes and the manner in which they are enforced, different types of mining and processing, and different underlying geologies. In most cases, artisanal mining personnel and knowledge is completely excluded from government and formally constituted institutions of mine governance. Artisanal mining is largely selforganising with extremely limited organisational structures and very small capital investment. There is effectively no cost of entry, although risks—especially from rival artisanal miners and police—are high. Amounts of gold produced are difficult to measure, but may already have overtaken formal capital-intensive mining since artisanal production and refining technologies are extremely efficient and growing rapidly. Inclusion therefore is entirely informal although economically significant. Our current research includes ethnographic and observational work as well as technical analysis of production processes (XRF, OLM, SEM) of ores and waste streams, and compares contemporary artisanal mining

technologies with archaeological evidence of pre-colonial mining to assess the historical continuity of artisanal mining.

**13:00–14:00**

## **C2) Impacts, Dispossession, (re) Distribution of Benefits from Extractive Projects**

**Chair: Ariell Ahearn–Ligham (University of Oxford, UK)**

*Bringers of light: performing resource revenue transparency in Liberia*

*Levon Epremian (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)*

*Cathrine Brun (Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP), Oxford Brookes University, UK)*

Initiatives designed to increase transparency have received particular focus as a development tool for improving governance and fighting corruption in the natural resource sector. This trend has seen the emergence of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), an international organisation that administers a voluntary standard for natural resource revenue transparency. In line with western liberal democratic ideals, EITI aims to empower citizens through the dissemination of information supporting governance improvements, more public scrutiny and accountability in the sharing of benefits from resource extraction. Using an ethnographic approach, this paper examines EITI's efforts to disseminate natural resource revenue data in rural Liberia. The paper first sets out an ethnographic approach to the study of practices through which transparency is constituted in this context, focussing specifically on the performance of transparency policy by EITI staff. Secondly, we seek to understand the workshops as encounters between EITI staff and the various participants from the local area. The workshops are to a large degree constituted through the performance of EITI practitioners who attempt to negotiate complex agendas by structuring and orchestrating the flow of events and strategic representations designed to garner legitimacy in the eyes of various audiences, both present and not present at the workshops. Third, we discuss these representations as the effects of transparency policy. Here, we understand how transparency is performed according to the discursive scripts offered by liberal democratic narratives and rationalist accounts of knowledge on which transparency policy stands. This resulted in an idealised technocratic construction of Liberian politics and natural resource governance processes and recast people as an abstract category – as 'citizens' with a specific role and relation to the state. This was a version of reality at odds with the lived experiences of people living in the areas where resources are extracted. This paper presents an example of how depoliticised governance initiatives, by editing out the references to political-economy and socio-political relations 'as they are', can have effects that are a long way from their rhetoric of empowerment. It also indicates a more fundamental contradiction within instrumental notions of transparency as a modernising governance project. A broader contribution of the paper in this regard is to use an empirical case to show how transparency through its

practices of enactment becomes spectacle, itself obscuring backstage processes, inviting passivity from its audiences and the maintenance of status quo.

*Transparency as a solution?*

*Päivi Lujala (Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway)*

The international community promotes transparency as a means to remedy misappropriation and mismanagement of natural resources and their revenues to combat corruption, increase accountability, and promote government effectiveness and development in many developing countries. A cornerstone of transparency initiatives is the dissemination of information about the management of valuable natural resources and their revenues to the public. The idea is that by informing the public people are empowered to demand better, and perhaps more equitable, natural resource management.

Although the chain of logic behind this transparency narrative is widely accepted, empirical studies have so far not been able to show clearly that transparency has had an impact on corruption, resource management, or broader societal and economic development. The lack of tangible impacts from transparency initiatives on their purported objectives raises difficult questions regarding whether the mechanisms thought to link increased information disclosure to better resource governance are valid. In this presentation, I will question the underlying assumption that increased information about natural resource revenues to the general public will itself increase demand and action for more accountable natural resource revenue management. In this presentation, I will take some tentative steps towards proposing a more realistic understanding of how information can foster accountability.

*Natural Gas revenues distribution in the Andean countries: Do Territorial projects matter for fostering regional economic change?*

*Felipe Irarrazaval (University of Manchester, UK)*

A key characteristic of the last commodities super-cycle was the substantial increase in public revenues because of resources extraction. Particularly in Latin America, this increase in public revenues entailed many social tensions regarding how such revenues shall be distributed among different sub-national levels. Although some authors state that extractive revenue distributions just increase extractive industry related problems, other authors state that there is not enough clear evidence that revenues distribution to sub-national levels has a negative impact. In that vein, Hinojosa et al (2015) state that the development of a territorial project based on the articulation of different actors is critical for reaching positive outcomes - e.g. economic diversification or inequality reduction - from extractive revenues decentralization at sub national level. Against this background, this work looks for analysing in a comparative perspective how the inclusion of different actors improves Natural Gas revenues decentralization performance. Even though social inclusion is essential, it is proposed that it is necessary to analyse the creation of territorial projects as well because they show how actors and coalitions negotiate, build and argue about development perspectives. For such purposes, it analyses the processes

of revenue decentralization in Cuzco (Peru) and Tarija (Bolivia), specifically regarding social inclusion dynamics and territorial projects. This analysis is based on secondary data analysis and literature review developed prior to fieldwork.

**13:00–14:00**

**D2) Local Involvement in Knowledge Production and Decision–Making**  
**Chair: Mark Nuttall (University of Alberta, Canada)**

*Local knowledge production in Uganda's early oil exploration phase*

*Laura Smith (University of Leeds, UK)*

*Jamie Van Alstine (University of Leeds, UK)*

We consider how local knowledge has been produced in Uganda during the early stages of oil exploration in the country. To help Uganda prepare to become an oil producer, expert knowledge, resources and management technologies flowed into the country via Western donors, international organisations, international NGOs and international oil companies. This knowledge represents a dominant discourse about oil and development, whereby oil is a potential ‘curse’ (i.e generating poverty, inequalities and conflict) and requires certain measures to ensure it is managed for the benefit of all. From data collected in several villages in the oil bearing regions in Uganda during the early stages of exploration we find that local knowledge about oil is shaped by this dominant discourse of oil and development. Knowledge produced by CSO interventions and oil company stakeholder engagement activities at the subnational level reflects a certain understanding about oil and the impacts of oil, rather than local community experiences and needs. The case of the oil refinery displacement in Hoima district in Uganda’s oil bearing regions demonstrates that local people, and indeed CSOs, were not prepared for the context specific impacts of the oil project in Uganda.

*Landscapes of Extraction: The Convergence of Extractive Interests and Heritage/Resources Policy along the Resource Frontier*

*Melissa Baird (Michigan Technological University, USA)*

In recent years, there has been a marked increase of mining (and other) operations (oil, coal-bed methane, and gas) on Indigenous lands or traditional territories. Unsurprisingly, these landscapes of extraction also map onto communities that have been historically disenfranchised. New configurations along the resource frontier are built on (and supported by) the well-grooved architecture of settler colonial policies that have yet to find resolution. Recent attempts to weaken heritage legislation bring into sharp relief the centrality of heritage in promoting extractive interests: In the United States, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee presented a bill to dismantle the 111-year-old Antiquities Act, while in Western Australia, governments had sought to amend the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA). In each case, the goal

directly relates back to support of extractive interests, especially in increasing access to lands (and waters), and/or open these to oil, gas, and mineral explorations. Drawing on research in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia and recent events in North American contexts, this paper aims to show how that heritage laws and legislation, that were created to protect cultural property and resources, are increasingly under attack by extractive interests who seek to dismantle or weaken protections and reposition the debate around economic growth and interests. This paper also offers new possibilities for inclusion by focusing on paths of connection and common interests in negotiations.

*Community heritage, trust and uncertainty: the troubled reopening of the Riso-Parina Valley zinc mines*

*Isabel Crowhurst (University of Essex, UK)*

*Robin West (University of Essex, UK)*

Following a rise in the market value of zinc the Australian mining company Energia Minerals acquired rights to and reopened the long-closed mines in the Riso-Parina Valley in Northern Italy. Some two years into exploratory works and amid community consultations and promises, it remains unclear what the company's future intentions may be. This paper addresses two key questions emerging from preliminary fieldwork in the valley. First, as zinc extraction and processing escalates, what economic benefits will this bring to the local communities in the form of expected royalties and local employment? While the population was not plunged into rapid economic decline with the mines' closure in the 1980s, today there are signs of economic struggle and failed plans to develop general tourism. Interviews conducted among the community suggest that the population is keen to revitalize the valley's economy, but also not completely trusting of Energia Minerals' intentions. Second and relatedly, what forms of exclusion exist when considering the phenomenology of valley life? These range from feelings of exploitation in relation to the company's use of local knowledge to the marginalisation of the religious connotations attached to mining which retain significance for the majority of the local population. Heritage therefore underpins relationships between the valley and Energia Minerals with mining undoubtedly a clear marker of an identity that is still practiced through mining 'ecotourism' and cultural performance.