

Territorial dynamics in mining conflicts: A comparative analysis of two local mining conflicts in Ecuador

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In Ecuador, promotion of large-scale mining as a main pillar of the development project of the Correa government has triggered conflicts at the local level, as well as intense public debate concerning the relationship between resource extraction and development. While in public debate the positions are usually more polarized, at the actual areas of large-scale mining projects there is much more diversity and ambiguity in the positions of the social actors regarding mining, and in the ways they engage with the state institutions and the extractive industry. In this paper, we critically compare the contexts of two different mining sites in Ecuador, the Project of Mirador in the province of Zamora Chinchipe and Intag, located in the province of Imbabura. Here, we analyze how territorial dynamics play out in these conflicts and their relation to heterogeneous local responses, political positions and claims, more specifically to explain why and how in Intag a strong opposition was constructed, while in Mirador the resistance to mining remained rather weak and divided.