

**Paper proposal to be presented at the International Workshop:  
The Political Economy of the Extractive Imperative in Latin America**

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**Disregarding the “Extractive Imperative”: The Claims Underlying El Salvador’s Opposition to Mining**

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This paper addresses the case of a Latin American country that has thus far ignored the so-called “extractive imperative.” Since 2009 El Salvador has been ruled by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)—formerly a guerrilla organization, now a left-leaning political party—which has publicly stated that its policies would be modeled on those of governments constituting the New Left in Latin America. The majority of these new-left governments have promoted greater inclusion through welfare programs while relying to a large extent on extractive industries as a means of financing these programs. El Salvador’s left-leaning governments have likewise embraced inclusion programs (albeit minimally relative to other countries) yet done so without resorting to resource extraction as a means of financing them. In 2008 the conservative ARENA government established a moratorium on exploration and exploitation permits—a moratorium that has been upheld by the FMLN governments. That same year, the Canadian corporation Pacific Rim decided to sue the Salvadoran state for prohibiting exploitation after the corporation had already conducted exploration and made all the necessary investments to begin extraction. This paper seeks to describe the paradigmatic case of El Salvador as a country that is currently deliberating how to proceed with regard to the governance and management of its mineral resources. It will elucidate the arguments that the state and actors opposed to mining are putting forth, thereby suggesting that El Salvador might serve as a counterpoint to the extractive imperative that seems to dominate throughout much of Latin America.

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## **Brief Bio**

Ainhoa Montoya is Early Career Lecturer at the Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London. She was previously an Alliance 4 Universities Fellow at the Department of Social Anthropology, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. She holds postgraduate degrees in social anthropology from Manchester and Cambridge.

Ainhoa has conducted research on the relationship between post-war violence and the transition to a free-market democracy in El Salvador. With the goal of continuing research on post-war violence and its impact on democratization processes, she is currently developing a project on the conflicts and legal disputes over metallic mining in Central America. Her research interests include the anthropology of violence and conflict, the anthropology of democracy, political economy, the ethnography of the state, transitional justice and memory studies, social movements and human rights.