

Opposition to the Extractive Industry in Honduras: Resistance to a Renewed Push into the Resource Frontier

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This paper documents opposition to mining in Honduras, at the verge of a 'mining boom'. It analyses how a broad movement – involving NGOs and local communities - engages in opposition to the extractive industry, declared national priority by the Honduran government. The movement frames access to uncontaminated water as a requisite for livelihood and life – a frame which draws on the negative impact of Goldcorp's open-pit operation in Valle de Siria where serious health problems have been registered. We argue that this resonates strongly with local communities and motivates them to declare their municipality free of mining via public referendums. The extractive industry, seconded by the state, is far less successful in convincing local populations of the potential benefits of mining. Where legal means to gain communities' consent fail, the 'extractive frontier' is frequently pushed by the threat of violence. This raises concerns about the usefulness of international mining standards; ties between state actors and organized crime; and the human rights and lives of those engaged in the 'defense of life'.