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Social Exclusion and Territorial Dispossession: A Reflection on Mining Activity in Peru and Mexico

John Kenny Acuña Villavicencio

Abstract

From the social struggles that are found all over the globe, it is important to try to analyze the territorial dispossession suffered by the peasant communities, by the transnational mining companies. For this, we rely on categories such as accumulation through elimination in order to know if social exclusion is an event in the development of capitalism or responds to an abrupt struggle between labor and capital. In this sense, we are interested in focusing our study on two cases that are found in Peru and Mexico. In such regions, social mobilization has not only developed as a generalized form of rejection of mining but also accounts for the contradictions of the mining industry.

Keywords: social exclusion, accumulation by dispossession, work, extractive capitalism, state

1. Introduction

Despite the capitalist world crisis that is experienced, Peru seems to be living a fairy tale. For the government sector, business, and several international organizations, the country is going through an economic bonanza. For the Inter-American Development Bank, Peru has shown robust economic growth uninterrupted during the last 10 years [1]. But this growth is largely due to the investment of transnational capital that is developed in this country, it is mining or extractive companies that with the help of the state are stripping communal territories and thereby restructuring social relations.

Mining in Peru has become one of the largest sources of income. According to the Ministry of Energy and Mines estimates, the gross domestic product until the beginning of 2013 was 5%, and, of course, one of the sectors that contribute most to the said GDP is mining [2]. The IMF [1] considers Peru as the propitious place for private investment: according to this organization, this country “has become one of the most liberal and open economies not only in Latin America but, as the IMF maintains in a recent country study, in the world” [p. 54].

Also, ECLAC maintains that “the most industrialized countries were financially integrated into the world economy (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru) with an annual growth of 4.4%, with a partial recovery of Brazil’s growth (2.7%),

but with higher rates in Peru (5.7%), Chile (4.9%), Colombia (4.5%) and Mexico (4.0%)” [3]. However, the reality of these countries is different: in Peru, the gaps at the local, regional, and central levels become more evident with the mobilizations and struggles that emerge as contradictions of mining capitalism, for example, that economic growth and high rates of mining (transnational) investment cannot be made poverty and unemployment, but quite the opposite, we refer to the precarization of the human condition and a continuous accumulation by legitimate dispossession by the state.

Without a doubt, one of the great problems that afflicts the mining sector is its relationship with the high rates of unemployment and poverty. These facts are evident in Espinar, province of the Department of Cusco. According to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cusco receives from the mining canon annually \$ 2364 million soles, and its province as Espinar receives a total of \$ 203 million soles [4]. Also, according to studies, the provinces with the highest per capita income are Espinar and the Convention. It is estimated that per capita income per person in Espinar (capital) is 556 soles, while in Condorama (where mining is developed) amounts to 3094 soles. In addition, in one of the districts of La Convencion, Echarate, the per capita income is 10,209 soles [5].

However, despite the fact that the revenues from canon and mining overhang are the highest, unemployment and poverty still persist. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics, 51.1% of the population of the Department of Cusco lives in poverty, and 28% of its population lives in extreme poverty; in turn, in the province of Espinar, according to figures and surveys, 64.4% of the population lives in poverty and 33.3% extreme poverty [6, 7]. The extractive sector does not “promote productive processes or enable the redistribution of economic benefits in the place of origin; therefore it does not promote or assure, in any case, the regional or local development. Quite on the contrary, it simply allows processes of accelerated recovery of capital investments as well as their expanded reproduction and, with it, the strengthening of a small power block that controls the process” [8].

As for Mexico, experts say that its economic growth has stagnated and this has to do with the capitalist crisis that has shaken the whole world. Part of the dominant discourse states that Mexico should encourage direct investment. Last year, Mexico achieved a growth of 3.6% of GDP, and for 2014 it is estimated to be 2.4% according to the IMF (well below the predictions of up to 5% that were made by different institutions and government agencies in that country). The dreamed growth, experts say, can be due to industrial activities, increased public spending, and the application of structural reforms. There is a close relationship between economic growth and investment, where we know that foreign investment has been a central element. Thus, in terms of mining in 2012, there was 1101.4 million dollars in investment in the mining industry according to INEGI data.

Despite these “achievements” we see that in Mexico in 2010 there were 52.1 million poor people where the State of Mexico, Veracruz, Chiapas, Puebla, and Jalisco were those who occupied the first places. By 2012, 11.5 million people were living in extreme poverty. On the other hand, wage rates in Mexico turn out to be among the lowest in Latin America.

In the case of the Sierra Norte de Puebla, we can see that the state uses several mechanisms to strip and privatize the “ejidos” or communal territories belonging to the indigenous. However, this dispossession policy could not be understood if we do not consider the general context in which the state moves. It is from the taking of the presidency with Enrique Peña Nieto that there has been a wave of violence

against several sectors reflected, in its pure form, in all the reforms that had been postponed before the 2012 elections. These reforms, especially the energy and the educational one, have caused the privatization of the services that are considered an obligation of the state. However, at the end of 2013, the energy reform gives rise to the exploitation of resources by private companies which is “normal” and part “necessary” for the development of the country, without the state has any real interference except the violence. As an example, we have the murder of a peasant leader Antonio Esteban Cruz on June 4, 2014, in the municipality of Cuetzalan del Progreso where the Regional Committee of the Independent Peasant and Urban Peasant Workers Movement (Miocup) and the association Tetela Hacia el Futuro ask to clarify the said harassment holding the state responsible for such acts.

In the case of the state of Puebla, it can be observed that 87% of the employed population earn less than 5 minimum wages (Salary Observatory of the Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla). In the Sierra Norte de Puebla, it can be observed that of the 217 municipalities that make up the state of Puebla, 125 municipalities considered “priority attention” where 36 have a very high degree of marginalization, 60 high, and 29 medium [9]. We are talking about the fact that in the region, half of its population is in a situation of marginalization. In the Sierra Norte de Puebla, the conditions of poverty have not been overcome due to the colonial legacy of the type of clientelistic relations and dependency that were woven through time to the neoliberal configuration in the current capitalism. The risk condition for the rural population has always been a constant, and their permanence has not been due to a longer life expectancy but to the way in which the peasants deploy strategies of resistance in order to survive. Thus, in this area, there have been various types of survival strategies, but the current mobilization and organization against the neoliberal policy around the dispossession of lands in the name, again, of progress have not been compared in recent years. This progress has specific names such as gas pipelines, mining, etc., which have been anchored in places where the majority of the population is indigenous or of peasant origin. Therefore, the current economic activity could not be understood without considering the general panorama that the state of Puebla is experiencing within neoliberalism.

2. The state and extractive capitalism

The growth of extractive mining capital in Peru responds to some extent to the economic and social changes generated with Alberto Fujimori (1990–2000) in the 1990s. At the time, this regime responded in some way and managed immediately to the economic crisis caused by Alan Garcia (1985–1990) during the second half of the 1980s. For this date, the country suffered an internal war unleashed between the Shining Path Communist Party and the state and a dramatic economic crisis. Inflation had reached the end of this decade at 7650%, solvable only by means of a drastic restructuring of social relations.

This economic and political crisis made the national scenario collapse. For many, it was the justifiable reason for Fujimori to carry out an adjusted line of neoliberal policies. However, it was also the mitigating factor for the Peruvian bourgeoisie to be legitimized once again by Fujimori.

From then on, the scenario was different. Everything seemed to indicate that neoliberal policies worked perfectly. Thus, the first years of the Fujimorist government reflected optimal results based on economic growth. As an act of magic, Peru had an economic stability never expected: the gross domestic product in 1994 reached 13.1%, being the highest in the world, and in 1991, unlike in previous years, inflation had been reduced to 139% [10].

However, these changes in the economy responded more to the effects of a policy imposed through violence. In 1992, Fujimori perpetuated a self-coup of state with the aim of approving a new Constitution (1993) that guarantees legitimacy and capitalist accumulation. The reforms and constitutional guarantees that the state provided were the most favorable for more than one company decided to invest in the country. Within these reforms was to promote not only the investment of foreign capital, but to privatize state industries. As Gonzales de Olarte mentions for “1996, 6.312 million dollars had been accumulated as a result of privatizations of state enterprises” that could not be used for fear of other inflations or the presence of some “exogenous shock or a balance of payments crisis” [10].

In addition, in 1997 the state had ceded “132 companies to the private sector out of a total of 186 national companies.” The first companies that were granted to private capital were those industries that were dedicated to the extraction of natural resources. Among these were “Hierro Perú, Refinería de Hilo, Cía. Minera Tintaya, Metal Oroya, Mining Company Mahr Tunel, Cement Lima, Cementos Yura, and Refinery of Cajamarquilla (mining industry),” among others [10].

In the case of Puebla, more specifically in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, we can see that the state uses several mechanisms to strip and privatize the “*ejidos*” or territories belonging to indigenous. However, this dispossession policy could not be understood if we do not consider the general context in which the state moves. It is from the taking of the presidency with Enrique Peña Nieto that there has been a wave of violence against several sectors reflected, in its pure form, in all the reforms that had been postponed before the 2012 elections. These reforms, especially the energy and the educational one, have caused the privatization of the services that are considered an obligation of the state. However, at the end of 2013 the energy reform gives rise to the exploitation of resources by private companies which is “normal” and part “necessary” for the development of the country, without the state has any real interference except the violence. As an example, we have the murder of a peasant leader Antonio Esteban Cruz on June 4, 2014, in the municipality of Cuetzalan del Progreso where the Regional Committee of the Independent Peasant and Urban Peasant Workers Movement (Miocup) and the association Tetela Hacia el Futuro ask to clarify the said harassment holding the state responsible for such acts.

The state is a “specific social form [that] is only able to maintain itself to the extent that it continues to be guaranteed” capitalist economic reproduction [10]. It means that the state becomes capital because it derives as “objective form of social relations” and its political actions, besides guaranteeing its existence, reproduce capitalism on a planetary scale. In this regard Mariano Feliz [11] says the following:

it expresses the domination of capital in society, its policies naturally tend to favor its reproduction as the dominant social relation. This is particularly true in the peripheral economies whose state-shaped from the world-constituted economy [...] -does not act simply to reproduce class domination at the local level (of the local bourgeoisies), but rather is the place where It will crystallize the need to reproduce capital on an international scale. The State is not placed above the law of value (i.e., the law of surplus value), but is part of it.

This capacity of capitalism (mining) presupposes, in Marx’s words, the reduction of the individual to himself, that is, to “a natural subject” [12]. As such, this subject is absorbed into the “circle of production conditions” of extractive capitalism, whose expansion occurs in forms of accumulation by dispossession [13]. In other words, it is an accumulation that expropriates all human capacity as a power, an accumulation that carries forward:

The privatization of the land; the expulsion of peasant populations; the conversion of the different forms of property into private property; the suppression of communal resources; the elimination of alternative forms of production and consumption; the colonial appropriation of natural resources; monetization and taxation; the trafficking of human beings; Usury and indebtedness through credit. [14]

This form of accumulation is described by Marx as the “midwife of history,” because it deals with the vertiginous changes and mutations of patriarchal social forms to a generalized form of capitalist production. For Marx, work is considered the very essence of human fulfillment, a creative capacity that, in addition to possessing qualitative characteristics, is crossed and subsumed by capitalist logic. In Marx’s words, it is about the double dimension of work (concrete work and abstract work) that determines the history of the struggle. As he mentions:

The tendency of capital is precisely this to remove the natural foundation under the base of each industry, to transplant its conditions of production out of it, to a general connection, and hence the conversion of what was seen as superfluous into something necessary, in a historically generated need. [13]

The generalized production of capital leads to conditions of precariousness of work. However, this situation of precariousness of work, that is, instability and lack of sufficient guarantees to find work (salaried) in a certain place, must be understood under the Marxist budget of “industrial reserve army.”

Under this conception it is understood that the increase of production and capitalist accumulation will generate a population “apparently” waiting to be absorbed by the productive process. For Marx this responds to a systemic law because “the greater this reserve army is in proportion to the active workers’ army, the more the mass of consolidated overpopulation spreads, whose misery is in inverse ratio to the torments of its work” [15]. This reserve industrial army does not mean that the individual is outside the capitalist production; on the contrary it is a system that generates a bulky growth of working population necessary for capitalist production. Although the original dispossession and accumulation have created subjects incapable of supporting their own existence, we believe that the violent side that all this implies needs to be rethought since there is no place where those stripped of neoliberal capitalism enter as an army of labor.

3. Territorial disposal in Espinar

The province of Espinar, considered high-Andean zone, is located in the region of Cusco. It is located at an altitude between 3500 and 5000 m above sea level. The approximate extension of its territory is of 5311 km². To date, Espinar has a population of 62,000 inhabitants. In addition, it is estimated that 50% of its population is rural and lives in 72 communities distributed in the districts of Alto Pichigua, Condorama, Coporaque, Espinar, Ocururo, Pallpata, Pichigua, and Suyckutambo.

In the districts of Espinar, the existence of immense quantities of copper and gold has been discovered. At present, these minerals are exploited by the transnational company Xstrata Tintaya-Antapaccay, better known as the Antapaccay Project. For many specialists this project is considered one of the most important mining megaprojects in the history of Peru, but it is also one of the investments that has caused over time the territorial dispossession and precarization of living conditions:

Four copper mines will start during 2013. The four have just entered operations and it is estimated that after 2 years they will reach production levels never before registered in Peru: no less than 800,000 tons per year. That is, eight times more than what was planned to be extracted from Conga in a year without the social conflict that finally paralyzed her. Las Bambas, Toromochó, Antapaccay [Espinar] and the expansion of Antamina are those four copper projects whose production will allow the Peruvian economy to reach a growth rate of 6.9% in 2013. [16]

The coexistence—if you want, unstable, by the periodic mobilizations—of the communities of Espinar with mining companies has a history of more than 30 years. In the decade of the 1980s, the government had the intention to impel a copper industrial plant in Espinar with the purpose that the zones devastated by the poverty entered new cycles of progress. This idea took shape in the second government of Belaunde Terry (1980–1985), because it was considered that the state should have its own companies that provide income and, in this way, can generate local and regional developments.

However, with Belaunde in the presidential chair, the episode of extractive mining projects was marked by bloody results such as forced territorial expropriations and forced migrations to the surroundings of the mining industry. In many cases, several communities had to perish or were regrouped in areas where scarcity of resources affected daily life.

For the regulationist project to work, it was necessary to strip people's assets. Palacios [18] mentions that at the beginning of the 1980s, the state had expropriated in Espinar “2368 hectares of territory to the Peasant Community Anta Cama, parent of the Tintaya Marquiri community, thus initiating its dismemberment and subsequent disappearance” [17].

The state considered that the creation of a state enterprise could generate work (salaried) and greater benefits, especially for the communities where the “mining enclaves,” were developing. The expropriation of the peasant communities in Espinar was considered by Belaunde as an achievement, since this would allow the establishment of the Special Mining Company Tintaya SA (EMATISA), later (1985) called Special Company Tintaya SA (Tintaya SA). As the activity of the company intensified the territorial dispossession was inexcusable, this also responded to the increase of exports and copper prices abroad. In 1983, the state managed to expropriate 2011.50 hectares of territory of the community of Tintaya Marquiri, 204.73 hectares in the community of Alto Huancané, and 151.77 hectares of the community of Huancané Bajo that automatically passed into the hands of the company Tintaya SA. In order to compensate the damages caused to the peasants, the state company offered jobs and improvements in the infrastructure of the affected communities:

Among the main commitments signed in 1982 with the mining company was to grant a job to all those affected, after training. Carry out water and sewage construction in the town center, educational center, medical post, paved streets, access road and support in construction of family homes. [18]

The dispossession gave clear signs of having become a necessary movement of capitalist reproduction. The deficient technology, the expansion of the market, and the opening of neoliberal policies showed a drastic panorama of changes in social relations. The companies could no longer be controlled by the state. Well, with the advent of the Fujimori government, almost all of the state companies were sold in an international public auction to the large transnational corporations. The investment of large transnational capitals in Peru motivated the authorities to deliver, for

example, among others, Tintaya SA de Espinar to the American company Magma Copper Company, in 1994.

In the decade of the 1990s, the communities of Tintaya Marquiri, Alto Huancané, Bajo Huancané, Huano Huano, and Alto Huarca suffered the most devastating effects of the large mining transnationals and the economic policies of the Fujimorist government. In 1996 BHP Australia managed to put pressure on the state so that it could promote the authorization of another 1263 hectares for its operations. The peasant communities had to cede their territories in a forced manner in exchange for relocations and proposals for sporadic work in the mine.

With Fujimori in power, the number of possession of territory had gone from 10 to 34 million hectares at the hands of mining activity [19]. The destruction and deterioration of the communities worsened because the companies used state-of-the-art technologies that facilitated greater exploration and extraction of minerals. Undoubtedly, the great technological and investment capacity of the transnationals exacerbated the situation of the peasants and implied that more of their territories are expropriated, thus causing a precarious work or make creative.

As Harvey [13] would say, the technological changes and the capacity to invest extractive capitalism in a specific place generates unemployment, it generates an industrial reserve army: capitalism creates its own other. It is a capitalist logic of permanent appropriation and ruthless exploitation of nature. As Leff points out, “the natural has become a fundamental argument to legitimize the existing, objective order” [20]. Undoubtedly, nature in capitalism is considered only as a productive process.

The forced dispossession, the subjection of creative work to forms of capitalist production, and the migration of people who go in search of employment tell us that accumulation by dispossession still stands. This fact for Marx is understood as the “original sin” of capital. Unlike Harvey, Marx does not expose the “primitive accumulation” to indicate that after this what remains to the current world is “an enlarged reproduction” (although the exploitation of live labor in production is mediated), in conditions of “Peace, property and equality” [13]. On the contrary, Marx considers that original sin is the beginning of an incessant struggle in and under the capital-labor relation.

On the other hand, the interest of the companies in Espinar grew in the mid-1990s because there was a rise in the price of gold and silver. This generated a radical turn of the social and labor activity of the peasants. The forced territorial dispossession brought with it a generalized form of unemployment and job insecurity; in turn, a relative growth of private property was being generated. The accelerated change of industrial expansion in Peru and the legal facilities that the state provided to the private sector was well regarded by foreign capital:

While the global investment in exploration grew 90% and quadrupled in Latin America, between 1990 and 1997, in Peru it increased twenty times ... In 1997, the peak of exploration in the five-year period 1995–2000, Latin America (US \$ 1242 million) was the place with the highest proportion of explorations in Australia (US \$ 875 million), Africa and Asia (US \$ 550 million each) [19].

The increase in copper prices caused capital to move to spaces where conditions were favorable. In 1996, the copper and gold deposits controlled in Espinar by Magma Copper Company were acquired by the Australian transnational Broken Hill Proprietary Inc. (BHP). This new company also began to buy and expropriate more territories, causing the population centers around the company to increase. For just citing:

In 1996, BHP Tintaya S. A purchased 1263 ha of land from the community of Tintaya Marquiri, former annex of the community of Antaycama. This operation displaced some families that happened to form the Tintaya Marquiri town center, established adjacent to the property of the Mining camp. [21]

However, the good situation of metals in the world forced more transnational capital to mobilize. After BHP bought Macma Magma Copper, it decided to merge with Billiton Plc, in 2001, under the name of BHP Billiton Tintaya SA. The purpose of its merger, in addition to its metal-mining production, was to control the world copper market and operate throughout the globe [22].

The operations of the transnationals in Espinar are marked by an open struggle of the peasants against their presence. In 1996, for example, BHP Billiton considered it necessary to acquire 1263 hectares, this time from the Tintaya Marquiri Peasant Community. Not only that, the company acquired 246 hectares of the Alto Huancané Community to provide security to the tailings dam produced by the extraction of minerals. In addition, this same company sought to award another 400.85 hectares of the Huano Huano Community and 477 hectares of the Alto Huarca Community as a result of the exploration work carried out by company specialists [23].

In 2006, the peasants of Espinar mobilized against BHP for the tailings contamination that this company was generating. This mobilization involved the sale of BHP Billinton and Billiton Plc to the Swiss company Xstrata Copper, now known as Xstrata Tintaya. This company is the fourth largest producer of copper in the world and is currently in charge of the Antapaccay Project in Espinar, which, as a mining reserve area, started operating since 2010 (**Figure 1**).

According to CooperAccion until 2010, mining had caused more than 34% of the territory of the province of Espinar to concession to transnational companies (see **Figure 2**). However, we believe that in order to carry out territorial concessions in

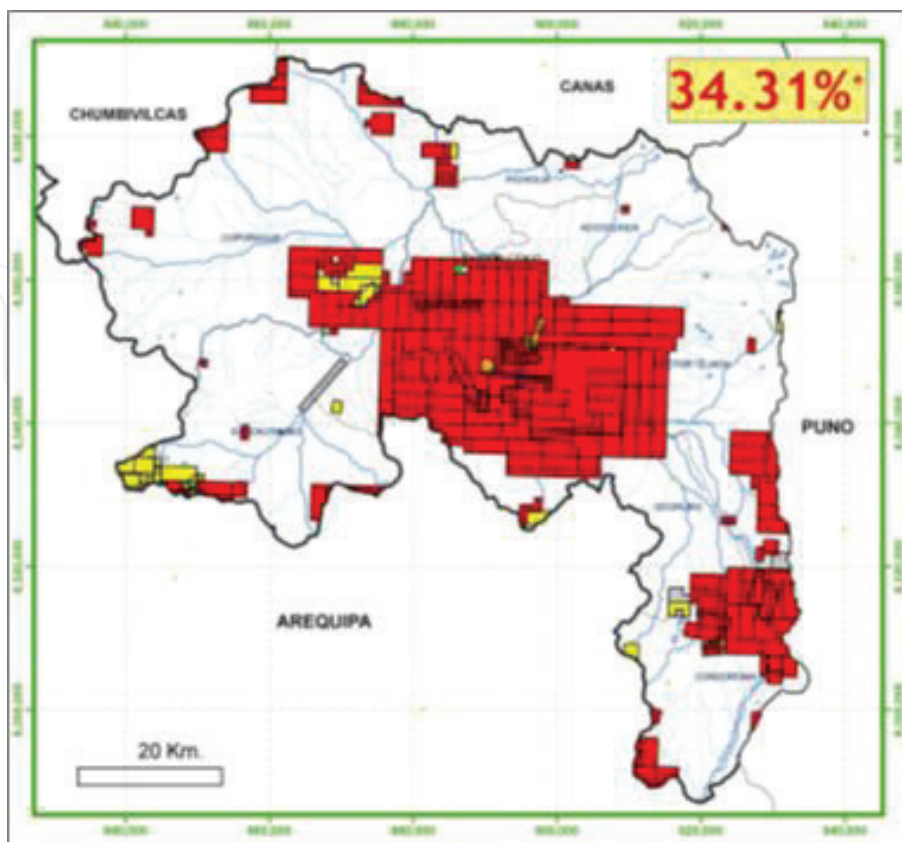


Figure 1.
Territorial expropriation in Espinar [24].

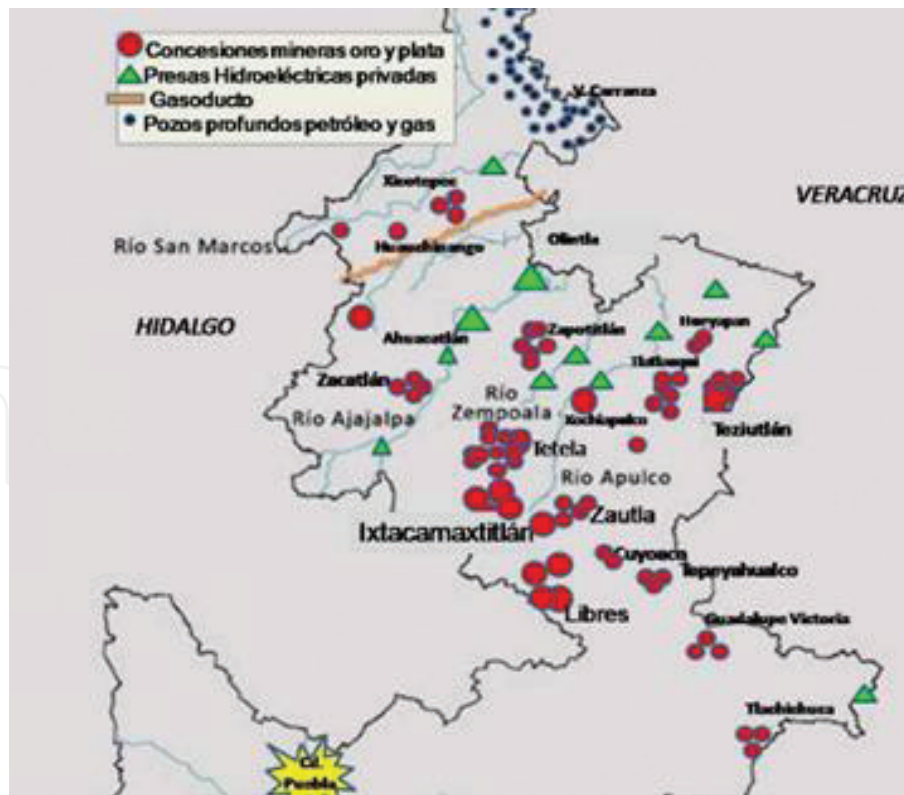


Figure 2.
 Map of municipalities of Puebla with concessions to companies (source: [30]).

favor of transnationals, it is necessary to consider the decisive participation of the state. As we mentioned above, it is an entity that supports one of the wildest forms of accumulation and reproduction of capitalism. We refer to a form of accumulation by forced dispossession that, in areas where the territory is vital for the social reproduction of the community, is legitimized by the state.

The communications launched by Xstrata indicate that in 2013 the mining project Antapaccay de Espinar will produce an average of 160,000 tons of copper, in addition to other minerals such as gold and silver. Over time, this growth will continue causing greater dispossession. To date, the territory of the Espinar communities under concession in favor of the transnational company Xstrata exceeds 180,000 hectares.

4. The mining capitalism in the Sierra Norte de Puebla

Puebla is not considered as an area with mining tradition; on the contrary, in fact the image we see is that of a place where something new begins whose magnitude of the devastating consequences (of what arises) is still unthinkable for thousands of people. It is not only about generating innocuous economic activities to promote “development” in the Puebla region, but it is also a vision of a neoliberal society that does not contemplate the needs of the population, which is little by little stripped of its own resources. In addition to resources, we are seeing the radical transformation of life where centralization and authoritarianism cancel the possibilities of a plural and democratic life. In Puebla, capitalism has taken a turn since 2011 where they want to carry out by the use of force and intimidation economic projects linked to transnationals that few benefits will bring to the population: water privatization, gas pipeline projects, mining, and planning of megahighways like Arco Norte and Arco Sur Poniente. The Integral Morelos Project (PIM), which involves two thermoelectric plants (which are said to give energy to mining companies), a gas pipeline (Morelos gas pipeline) and an aqueduct with a total investment of 1600 million dollars, has

been questioned by residents of Puebla, Tlaxcala, and Morelos not without the violent response of the state. They are large exploitation complexes that have tried to establish themselves sometimes with the use of deception. Daniel Rojas, leader of a group, estimated that with the work to be developed, about 800 “ejidatarios” from 19 municipalities would be affected, which will affect the cultivation of vegetables [25].

In the case of mining companies, the situation is part of that neoliberal vision to increase the economic supply. Thus, we have since 1992 the mining legislation that has been in force as long as this activity has been arranged for private investment, both public and private. The problem before these privatizations promotes the end of the sovereignty that the nation has to have some contribution for this activity and that this development represents a violation of the fundamental rights of the workers and the contamination of the environment.

On December 20, 2013, the Energy Reform was enacted, where it is supposedly intended to modernize Mexico; others consider that this reform is the continuation of a conservative revolution that was evidenced in 1992, where the distribution of land was clearly ended and the way was opened for the expropriation of *ejidos* and communal lands. In 2013, from the state, proposals are still made to reform articles 27 and 28 of the Constitution (economic chapter) since both evidence the illegality and contradiction that is manifested in the Foreign Investment Law, which in addition to allowing an investment 100% foreign investment displaces the state as rector of a strategic industry where the benefits that could be obtained from the said exploitation of resources become only minimal symbolic contributions, that is, fair contributions are not received for extracted minerals [26]. We believe that we should talk about privatization in the context of mining companies because of the insistence on modifying the aforementioned constitutional articles that promote dispossession and lack of rights.

The mining legislation, as Jaime Cárdenas [27] points out, infringes on constitutional rights. This situation was addressed in the so-called Pact for Mexico. In this political agreement, among other things, it meant preserving, at least on paper, the regulation of the state as well as respecting the rights of indigenous communities and peoples. However, this document did not specify the specific strategy to increase contributions for the mining activity, nor did it indicate the manner in which the redistribution of these resources would be made, nor did it say anything about how they could access justice to people who will be affected by these activities.

Thus, by October 2013, 69 authorized projects were counted in the Sierra Norte de Puebla with the outrage of many organizations who were not even consulted about the project. Such was the case of the municipality of Cuetzalan del Progreso where its municipal president noted that the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (Semarnat) had refused to provide information on mining concessions [28]. This pressure on the part of the population has been an agreement of the resistance for the government to deny exploration and exploitation which permits entrepreneurs without prior popular consultation. The resistance in Zautla or Tetela de Ocampo, that Huauchinango, Huehuetlan el Grande, Tlatlauquitepec, Olintla, etc., are just some of the towns that have organized to stop the imminent advance of the Canadian, the Australian, and especially the Mexican mining Group Frisco, which belongs to Carlos Slim [28].

In Puebla, according to the data provided by Project Poder, 45% of the concessions were from Mexican companies (with a predominance of Grupo Frisco and Grupo México), 35% were in the hands of foreign companies, and the rest were private individuals. These miners have obtained 35 concessions equivalent to 918,000 hectares for mining exploitation; instead, it calculates 12,800 hectares for hydrocarbons. By the end of 2013, they had identified “six hydroelectric projects that will affect 18 municipalities and 12 rivers” [29]. These miners try to extract material through hydraulic fracturing either to obtain gas, oil, or metals.

5. Conclusions

One of the greatest effects produced by mining capitalism in the so-called Third World countries such as Peru and Mexico have been exclusion and social marginalization. Moreover, although the state points out that private investment and the exploitation of natural resources generate social welfare and economic growth, the results have not been as expected. On the contrary, in the places where the mining industry has settled, there has been an accelerated reorganization of space and daily work. Of course, this phenomenon is not a novelty, but it is currently presented as a unique and modernizing event for the society.

The precedent of this contradictory experience is Espinar. It is a region where the accumulation of dispossession has forced thousands of peasants to leave their territories and offer their labor power to large mining companies at a cheap price. In other words, this phenomenon in Espinar has become the norm, in a form of prolonged accumulation described by Marx as the origins of capitalism and the beginning of the history of domination and resistance.

On the other hand, in the case of the Sierra Norte, the tendency seems to be the same, but the resistance of the so-called Meeting of Peoples in Resistance, Tiyat Tlalli, and MAPDER (Mexican Movement of Affected and Affected by Dams and in Defense of the Rivers) has managed to stop the advance of this new form of capitalist accumulation. All these mobilizations are undertaking various strategies of struggle despite the repression exercised by the state; however, the power of capital will not rest to enforce these so-called death plans. In Latin America the scenario is dark, and the onslaught and the return of it may involve a greater participation of the state, but of course the resistance will depend on how these contradictions are understood by the civil society itself.


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Author details

John Kenny Acuña Villavicencio
Hippocrates University, Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico

*Address all correspondence to: johnkenny291@yahoo.com.mx

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