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# The global mining cluster and decoding sustainable mining

## Abstract

This article presents reflections on the "Global Mining Cluster", defined as the worldwide political coalition of transnational mining corporations organized to keep territories open to mining interests and counteract criticisms that decry the social and environmental devastation caused by mega-mining. This Cluster through the International Council of Mining & Minerals, the organizing hub for mining policy whose philosophical foundation is the "Global Mining Initiative" works to achieve two broad objectives to produce "strategic intelligence that helps influence the political classes and institutions of national states, while elaborating protocols and techniques for imposing "horizons of coercion" on regions and local communities and second developing a new planetary public discourse based on the announcement of "sustainable mining" which presents the Global Mining Cluster as a producer of "social goodness" while simultaneously legitimizing interventions by its agents to control daily life in communities and regions. To illustrate this argument we examine the operation of the Global Mining Cluster in the Mexican case.

**Keywords:** global mining cluster, global mining initiative, horizons of coercion, sustainable mining

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## Introduction

This article presents a series of reflections on the "Global Mining Cluster", defined as the political coalition of transnational mining corporations organized to keep territories around the world open to their interests and counteract criticisms that denounce the social and environmental depredations of mega-mining. We argue that the International Council of Mining & Minerals (ICMM), founded in 2001, has acted as the organizing hub of the mining industry's international public policy since it launched the so-called "Global Mining Initiative" at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002. That document gave the Cluster its philosophical foundations, a public discourse and an action plan that allowed it to articulate converging interests in a unified, worldwide political block. In its capacity as a "global political subject", the Cluster pursues two general tasks: first, developing "strategic intelligence" so it can strengthen its influence on the political class and national state institutions the world over, while simultaneously elaborating protocols and techniques for imposing "horizons of coercion"[1] on communities and regions to achieve one central goal neutralizing local resistance to its operations. Second, it has elaborated a "new international public discourse" summarized in the term "sustainable mining", which presents the Cluster as a generator of "social goodness", while legitimizing daily interventions by its agents to maintain social control over the lives of communities and regions. To illustrate this, we analyze the Cluster's operations in a case in Mexico, but our reflections can be extended to other countries in Latin America and beyond, for similar scenarios of local conflict due to the imposition of mining have been documented in studies by the Latin American Observatory of Mining Conflicts[2] and internationally, by the Environmental Justice Organizations, Liabilities and Trade project.[3]

According to the Washington Consensus, three decades, after its 'neoliberal revolution' Mexico is still linked to the global economy in a subaltern condition. Changes in the country's legal and institutional apparatuses, privatizations of public companies and the dispossession of peasant lands since the 1980s have given global corporations and national commercial elites exceptional advantages.[4] Mexico has earned a reputation for promoting cheap labor, dirty industries with little or no environmental regulation, advantageous concessions for natural resource exploitation and special government treatment through legal guarantees that attract corporate investment. Also, unbridled corruption in government spheres both high and low, the judicial and legislative powers, political parties and the media, greases the wheels of transfers of resources and lands from rural communities to global corporations.

Mexico has rich mineral reserves. By official count there are 1,122 active mining projects, 880 in the exploratory phase, 45 in construction, 197 in production and 67 more temporarily suspended for technical reasons or local social problems.[5] From 2000 to 2013, 250 foreign mining corporations invested $39,842 million USD (SE, 2014) in Mexico, a very lucrative locale for mining interests. One example is Peñasquito, an open-pit mine in Zacatecas covering 8,800hectares (21,745acres) with a productive life of 22years, owned by Canada's Goldcorp Company, which we analyze to illustrate our case. Using company data and 2012 prices, we reached the following estimates: $84,053million USD in income from sales; $15,430million in production costs; and, $68,622million in operating profits. Scaling these figures up to all 1,122 mining projects now in development gives an approximate idea of the dimensions of the interests involved in mining in Mexico; powerful motivation, indeed, for the Cluster to work to produce an ambience 'friendly' towards mining in the halls of government.

But Mexico also provides an example of the growing deterioration of the social order, especially in rural areas where mining and other mega-projects proliferate, competing with peasant communities for

land and water as conflicts multiply due to land seizures, environmental damage and modifications of traditional environmental management practices.[6–9] An associated effect is the deterioration of social peace due to the empowerment of organized crime cartels that practice multiple criminal activities: trafficking of drugs, people and weapons, kidnapping and extortion. Those groups dominate broad regions of rural Mexico and many towns and cities today, controlling behind the scenes municipal councils and pressuring state governments. Studies estimate that 80% of municipal governments operate under the influence of one cartel or another and that from 2005 to 2012, 116,100 people died in incidents linked to drug-trafficking.[10]

The potential for conflicts over land seizures in Mexico is high. Some 25million people live in rural areas, distributed in 170,000 localities with under 2,500 inhabitants.[11]Also, 51% of the national territory (an area almost as large as Spain) is distributed in 31,789units of collective property with 3.5million peasant titleholders.[12] There are two types: ejidos and 'agrarian communities'. The former were born of the agrarian reform that redistributed extensive hacienda lands after the 1910 Revolution; while the latter resulted from the reorganization of collapsed pre-Hispanic empires in colonial times. Formally-speaking, both types are governed by assemblies that include all titleholders and managed by a group of representatives called, respectively, the Comisariado Ejidal and the Comisariado de Bienes Comunales. Another 35% of land is held by 1.5million private owners whose farms average 50hectares (124acres). Most are mestizo farmers or ranchers representative of ranchero culture. Like ejidatarios and indigenous comuneros, private owners typically consider their property a "patrimony", so it is morally wrong to sell land, which should be bequeathed to succeeding generations.

In Mexico, confrontations between mining companies and communities are on the rise. Seven conflicts occurred from 1990 to 2000 and eight in 2001-2007, but at least 70 from 2008 to 2014. Often, the communities involved were defeated, but others persist in the struggle, though triumphs are rare. Rural resistance continues to grow with communities forming coalitions to defend their territories, even crossing national borders, as in the case of Mayan communities in Guatemala and southern Mexico.[13,14] But corporations also work, perfecting ways to manipulate communities and compromise government agencies to favor their business. Surely in other national contexts where citizens' personal safety is protected by rule of law the number of conflicts generated by peasants defending their lands would be much higher, but the reality in Mexico is that mafias control broad areas where they create de facto regimes to control local populations through violence, fear and coercion, contributing a necessary ingredient for imposing mining operations in hundreds of regions. We call these informal regimens of domination 'horizons of coercion".

Our analysis constitutes an important contribution to the growing literature on crucial topics like the role of global discourses in organizing local spaces;[15] the profound contrast between mining's discourse of 'social responsibility' and real local conflicts;[16–18] Harvey's "accumulation by dispossession"[4] and the concept and practice of environmental justice.[19,20]

## Methodology

The text contains two main sections, first a broad reflection on the political organization of the Global Mining Cluster and its operations in Mexico where our approach involved obtaining documents from organizations associated with the Cluster and institutions with which it has forged links, then 'mapping' the network of key linkages to the social field of the Cluster and its relations with important actors internationally and in Mexico.

The second dimension presents a case study of the Peñasquito mine that highlights the contrast between the Cluster's discourse and ethnographic reality. Our approach consisted in assembling an overview of the project from news reports and public documents of mining companies and the Mexican government. Peasant leaders identified in press reports were interviewed and snowball-sampled to find community members who were indifferent to and those who supported the mining company. Open-ended interviews were conducted to pursue four broad themes:

i. A rough outline of community livelihoods and history

ii. The links forged between company and community, including contracts, informal agreements, demands and points of contention

iii. Local forms of political organization and local interest groups with their positions vis-a-vis the company

iv. Other key factors, such as politicians, bureaucrats and NGOs. Interviews were held up to a saturation point; i.e., when they stopped providing new information, or only mentioned themes and reports already identified.

Teams of 2 or 3 researchers led by ("author") six 1-week visits to the area. Sometimes it was possible to hold group interviews and accompany community members on visits through their territory. On various occasions, community members invited us to go with them as silent witnesses during talks with the mining company. To enrich those visits, other actors involved were interviewed as well: representatives of government agencies, members of political parties, mayors, imprisoned community leaders and mining experts. Interviews were video-recorded, unless permission was denied. Approximately 56hours of interviews were conducted with 14 individuals. Also, we conducted two 4-hour collective interviews with 12 or more people.

## The new mining geography and the emergence of the global mining cluster

Several studies have identified a tendency towards the worldwide exhaustion of mineral deposits due to the global economy's growing demand for industrial and precious metals. They affirm that metal extraction will show a behavior similar to "Hubbert's curve" for the oil industry; that is, existing reserves of cheap metals have reached their zenith and will decline rapidly in coming years,[21–23] fueling a tendency towards higher metal prices and 'investment fevers' as mining companies' profits rise.

The geological characteristics of the exhaustion of mineral deposits is important, for as reserves concentrated in "high law" zones decrease in number and quality they leave only numerous "low law" deposits where metals are microscopically dispersed in vast volumes of sterile material. Since traditional underground mining cannot exploit this kind of geological distribution profitably, a transition to open-pit operations is taking place, but this entails much more radical impacts since the industry has to multiply its costs in water, energy and the surface area affected in order to obtain the same amount of metal.[24]

In the 21st century, scarcity has generated a new mining geography because companies are now interested in territories with even the poorest deposits. This has led to the introduction of new processes of territorial occupation where:

1) productive underground mines are converted into open-pit operations

2) long abandoned "low law" regions are reactivated thanks to new technologies

3) regions with no history of mining are opened to exploitation

4) Difficult-to-reach deposits in mountainous, polar and sub-aquatic areas are being mined.[25,26]

This new mining geography was enabled by a broad, three-pronged transformation of the global industry. First, prospecting ventures, family-owned companies and regional operations are absorbed or displaced by global shareholder corporations.[27,28] This organizational modification allows companies to concentrate their technological, economic and political power in a common command that increases their ability to act when promising deposits are found in any country or region of the planet.[29] Second, technology has evolved towards open-pit mining that permits profitable exploitation of relatively poor deposits by installing gigantic apparatuses that can remove, crush, sift and leach millions of tons of material to salvage minuscule but valuable quantities of metal. Technological development also facilitates 'underground mega-mining' that extracts metals from scarce veins of concentrated ore. Often, these two techniques are combined, depending on the distribution of minerals in the sub-soil. Like the oil industry that seeks to compensate the exhaustion of reserves by exploiting deep-water deposits or bituminous lands despite extremely high energy costs and environmental damage, the mining industry pursues metals by literally pulverizing whole regions.[24]

Third and the central thesis of this article, despite intense internecine commercial competition, mining corporations have constructed a 'unified social field' consisting of a large worldwide network of mining companies and associated interests. For lack of a better term, we call this social field the Global Mining Cluster. As we argue, its role is to operate politically on multiple scales to legitimize mining operations on lands and in regions worldwide and ensure they remain open to corporate exploitation. Pierre Bourdieu[30] defines "social fields" as relatively autonomous social spaces for social action and influence where certain social relations converge. They thus function as competitive markets whose participants, while battling for advantages and positions, recognize and follow a set of structured rules that involves the ongoing actualization of values, norms, hierarchies and dispositions (habitus). Seen in this perspective, mining's social field consists of a worldwide network of corporations, offices, advisors, associations, professionals, ideologues, research centers, politicians and others, that compete to gain an edge but must not compromise the network's broader interests, values and rules; in short, they identify with the network. As a result, we can analyze the Cluster as a kind of "community" in the widest sense of the term that reproduces itself in time and can, therefore, be treated as an ethnographic subject-object despite the cultural diversity and geographic dispersion of its individual members.

The 'unified' nature of the network refers specifically to what mining's social field has achieved, despite the competing interests of its members, by congregating representation of its strategic interests in centralized structures the world over and disseminating a global ideological discourse. Indeed, it has set itself up as a global public 'subject' that speaks on behalf of its members. Hence, we consider that the Cluster has the faculty to act as a 'subject' capable of defending its interests and implementing strategies.

The Global Mining Cluster's first strategy consists in aligning the interests of national, state or provincial governments with respect to mining, while laying the groundwork for the successful imposition of "horizons of coercion"[1] on local communities and regions. The second strategy clearly designed to conceal the first promotes a public discourse encompassed in the slogan "sustainable mining", which represents mining corporations as generators of "social goodness".

Both strategies are designed to respond to the new mining geography that unavoidably entails collisions among mining interests, the historical rights of titleholders and the life ways of local communities and regions. Because of its technological gigantism, the magnitude of its needs and its impact on landscapes, this mining behemoth cannot co-exist with local towns, as its operations demand the radical extirpation of cultural uses of territory, displacing entire populations, subordinating social life to the mining business and, finally, destroying during historical landscapes over an ephemeral period of two or three decades.

## The global mining initiative

The constitution of the Cluster as an ideological block can be traced to 1999, when nine large mining and metallurgical corporations met in Melbourne to analyze their industries' poor international reputation caused by scandals of pollution and violence. That group publicly launched the so-called Global Mining Initiative (GMI). Its ideologue, Sir Robert Wilson, Director of the Rio Tinto Corporation, argued the following: Arising from the environmental and social shortcomings of the past, the mining industry now faces a major challenge. There is a perception held, often tacitly, by a growing number of people that the global mining and minerals industry is incompatible with sustainable development. This is a perception that we must address. Unchecked, it will drive legislation and distort markets in ways that will ultimately harm our business and developing economies alike and produce unlooked for environmental and social consequences. I firmly believe that unless the major players in the global mining and minerals industry can present a convincing case that their activities are conducted in line with these principles (sustainable development) then their long-term future is in jeopardy. We must be able to explain our role to a generation that takes sustainable development as a given. Presenting this case will not be easy, for several reasons. One is that the mining industry carries a lot of baggage. No one can deny past environmental damage, or the existence of modern examples of poor practice. Another reason is that the fragile nature of our industry and the keen competition that exists between producers, have not equipped the industry to deal strategically with such a broad and complex threat to its activities. The industry is not organized to analyze and respond adequately to such a comprehensive and deep seated challenge to its future. We have, therefore, launched a new project to tackle these issues under the name of the Global Mining Initiative.[31]

Corporate giants supported the GMI, whose first task was to create, in 2001, the International Council of Mining and Metals (ICMM) as an instrument for exerting a united political influence in international circles. The organization was strengthened by admitting not only the largest, most powerful corporations in the world, but dozens

of associations representing literally hundreds of 'Junior' mining companies. Today, its ranks include 22 giant international mining corporations, 32 national or continental mining associations, several mining sectors (i.e., 'commodity-based' groups that mine gold, steel, etc.), for a total of some 1,500 associates. Together, its members operate more than 1,200 mining projects in over 70 countries worldwide, with thousands more in the exploration phase.[32] Its aspiration is to form a universal mining coalition, so it is actively recruiting in Russia[33] and especially, in China. At the 2012 China Mining Congress it distributed Chinese translations of key documents and held interviews with the "central Chinese government".[34]

The second task consisted in drafting the GMI's theoretical text, a labor entrusted to the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London. Its web page presents the following declaration: We are an independent policy research organization based in the UK we help strengthen marginalized people's voices in decision-making and ensure that national and international policy better reflects the agendas of poorer communities and countries.[35]

The IIED organized a large, multinational group of social scientists and experts. In 2002, it presented its document: Breaking New Ground: Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMDS)[1]. This report presents a diagnosis of the international mining sector with profiles of the actors involved in mineral production, provides information on conflicts between mines and communities in some nations and analyzes their causes, discusses errors in land acquisition, forced settlement relocation, indifference to incidents of contamination and grievances by communities due to health effects, the destruction of sacred sites, or inadequate compensation, among others.

The lesson learned was that if companies had studied local and national contexts, lessened environmental impacts and forged better linkages with local populations, those conflicts could have been defused with less virulence, or prevented altogether. The tacit suggestion was that corporations curb indifference and recognize the legal, social, cultural and political complexity of the places where they operate. But the key recommendation was that the Cluster elaborates a policy for active intervention in the social life of communities and regions based on the 'currency of sustainable development'. The report urged them to protect the environment and become promoters and defenders of all important community social and cultural rights (e.g. to consultation, gender equality, health and a sustainable environment). It includes a call for commercial responsibility to combat poverty and promote "community development" projects that will bring affected communities into the prosperous fold of "sustainable development", convokes its members to create inclusive spaces for negotiating initiatives with community leaders, government agents, NGOs and other interest groups, harmonizing ideas and resolving disputes, while warning against arrogance and supporting discrete, indirect intervention that does not ignite local opposition by seeming to supplant the role of government.

Among the many rights that the IIED's report to its financiers (the ICMM) urges be recognized, is the notion for them, subversive that

governments (there is no mention of corporations) must accept that local communities can oppose mining operations. But this idea is expressed only once, in a timid phrase buried in the report's 419 pages and immediately short-circuited by the condition that opposition must result from a "well-established decision-making process" in what it categorizes as "indigenous communities".[36]

The report's authors vehemently defend communities as "relevant actors" that must always be granted the right to participate and be consulted, never excluded from the imagined bargaining table where their fate is debated. That table is thought to include multiple "actors" (some relevant, others not so much) that have a legitimate right to participate (government officials, mining representatives, social organizations, environmental groups, international agencies). According to the IIED, however, local communities do not merit a place in the higher echelons of legitimacy, which are reserved for national states and, obviously, mining companies. The argument is that at all levels, from the international to the local; there are groups of actors considered legitimate voices in the mineral sector. At times their demands for legitimacy are difficult to evaluate. For sustainable development it is fundamental to understand who the 'social actors' are, evaluate their legitimacy, assure they are accountable and promote their capacitating.[36]

The IIED thus assigns 'degrees of legitimacy' to actors according to a 5-level hierarchy:

a. Actors with veto rights, including, for example, legally-constituted government authorities with the faculty to deny permissions and landowners with rights to exploit but no obligation to sell

b. Actors with the right to compensation; e.g., landowners without rights of exploitation, injured workers, communities facing relocation

c. Actors with the right to participate; e.g., some national indigenous organisms, local planning authorities, people who satisfy the requirements to participate in EIA processes

d. Actors with the right to be consulted; e.g., affected persons whose opinions must be investigated, neighboring communities, government organisms not involved in decision-making

e. Actors that must be informed; e.g., suppliers, mass media[36]

Note that the only actors with the veto rights are national states and mining concessionaires, "who are not obliged to sell. In contrast, landowners without mining concessions only have the right to be compensated; that is, to be remunerated for the lands they lose. Here, communities collectively or as the sum of their titleholders are obliged to cede their lands and accept relocation, if necessary. In the universe of rights recognized by the "sustainable legislators of the IIED" communities are, in effect, deprived of their right to say "No", because they are not national states and cannot make purchases or negotiate with state bureaucracies over mining concessions on their lands.

All other actors i.e., neighbors without real property, gatherers, or the environmentally-affected are left with only a weak "right to participate"; i.e., to share in the piñata of money distributed by the mining company or government. Finally, to close its pincers the IIED grants the right to speak to political intermediaries, government officials and other actors who can meddle and opine on the only topic open to discussion; namely, the best technique for effectuating the

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[1]Only three organizations participated in drafting the Breaking New Ground report: the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) http://www.iied.org, Environmental Resources Management (ERM) http://www.erm.com/in/; and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) http://www.wbcsd.org/home.aspx. References to the IIED, therefore, extend authorship to include the other two groups.

territorial dispossession of local communities. And it is here that we find the key to decoding the discourse of "sustainable mining". The MMSD's report recognizes all the rights it deems convenient, except the right of communities to inhabit their lands in accordance with their life ways and historically-constructed landscapes and to reject watching as their territory is converted into what Lerner[37] calls "a zone of sacrifice".

The IIED's scholars abstained from questioning the model of international mineral consumption. For example, there is no discussion of the meaning of precious metal consumption in relation to sumptuary consumption or of financial security in exchange for territorial destruction, nor any analysis of the radical destruction of landscapes and the dimensions of environmental liabilities in affected regions. The report remains silent on such topics as the negative reciprocity that characterizes the private appropriation of massive volumes of wealth that move from peripheral regions to the luxurious central nodes of the global economy, or why private mining interests are given equal weight to the international public interest.

## Sustainable mining and techniques of domination

The GMI organized the Global Mining Cluster as a "unified social field" in order to offer in the MMSD report a new conceptual framework and discourse that present the industry as a socially-responsible sector committed to the environment. Also, the GMI endowed the Cluster by founding the ICMM through the interwoven command of powerful mining corporations with an apparatus that provides "strategic intelligence", constituted as a "global political subject" well-equipped to defuse criticisms, legitimize the sustainability of mega-mining and gain influence in key international organisms and national states. Of course, before the advent of the GMI the mining industry had formed powerful associations (by country, continental region, or "commodity") and organized congresses to forge links with communities of interest, but their leaders saw no need to respond publicly to the criticisms and scandals caused by their members' operations. Their activities focused on negotiating the rules of competition inside the sector and pursuing legal and regulatory advantages in national states. But at the 1992 Earth Summit in Río the industry was caught off-guard and failed to respond to criticisms of its "predatory" behavior in a new global milieu where the themes of the environment, human rights and the rights of ethnic groups emerged as central issues. That marked the moment when the mining industry felt impelled to organize in a global Cluster and respond with a legitimizing international strategy.

The ICMM took on the task of organizing the strategy and, in 2003, published the Decalogue that outlines the principles of "sustainable mining" and was soon featured on the web-pages of mining corporations worldwide.[38] To the world beyond their industry, mining companies publicized themselves as ethical organisms concerned with sustainable development, defending human rights, respect for cultures, protecting the environment, health, worker safety and efforts to alleviate poverty. Inside, the Cluster focused on educating its members in this new discourse to make its Decalogue more believable. The first strategy involved building a kind of self-certification mechanism to evaluate mining sustainability that broke the Decalogue down into several criteria of "sustainability" and "social responsibility" assessed by a scoring system designed to measure compliance. Today, mining corporations evaluate

themselves and present "Public Reports" based on the Decalogue's criteria, which are then audited by a panel of independent experts. In 2012, the ICMM declared that 100 corporations including all of its founders! Satisfied the criteria with high scores.[39] What corporations seek with this resource in the international sphere is accreditation as sustainable, socially-responsible enterprises. To thwart dismissals of the mechanism based on problematic issues like unauthorized mining operations in protected areas or indigenous territories, they publish "position declarations" which label them as "in controversy", meaning that they continue to operate but show their willingness to participate in future dialogue.[40]

The ICMM also responded to specific criticisms. For example, it replied to the indigenous organization First Peoples Worldwide which accused it of denting original peoples' political right to say "No" to mining operations in their territories[41] and turned its weapons of defense on academics who dared criticize the Cluster. The award-winning text, Sustainable Development in the Mining and Minerals Sector: The Case for Partnership at Local, National and Global Levels, authored by the ICMM's "Senior Programmer", Kathryn Mc Phail, can be interpreted as one counterattack. In a comparative study of various countries, she conveniently concludes that the so-called "curse of resources" i.e., that they generate poverty, inequality and environmental deterioration– is a result, not of the acts and logics of the mining industry but, rather, of the regulatory weakness of governments; an argumentative twist that could only hold water if global mining corporations were humble, disorganized prospectors with no political influence, operating in the far-off lands of states that had forgotten them.[42]

A second line of defense created by the ICMM consists in providing the Cluster with solid, politically correct arguments that exalt the language and strategy of the MMSD report as the public policy of key international organisms. A review of mining issues in documents by the World Bank, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development,[43] shows that they contain simple re-elaborations of that discourse: "Mining is a worldwide priority, the entire geography of the world is open to mining exploitation but exploitation must be socially-responsible, sustainable and participative." Examples include the WEF's "Initiative for the Development of Responsible Mining", which states its goal of creating "a truly multipartite neutral platform for debate and the development of ideas capable of freeing potential socioeconomic benefits of mining"[44] and documents by the APEC's Mining Task Force endorsed by the ministers of the member countries of this powerful organization that, for example, see no environmental problem with underwater mining "if conducted responsibly".[45]

A third line gives mining companies guidelines and recommendations for managing social conflicts with local populations and mitigating practices that harm the environment; including, for instance, techniques for recycling materials and protocols for relating to indigenous groups, resettling localities, or processing community-based disputes. Key here is an exemplary text drafted by the ICMM and the World Bank entitled: "A Set of 20 tools for application in the cycle of mining projects for community development. Tool kit".[46] This document was designed for corporate mining operators and provides systematic instructions for determining, intervening, negotiating and conjuring potential conflicts.

Composed in the rhetorical key of "sustainable development" this Kit claims to "foster alliances and constructive work relations among communities, companies and governments to improve opportunities for the sustainable development of communities and regions in relation to mining and metal operations in all phases of the cycle". This sophisticated "strategic intelligence" manual is ready to be applied by "community relations" offices at mining sites. Its first set of tools helps construct a "panoptic" of the region that identifies and describes the network of internal and external actors, even localizing their homes on a town map. It teaches how to classify them as to their political influence, strength of opposition and potential to affect the mining project; how to choose the most suitable approach for each group, especially leaders and opponents who receive offers of "opportunities for association" and recommends elaborating complementary sociological studies of local daily life, economy and history, peoples' cultural values and internal divisions and conflicts, among other themes. A second set of tools is designed to detect local needs and aspirations and invite local population to play at "sustainability" through "participative projects" closely supervised by company agents. A third sets out how to manage claims and conflicts, re-settle towns pacifically and draft "agreements and plans for community development". Taken as a whole, the Kit organizes a micro-politics of differentiated treatment intended to weaken the formation of unified oppositions, while training mining agents to manage and channel local collective action towards objectives that do not affect the mine's interests.

The underlying objective of the Community Development Kit is to install a regime of domination through a kind of "indirect government" operated by mine management. This "indirect" character akin to 'out-sourcing' is crucial because it dissimulates intervention, evades responsibility and reduces monetary costs, while publicizing action plans and local micro-businesses as genuine community initiatives. The presence of consultants, ONGs, universities and government agencies all loyal to mining is justified as "responding to local petitions". Finally, the dominion of mining is concealed as a disinterested philanthropic collaboration with poor "neighbors" that obeys the rhetoric of "corporate social responsibility" (Table 1).

A similar manual is entitled mining: Partnerships for Development Toolkit. Its objective is to dominate actors that operate in sub-national spaces.[47] Two other manuals teach how to calculate the company's reputation[48] and deploy communications strategies, respectively.[49] With all these tools and agents trained to use them, corporations can "capture communities" and implement regional "horizons of coercion" that allow them to conduct their lucrative business in "social peace".

Direct production by the ICMM exceeds 8,500 documents, which can be taken to represent the Global Mining Cluster's official posture. In reality, they are drafted by a broad network of scholars organized in multiple "Think Tanks" in universities, civil associations, consulting firms. Key groups include the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in England, Canada's Simon Fraser Institute and the Sustainable Minerals Institute at the University of Queensland, Australia. The fact is that publication of the MMSD report opened up a new "academic field" dedicated to resolving the Cluster's theoretical dilemmas and developing applications for handling real-life situations. This has produced a whole corpus of articles and books in "scientific" format that propitiated the emergence of an arena for consulting firms specialized in handling the many legal, social, political issues and problems entailed in mining processes. Indeed, it

is not strange to find academic groups that theorize political processes while simultaneously operating them in favor of the Cluster.

**Table1** Twenty tools for "community development" of the International Council on Mining and Metals ICMM)

| "Community development toolkit" | |
|---|---|
| **Relationship tools** | |
| 1 | Identification of Interested Parties |
| 2 | Analysis of Interested Parties |
| 3 | Consultation Matrix |
| 4 | Assessment of Partnerships |
| 5 | Grievance Mechanism |
| **Planning tools** | |
| 6 | Strategic Planning Framework |
| 7 | Mapping the Community |
| 8 | Institutional Analysis |
| 9 | Hierarchy of Opportunities for Development |
| 10 | Financial Assessment Tools |
| **Assessment tools** | |
| 11 | Baseline Social Study |
| 12 | Evaluation of Social Impact and Opportunities |
| 13 | Assessment of Competencies |
| **Management tools** | |
| 14 | Community Development Agreements |
| 15 | Management Systems |
| 16 | Community Action Plans |
| 17 | Local Economic Investment |
| 18 | Resettlement Planning |
| **Follow-up and evaluation tools** | |
| 19 | Definition of Indicators |
| 20 | Goal Attainment Scale |

One basic element of this "academic field" is called the "Social License to Operate". This concept holds that mining companies require in addition to formal permits "license" from local inhabitants, otherwise their operations will generate opposition and run the risk of boycotts. This has been applied with some success by the Mining Cluster, for it provides a theoretical apparatus that analyzes success and failure in cases of territorial dispossession, reflects on the complexity of local communities and their responses and discerns the best way to 'capture' a community and take its territory without upsetting social peace. The concept was coined by Jim Cooney, a political scientist who participated in the MMSD project[50] and is now a consultant and leader of the important Responsible Minerals Sector Initiative (RMSI) at Simon Fraser University's Beedie School of Business. But perhaps the principle theoretician behind it is Robert Boutilier also at Simon Fraser who sustains that there are four levels of "social license". The lowest level is "retention" of the license, when a community actively rejects the mining project. The fourth and final level is "psychological identification", which occurs when a population actually defends the mine as a psychological "co-proprietor" of the project. Boutilier

recommends investing "social capital" to convert local populations into 'psychological co-proprietors' of the company, clarifying that the fictional nature of this 'co-property' is not an obstacle as long as the population buys into it. Complementing this conceptual apparatus is a typology of political organization in local societies that has proven useful for interpreting the tensions of local political arenas, intervening in local scenarios and manipulating leaders to side with mining interests.[51] The ICMM's tools, described above, are practical products of this "academic field".

Today the Global Mining Cluster is further strengthened by a new initiative: the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IFMMMSD), whose goal is to promote "the contribution of the mining sector to sustainable development" by offering governments a "platform for dialogue among multiple interested parties to discuss the opportunities and challenges that mining confronts". According to their documents, 47 national governments on five continents have bought into this initiative.[52]

## The global mining cluster in the mexican context

At the planetary level, the Cluster works to broaden its influence in international organisms, provide strategic intelligence and disseminate the gospel of sustainable mining. In national states its aims are operational to establish favorable legal conditions, obtain government support to remove regulatory and political barriers, contain local resistance and deactivate opponents, while in relation to social and environmental concerns it seeks to legitimize mining companies as producers of social goodness. In Mexico, the key institutions for mining interests are: the Secretariat of Economy (SE), which grants mining concessions; the National Water Commission (CONAGUA), which concessions water; the Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), which issues "environmental impact certificates"; the Federal Procurator's Office for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA), which punishes violations of environmental law; and the Agrarian Procurator's Office (PA), created to defend the agrarian rights of communities, but that in mining areas actually manipulates ejidal assemblies and agrarian communities to obtain legal transference of their lands to mining interests.

Through its General Coordination of Mining (GCM), the SE plays a central role. While formally entrusted with "fomenting" and "regulating" mining, in practice its main purpose is to promote the Cluster's interests at the federal government level. Its intervention is a determining factor in subordinating the decisions of federal agencies regarding mining concerns to the will of corporations so that, for example, they can open mines in protected areas, obtain water concessions and appropriate lands. Proof of this is the Guide to Surface Occupation, an official SE document full of derogatory references to peasant titleholders that explains the procedures for legally accessing ejido and community lands while advocating "bad faith" strategies to effectuate dispossessions. For example, it recommends that companies sign "temporary land occupation agreements" with ejidos while negotiating expropriation behind their backs with the very federal government that the SE represents! Also, it suggests applying techniques for community development illustrated with "successful cases" like Canada's Goldcorp Company or Mexico's Peñoles which appropriated peasant lands without disturbing social peace. The SE sees no conflict of interest in publishing the Guide and makes no effort to conceal the fact that the text was co-authored by mining companies and associations in the ICMM.[53] Hardly surprising, then

those peasant organizations and other opposition groups impugn the Guide and decry the Federal government's servile attitude towards private mining corporations.[54]

The Cluster channels its influence on federal government agencies, congresses, state governors and public opinion through Mining Task Forces and the Mexican Chamber of Mining (CAMIMEX). These organisms widen the Cluster's operational capacity by hiring specialized consultants to negotiate specific aspects of its agenda (political lobbying, situational studies and media management) and teaming up with ONGs and research centers to develop agendas for intervening in local communities. Mining Task Forces are comprised of coalitions of corporations that deploy discrete, high-level working groups that seek to influence the highest spheres of government. Grouped by country of origin, they are formally led by corporation directors in the host country, but are really operated by teams of specialized consultants. Obeying their military metaphor, they create "task forces" that pursue specific goals in specific scenarios. Rosalind Wilson, current president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Mining Task Force, explains as follows: Essentially, the Mining task Force is a platform for Canadian companies to share common success and areas of improvement. We meet every couple of months to share experiences and find solutions and strategies to approach local issues and authorities.[55]

Mining Task Forces monitor national settings and elaborate agendas to manage issues of concern. They also establish relations with the government and political elite and forge links with operational level officials to resolve obstacles that companies in the Task Force may face. One unique aspect of Mining Task Forces is its links to embassies through which private problems are transformed into matters of a diplomatic order.[56] The Canadian Mining Task Force is the most notorious of these groups. Its strength is reflected in the annual celebration of "Mexican Mining Day", held since 2010 in Toronto, Canada, during the international mining convention, Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada.[57] Mexican Mining Day includes a banquet where Canadian corporate managers entertain high Mexican federal functionaries, governors and influential figures linked to the circles of political power. During this 'social ritual', their Mexican guests exalt their country's "mining tradition" and vow to remove obstacles that worry the Cluster. Virtually every legal and institutional change since the neoliberal revolution of the 1990s in Mexico has been resolved in favor of the Cluster. Topics discussed include minor legal adjustments and security for the Cluster's mining operations. At the meeting in April 2014, for example, the Secretary of Economy of the Mexican government, Ildefonso Guajardo, promised to adjust the agrarian law to give "greater legal security" to the acquisition of ejidal lands and pledged to provide operatives to protect mines from organized crime. When frictions arose between government and the Cluster over a new 7.5% tax on profits, Guajardo said that "he would work" to channel this fiscal revenue into financing the "sustainable development" of municipalities and communities where mining companies are established.[58]

The Mexican Chamber of Mining (CAMIMEX) is a second key structure in the Cluster's organizational chart. It brings together the largest 150 companies, which concentrate 93% of the value of mining production in Mexico. This Chamber formally represents the national mining sector before the State, but with the dissolution of small companies global corporations now hold control. The functions, practices and objectives of the CAMIMEX[59] are similar to those of the Mining Task Force, but one substantive difference is that its leaders

(Mexico's mining barons, especially Grupo Mexico, Grupo Peñoles and Grupo FRISCO,)[60] exert direct influence on Mexico's national political class and mass media. A second is its effort to promote the idea of "mining communities" as seen in the biannual celebration of an International Mining Convention that cements its links to the network of mining congresses sponsored by the Cluster.[61]

In mining field management, Field managers are responsible for keeping mining operations 'up and running' in both technical terms and in relation to local politics. In order to control "community relations" they often form teams that specialize in maintaining control over communities. The objective of this organizational level is to implement and manage the "horizon of coercion" imposed by the mining operation on local communities in the affected region. Their preferred instruments are sustainable development and, when that fails, threats.

## Horizons of coercion

Ethnographic evidence from Mexico shows that, due to their need to secure exclusive control of territory and resources, corporations in the Mining Cluster must dispossess local populations, modify existing cultural uses and reorganize regional landscapes in tune with the exigencies of the mining business. Given that simple, open, violent dispossession is not publicly convenient in our modern, intercommunicated global world; they seek to impose regimens of domination on regions that successfully control populations while defusing local resistance through coercion. Following Lomnitz,[1] we call the local realities constructed in this way "horizons of coercion"; that is, apparatuses of domination imposed upon a network of social relations where exchanges are treated as if they were positive (i.e., as relations among free individuals, linked contractually through consensus, with respect for existing civil and political rights), when in reality they shroud the role of "negative reciprocity" understood as the intention to take everything in exchange for nothing[62] that surreptitiously, through coercion, defines the menacing character of the terms of exchange between dominator and dominated.

Horizons of coercion" subjugate families, communities and regions to secure, by coercive means, the transfer of labor, goods and/or territories to perpetrators who offer "almost nothing" in return unless, of course, one counts the right to stay alive. Horizons simulate positive transactions. From the victims' perspective, they appear as "enclosures" beyond which there is no one to whom they can turn for effective help, to assert their cause, or to break free of the threatening influence of their captors. The captors, of course, see the same enclosure, but as a means to isolate their victims from the outside world and contain the local, internal social life of towns within a domain where an omnipresent menace lies just below the surface. The intention is to provoke fear and so "entrap" individuals, group, communities and entire regions, forcing them to submit or "cooperate". In this sense, "horizons of coercion" impose social order through violence, defined as "any intentional action or omission that harms, or can harm, individuals and that ultimately perturbs or constrains their capacity to design their lives in freedom".[63]

In Mexico, the weakening of the rule of law, the government's subordination to mining interests and the invisibility of mining practices in the public sphere has allowed corporate mining operations to implement or attempt to impose hundreds of "horizons of coercion" across broad areas. These informal, meta-judicial regimens of domination at the micro-regional and regional levels have fragmented Mexico's national geography into an archipelago of autonomous areas, governed indirectly from the suites of mining corporations either on their own, or through tacit territorial accords of co-existence with factice power groups i.e., mafias that also through coercion, dominate municipal governments in extensive rural regions and negotiate protection for sectors of the state and federal political class. In fact a standard procedure of political fragmentation promoted by neoliberal mining corporations in states and regions peripheral of the world.[64]

In an interview with the Canadian Business News Network, Rob MacEwen founder of Goldcorp and owner of MacEwen Mining appeared puzzled by the theft of 198 kilos of gold from his mine in the state of Sinaloa. Region controlled by the famous "Chapo Guzman cartel". He said that his company had "good relations" with drug-trafficking groups: "The cartels are there. Usually we have good relations with them. When we want to explore somewhere we ask and they say: 'No, but come back in a couple of weeks when we've finished what we're doing'", indicating that the zone was being used temporarily to harvest and transport drugs.[65] MacEwen's[65] statements caused a fissure in the Cluster's posture in Mexico. On the one hand, Manuel Reyes Cortés, President of the Association of Mining Engineers, Metallurgists and Geologists of Mexico (AIMMGM) admitted that miners do negotiate with organized crime groups,[66] while on the other; Rosalind Wilson (leader of the Canadian Task Force) denied any relation between Canada's mining sector and organized crime in Mexico: We have good corporate governance and this does not entail negotiating with criminal groups. MacEwen's[65] comment is very unfortunate and we must clarify that at least the Canadian companies registered in the Toronto, New York and London Stock Exchanges have a series of very strict rules that oblige them to report all their operations.[67]

Immersed in scandal, the Cluster's members initially denied such relations, even implying that they were victims of extortion, while rejecting any hint of mutual convenience. But the reality is that mines and mafias occupy the same geographies and for years the Cluster's failed to raise its powerful voice to protest the many robberies or lethal aggressions suffered by its workers and never reported such crimes to the authorities despite hundreds of incidents, which is what one would logically expect given the importance of this issue in the public sphere. Thus communities in hundreds of regions live politically annulled by the horizons of coercion imposed upon them.

## The peñasquito case

The Canadian mining company Goldcorp, active member of the ICMM and practitioner of sustainable mining, offers an exemplary case of a "horizon of coercion".[68] It owns the Peñasquito mine in the basin of the Mazapil Valley, on the state of Zacatecas' high desert plane. An open-pit operation with an estimated productive life of 22years that produces gold, silver, lead and zinc, Peñasquito was inaugurated in 2010 by then President Felipe Calderón. Peñasquito covers 8,000 hectares property of four ejidos: Cedros, Mazapil, El Vergel and Cerro Gordo. Goldcorp obtained legal control of this territory by signing a "Temporary Occupation Contract" for a period of 20-to-30years, in the presence and with the blessing, of agents of the Agrarian Prosecutor's office. However, our field interviews and later judicial sentences proved that those accords involved forged documents and bribes paid to ejido authorities. Goldcorp paid around $15.5million USD, but the concept of "negative reciprocity" reminds us that the corporation will obtain sales of $84billion USD for an operating profit of $68billion USD.

In 2009, the Cedros and El Vergel ejidos blocked the mine's gates, demanding that the Agrarian Prosecutor's office and the Secretariat of Economy review contracts that, they affirmed, were fraudulent. But both agencies upheld their validity. After these two defeats, the Secretary of State for Zacatecas demanded that the ejidatarios withdraw the blockade. In the ensuing negotiations the ejidatarios were advised by traditional politicians of the Mexican left, but they channeled the talks towards discussing amounts of monetary compensation and totally ignored the issues of the legality of the accords, usurpation of water and the territorial and environmental effects of mining. After various meetings, Goldcorp agreed to pay the Cedros ejido $3,000,000 USD annually during the life of the mine for 4,800 hectares affected. But the ejidatarios from El Vergel refused the money because their objectives were to annul the agreement and cap the 50 wells dug illegally by the mine which sucked all the water from the community's irrigation system. No settlement was reached, so El Vergel opted to sue Goldcorp for dispossession.

Goldcorp recouped the Cedros ejido for its cause and the assembly decided that the annual payment would be distributed in equal parts to its 434 members, guaranteeing each ejidatario a monthly income of $576 USD; a modest amount, but enough to solvent families' basic living costs. Here, the company's first strategy was to intimidate the leaders of the resistance and have them removed from the ejido administration. One fine day in late 2009 during the aforementioned negotiations the ejido's embattled representative who led the revolt against the mine informed us that there would no more meetings with him. Fearful and taking care not to be seen with us, he told me that a few weeks before some mafiosos had sequestered him for a week, keeping him tied and locked up on the floor of an abandoned house somewhere out in the desert, demanding a ransom of $20,000 pesos ($1,500 USD) for his return. His family sold a pick-up truck to raise the money and he was released unharmed. He says he never knew who did it, but that he would now devote his time only to his fields. He asked me not to look for him again.

After this episode, Goldcorp implemented a policy to prevent future conflicts, sending its agents out to intervene in the daily life of communities equipped with the tools of "sustainable mining". Soon it won over politically speaking the ejidal assembly and today employs dozens of local residents, offers young people scholarships to study technical careers, organizes cooperatives staffed by local women and provides loans for locals to open family businesses. Also, it remodeled the town's health clinic and church and organizes fairs with dances and rides for inhabitants in the region. As a result, most people now support the mine and have even mobilized to defend the company from accusations of dispossession by other ejidos. Threats played a role in these events. Today, Cedros' ejidatarios are "co-proprietors" of Peñasquito a la Boutilier i.e., not through psychological abduction but due to practical calculation in the face of coercion. They chose to accept the powerful corporation's offer and turn their backs on neighboring ejidos after weighing the costs of resisting a threat they perceived as very real after the kidnapping of their leader; this in a small town linked by a dense kinship network.

Turning to the lawsuit launched by the El Vergel ejido in 2009, we find that it was resolved favorably in 2013, as the presiding judge found against Goldcorp and annulled the land agreement because it had forged signatures and had been signed without the ejidal assembly's knowledge. Goldcorp was ordered to indemnify the town for four years of illegal occupation. But in July 2013, El Vergel desisted from its demand that the wells at Peñasquito be closed, on the condition that Goldcorp pay to rehabilitate the ejido's own wells. A new contract, witnessed by a high official of the Agrarian Procurator's office, was signed and the ejido agreed to accept $19 million USD in return for allowing the company to occupy 1,320 hectares for 30 years. That amount meant a monthly income of $607 USD for each of the ejido's 87 members. Goldcorp also agreed to preserve 40 jobs at the mine for locals, improve infrastructure, provide scholarships and rehabilitate the ejido's wells and irrigation works, which had been rendered partially unproductive. As at Cedros, El Vergel's ejidatarios chose not to raise the stakes, preferring instead to take the rent money and other benefits after an exhausting 5-year legal battle. In effect, Goldcorp won despite losing the suit. The ejido accepted the "money for water" transaction based on a new legal accord that guaranteed the company long-term access. The company obtained this excellent result not through violence "as action" but "as omission".

In another scenario, the Cerro Gordo ejidatarios took Goldcorp to trial over the dispossession of 599 hectares located around the Peñasquito pit. They too proved that the existing contract had forged signatures and other irregularities. Five years later, in April 2013, an agrarian magistrate ruled that Goldcorp had to return the usurped land and this was scheduled to take place on June 20. Bereft of legal resources to impede the measure, Goldcorp's lawyers approached the Cedros ejido to mount what was, in essence, a desperate ruse: the comisariado of Cedros petitioned a federal (non-agrarian) judge for 'protection' from the impending execution of the sentence, arguing that the ejido he represented was an "interested party" because the return of lands to Cerro Gordo harmed them since the closing of the mine would mean the loss of the jobs and other benefits the company provided. To publicize their position, over 300 residents of Cedros went to the city of Zacatecas and organized a demonstration in the central square in favor of Goldcorp. The judge granted the stay on exactly June 20 2013.

Alarmed by events in Peñasquito, Goldcorp's entire Board of Directors flew to Mexico City to meet with high federal officials. On July 24 2013, its eleven members had a private interview with Ildefonso Guajardo, the Secretary of Economy. There, "the high functionary reiterated the government's plans to favor businesses and mining", while Goldcorp's Board expressed its expectation that "the federal judge's resolution would suspend the action (i.e., returning the land)", "confident that the final sentence would be delivered with judicial equality".[69] The result in this process has been on hold since July 2013 while Peñasquito continues normal operations.

This case reveals the silent, underlying, menacing nature of the horizon of coercion, which perturbs or constrains local communities' capacity to design their lives freely. Cerro Gordo's advisers have told the media of threats received if they reject an extrajudicial settlement to end litigation.[70] Moreover, after our account of the Peñasquito case appeared in the journal Desacatos, I received two separate emails from two of those advisers, whom I did not know personally, offering me new information. My initial assurance of complete confidentiality was acknowledged in their second and final message, which read: Confidentiality is most important due to the repressions suffered and frequent death threats; this matter impacts that company very strongly. Thank you for your sensitivity.

The first message revealed the advisers' fear in no uncertain terms: "I'm receiving calls from different numbers; and I'm very afraid". I replied, but have received no further communication. Obviously, these messages offer only weak proof of coercion by mining companies, but they are certainly suggestive when seen in the larger context.

Finally, in early March 2015, the ejidatarios of Cerro Gordo bowed to Goldcorp's pressures and accepted an undisclosed sum of money. Goldcorp thus succeeded in winning control over the territory at a very low cost. After the second round of negotiations and up to late 2013 the total amount paid to the four ejidos through Temporary Occupation contracts is around $106million USD paid in cash to the ejidos. But the following figures highlight the "negative reciprocity" involved: for every $1,000dollars in metal sales in world markets, less than $1.30 is destined to pay for the land; while for every $1,000dollars of profit for shareholders on the Toronto Stock Exchange, the communities will receive a grand total of $1.60. In exchange, long after current interests and Goldcorp's ephemeral presence have faded into history, the Mazapil Valley will be left a desolated landscape and its people with useless, unproductive lands.

## Conclusion

The Global Mining Cluster has succeeded in setting itself up as a powerful network of interests acting in a unified fashion. With no centralized command, it operates a network of hundreds of corporations that, despite competing interests, operate in the global public sphere through a common political discourse. The Global Mining Initiative gave the Cluster its discourse of sustainable mining, a formidable ideological apparatus that conceals the violence implicit in landscape destruction and territorial dispossession to the detriment of local societies, while multiplying the Cluster's political clout. Of course, the techniques of "lobbying" national government officials, legislators, researchers and the media always on the edge of the law continue undeterred; the difference is that the discourse of sustainable mining gives the Cluster's friends and allies a "noble cause" around which to rally political support. The Global Mining Initiative taught that land seizures can be carried out intelligently and in silence and that social research can be useful in understanding, classifying and monitoring, manipulating and despoiling social groups with little need to resort to explicit violence.

The International Council of Mining and Metals serves as the hub of the strategic intelligence branch of the Mining Cluster, nourished by a vast network of researchers. From that universe of knowledge it distills rhetoric to apply in the global public domain and applies precision-crafted tools to increase its influence in national spaces and dominion over local ones. The pragmatic character of the Mining Task Forces, in turn, allows them to construct support networks in entrepreneurial, political, media and academic circles. Through "courting" (i.e., lobbying) they gain access to government and civil spheres where they work to remove obstacles that affect their interests. Finally, Mining Management performs the land seizures and implements horizons of coercion at the local level thanks to broad support networks in the nation's involved and sophisticated techniques for understanding and manipulating local social life.

In the Mazapil Valley, Goldcorp carried out this process of "accumulation-by-dispossession" and succeeded in establishing its business on a geographic "frontier" of corporate capitalism. It usurped local communities' control to obtain the lands and water it required for its commercial activities and quashed local resistance cheaply and effectively. The cost lies in the radical destruction of lands as the company transforms its $15,430 million dollar investment into a $68,622 million profit. Corporate successes in Mexico, while many, are not absolute. True, protests by peasant communities against dispossession have been few, but they are on the rise; costly resistances that seek to break out of the enclosure of the horizons of coercion that circle them. Many have been efficaciously contained and silenced, but others endure despite facing hostility. Sadly, before scenarios of territorial destruction and gut-wrenching adversity many communities opt to remain silent.[71,72]

## Acknowledgements

## Conflict of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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