

Abstract Submission: The Political Economy of the Extractive Imperative in Latin America

Extraction versus Environmentalism: current challenges, changing dynamics

This paper seeks better understand the relationship between extraction and environmentalism. It questions the extent to which extraction can be resisted and negotiated by mobilizing the rights, legislative frameworks and values associated with both indigeneity and protected areas conservation. The paper uses theories of environmentalism to link these interrelated campaigns, viewing both as socio-environmental strategies set against a dominant, extractive agenda.

This paper adopts a case-study approach, using recent fieldwork data to explore social movement opposition to a road that was planned by the state for the Isiboro Secure Indigenous Territory and National park (TIPNIS). This planned infrastructure has been promoted as linking two departments within Bolivia and better connecting highland and lowland areas. However, it would also enable access to gas pools within the TIPNIS. By locating this struggle in its wider political economic context, this paper questions the impact that extraction is having on both local inhabitants and conservation landscapes. This paper draws out some key challenges facing individuals and groups who challenge the state's extractive agenda, in a context where both the state and social movements are mobilizing indigenous discourse. Moreover, it explores the limits and contours of interlinked developmental and environmental state rhetoric, raising questions about how extraction is encountered by environmental activists and conservationists.

Name & Contact Details:

Jessica Hope
IDPM, University of Manchester
Oxford Road, Manchester, UK, M13 9PL

Bio:

I am currently both a Teaching Fellow at UCL, within their Department of Geography, and a PhD student, preparing to submit my thesis at IDPM, University of Manchester. I also hold positions as the postgraduate representative for the Developing Areas Research Group (DARG) of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and as a news editor for Geography Directions, the RGS-IBG Journals and Geography Compass blog. I also maintain links to the UK's asylum and refugee sector, in which I have worked and campaigned for the past decade.

My research seeks to contribute to political ecology, investigating the politics, power relations and conflicts that determine emerging conservation and development agendas. I question how conservation is (re)imagined, defined and practiced in a political context shaped by protected areas conservation, hydrocarbon extraction and indigenous territorial rights.

My research speaks to debates about the intersections of neoliberalism with conservation, natures and ecologies by researching emerging environmentalisms in a post-neoliberal context, where new political configurations are being negotiated. Moreover, it contributes to debates about social justice, representation and identity politics, exploring how mobilisations of indigeneity and social movements relate to wider development and conservation trajectories