Territorial Transformation in El Pangui, Ecuador

A Thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the Faculty of Humanities

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AUGUST 2013

ALTERNATIVE FORMAT: ACADEMIC WRITING LESSONS LEARNED

RESEARCHING TERRITORIALITY: REFLECTIONS ON LINKING METHOD AND THEORY

REVIEW OF DISSERTATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

8 Bibliography

* Word Count: 73,302
Lists of Acronyms in English

ANA
National Environmental Assembly

ASM
artisanal and small-scale miners

CEDENMA
Ecuadorean Committee for the Protection of Nature and the Environment

CEDHU
Ecumenical Commission of Human Rights

CEP
corporate engagement project

CGPSHA
Shuar Peoples of Arutam government

CME
Ecuador’s Chamber of Mines

CONAICE
Coordinator of Indigenous and Black Organizations of the Ecuadorian Coast

CONAIE
Confederation of Ecuadorean Indigenous Nationalities

CONFENAIE
Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon

CSA
Canadian Securities Administrators

CSR
Corporate Social Responsibilities

ECSA
Ecuacorriente S.A:

ECUARUNARI
Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui

FDA
Front for the Defence of the Amazon

FIDH
International Federation for Human Rights

FIPSE
Independent Federation of the Ecuadorian Shuar People

FISCH
Interprovincial Federation of Shuar Centres

FLACSO
Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales

FSHZCH
Shuar Federation of Zamora Chinchipe

ICMM
International Council on Mining and Metals

INREDH
Regional Institute of Human Rights Advice

MAS
Movimiento al Socialismo

MMSD
Mining Minerals and Sustainable Development

MOMEP
Military Observer Mission

NGO
non-governmental organizations

OCMAL
Observatorio Conflictos Mineros America Latina

PDAC
Prospector and Development Association of Canada
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRODEMINCA</td>
<td>Mining Development and Environmental Control Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIMISP</td>
<td>Latin American Centre for Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTZ</td>
<td>Rio Tinto Zinc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADCO</td>
<td>South American Development Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEDAR</td>
<td>System for Electronic Document Analysis and Retrieval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENPLADES</td>
<td>National Secretariat for Planning and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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Thesis Abstract

This research is about territory, mining conflicts and social movements in South East Ecuador. The Andean country with no large scale mining history is experiencing a recent expansion of large scale mining with growing levels of social conflict. Social movements have been questioning and contesting the forms being taken by the extractive economy as well as proposing an alternative pathway to development through the indigenous concept of *sumak kawsay*. The Socialist Government is pushing the nation’s extractive model forward to include large scale mining, motivated by the much needed revenues to diversify Ecuador’s oil based economy.

El Panguí, my field site, is located on the foothills of the Cordillera del Cóndor, where a large copper deposit is proposed to be developed by a Chinese mining corporation. The Cordillera is an area of great biological diversity and home to the traditional territories of the Shuar, one of the largest indigenous ethnic groups in Ecuador. The years of colonization of ancestral lands and of border war with Peru, the establishment of parks-for-peace, small scale gold mining activity and an expanding agricultural frontier, together have formed a complex territorial mosaic that contribute in shaping the social and physical landscapes. Since 2005 a mining conflict has been unfolding and that can be considered yet another layer of territorial disputes and symbolic contestation in the regions’ history.

My fieldwork was carried out from an engaged research and activist scholarship position. I used an ethnographic methodology to explore the bidirectional influences of territorial dynamics and the anti-mining struggle by looking at multi scalar impacts these have on people’s daily life, corporate social responsibility and environmental development debates. I also looked at the ways in which memories and meanings associated with past conflicts resonate in subsequent resource struggles to form a layering of conflicts. I was particularly interested in the less visible dimensions of environmental mobilisation embedded in the routines of daily life, as well as in the ways in which the memory and history of territorialisation and settlement influence social movement organizing. Theoretically, I propose a territorial approach to studying natural resource struggles and social movements that contest mining. This concept allowed me to examine the effects of the extractive projects on pre-existing territorial dynamics and the influence of these dynamics on the ways in which mining investments are contested.

*Key Words: Ecuador, Amazonia, territoriality, Shuar, mining conflicts, Corporate Social Responsibility, social movement, mining development*
Declaration

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Previously Published Work

The first section of the Introduction was presented at the Annual Conference of the American Geographers Association in New York City, 2012 and was later translated into Spanish and published in 2012 by the author in a peer reviewed journal as *Sin Fronteras: minerales, territorio y movimientos sociales en la Amazonía ecuatoriana* THEOMAI: Society and Development Studies. No.25

A version of Chapter 4 was first published by the author in 2010 as *Territorial Transformation in El Pangui, Ecuador*, Working Document no.60 by the Rural Territorial Dynamics Program–RIMISP. The peer-reviewed version found in this thesis was published in 2013 as a chapter in the book titled *Territorial Transformations in El Pangui: Understanding how Mining Conflict Affects Territorial Dynamics, Social Mobilisation and Daily Life* in Subterranean Struggles: New Dynamics of Mining, Oil and Gas in Latin America, University of Texas Press.

Chapter 5 was co-authored by Anthony Bebbington and is due to be published in 2014 as a chapter in the book titled *Negotiable Differences? Conflicts over Mining and Development in South East Ecuador* in Natural Resource Extraction and Indigenous Livelihoods: Development Challenges in an Era of Globalisation, Ashgate.

Chapter 6 was published by the author as *Why be poor when we can be rich? Constructing responsible mining in El Pangui, Ecuador* in the peer-reviewed journal Resources Policy, Volume 37.
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For my daughters Filomena and Saskia both who came to being while researching and writing this thesis
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I would also like to thank my family for their continuous support. Special thanks to my mother Myrtha for babysitting and supporting me throughout all my crazy adventures. In relation to mining issues, thanks to my father, Fred who -although we disagree ideologically about the mining industry-, was able to share his vast knowledge about the technicalities of the mining process and the workings of the industry. A mention to my younger brother, who once upon a time helped me start my PhD journey. Of course, thank you to my “twin” brother and friend Antony, who helped me understand more about the convoluted investment world of the mining industry among so many other things. Thanks to my good friend and sister-in-law Mo, who from the beginning gave me good old Dutch practical advice: keep the text tight and short.
On many occasions, when people learned that I was doing a PhD, while also working a fulltime job, pregnant and caring for a family, they would be surprised and ask, “How do you do it?!” Usually I shrug, smile and say that I have no idea. But here I will share my secret: to have an amazing, loving and supporting partner. So, thank you Luis for reading, correcting, editing, suggesting, arguing, and proposing ideas for my thesis. Thanks for sharing your encyclopaedic knowledge of the mining industry, your invaluable comments and editing suggestions as well as translation of one of my published articles into Spanish. Thanks for traveling with me from Patagonia to Holland to Manchester, Cuenquita, El Panguí and finally (at least for now) to Lima. The PhD journey started as my personal challenge and you helped turn it into our family project, Gracias mi Che.
Figure 1.1 Map of Latin America highlighting Ecuador

Figure 1.2 Map of Ecuador

1 World Atlas [www.worldatlas.com]
Figure 1.3 Concession map of the Canton El Pangui – indicating the Mirador Project

2 Instituto Geográfico del Ecuador [http://www.igm.gob.ec]
3 Acción Ecológica, 2009
1 Beyond Borders: Minerals, Territory and Movements

Introduction

It is May 7, 2009. I am in a red pick-up truck with Pepe, Cris, and Mauro, driving through a valley of the Cordillera del Condor in Ecuador’s south eastern Amazon. We criss-cross indigenous and non-indigenous lands with the Rio Zamora on our left and Peru further in the distance. Pepe and Cris are friends in their early twenties. Mauro is Pepe’s eight year old younger brother, who accompanies us everywhere. The three of them are second generation mestizos whose parents arrived here in the early nineties, searching for fertile agricultural lands and fleeing from the Nambija disaster in 1993. Pepe and Cris recently formed an ecological youth organization with a group of friends and they vigorously reject two large scale mining projects, owned by Canadian and Chinese multinational companies that started to be developed in the area a few years ago.

I am an activist, an anthropologist, and PhD student living in the parish of El Pangui in the province of Zamora Chinchipe. I am part Peruvian, which makes me conscious about possible resentment towards Peru, Ecuador’s war opponent in 1941, 1981 and 1995. I am also knowledgeable and sensitive of the mining industry’s impacts since I am the daughter of a Dutch geologist who worked around the world for some of the biggest and most contested multinational mining companies.

We are driving around to invite people from nearby communities to a big anti-mining public forum that will host indigenous leaders from Canada as key speakers. They will share their experiences of the impacts of mining in their communities.

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4 These are pseudonyms of my informants

5 Nambija is a town in the province of Zamora Chinchipe, located south of El Pangui. In the 1980’s gold deposits were found that attracted the immigration of numerous people from across the country and who ventured to extract gold from the mountain. The Nambija mine disaster refers to a landslide which occurred in 1993 where a part of the mountain above the countless mines gave way and buried about 300 people.
communities to help strengthen the struggle against large scale mining in Ecuador. But above all, the goal of the forum is to break down the myth that President Rafael Correa preaches about Canada that mining brings economic progress and is environmentally friendly, that indigenous people welcome it, and that anyone who says otherwise is just plain stupid.

I am four months pregnant and feeling sick as we wind up and down the dirt roads. I strike up a conversation about the lands we are crossing to keep me from thinking of my nausea. I asked the names of places and the location of communities. Pepe helped me create a mental map of the Cordillera. He explains everything in terms of “the struggle.” He points out where Corriente Resources’ main mining camp is located, where the limits of the mining concession lie, and where the open pit will supposedly be located. He mentions a mining camp that was burned down to the ground by a group of indigenous leaders, mestizo men and women, and anti-miners like him. We kicked them out in 2007, he remembers. But Cris reminds Pepe how the pro-miners burned the shack on his farm and poisoned his dog! Then, he points to Tundayme where the mining conflict had become violent and militarised for the first time in December 2006. Heavy clashes erupted near Corriente Resources’ camp site for their Mirador project, a few kilometres from the military post patrolling the international border. The mountain range all of a sudden looked different. It seemed as if I was absorbing Pepe’s mental map, constructed between memory and political discourse. Here, memory, popular ontologies and everyday practices seem important in determining how mining and territorial dynamics affect each other.

The Cordillera del Condor is part of the Tropical Andes Hotspot that runs from western Venezuela to northern Chile and Argentina, one of Earth’s richest and

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6 Discourses like these by President Correa can be found in various media and in particular in his weekly Saturday Radio program.
8 “Hot spot” is the term coined by Norman Meyers 1988 to refer to critical eco-regions with very high levels of biodiversity and are in a state of environmental emergency. The tropical Andes “hot spot,” where the Cordillera del Cóndor Mountain Range is located, has been designated by international conservation organisations as an “epicentre of worldwide biodiversity”.
most diverse. The area along the border of Ecuador and Peru is known as the Conservation Corridor of Abiseo-Cóndor-Kutuku, which covers some 13 million hectares\(^9\). The Cordillera is also rich in minerals. Ecuador’s south eastern ‘copper belt’ extends over a 20 x 80 kilometre area and is considered by the mining industry as one of the few undeveloped copper districts available in the world today\(^10\). Canadian company Corriente Resources started exploring in April 2000 and has four identified copper and copper-gold deposits: the Mirador and Mirador Norte Project in the parish of El Pangui, and the Panantza and San Carlos Project in the adjacent province of Morona Santiago (see Figure 1.3 on page 17 and Figure 4.1 on page 127). Mineral resources at Mirador have an indicated 11 billion pounds of copper plus 2.6 million ounces of gold. The Panantza San Carlos project has 6.7 billion tons of copper\(^11\).

Our ride continues along the bumpy road. With jokes and anecdotes Pepe explains that Corriente Resources and its subsidiary Ecuacorriente arrived a few years ago and cheated and convinced people to sell them their lands. Those poor people took the money, bought cars, went to the city, and thought they were progressing, he commented. But quickly they returned wanting their lands back because they spent all their money. The municipality of El Pangui registered 21 land purchases by the company in 2004 that totalled 1779.5 hectares, and 12 purchases of 758 hectares in 2005 and 26 purchases of 1,250 hectares in 2006\(^12\). They are becoming the largest landowner in El Pangui with a view to securing and enclosing their concession area. This process of land appropriation sounded similar to the ways in which indigenous peoples lost their lands to mestizos decades before. Public colonisation programs and the Agrarian Reform of 1964 paved the way for mestizos and highlanders to settle in the Amazon. It was not uncommon for indigenous peoples to be cheated into selling their lands or signing over communal deeds under the effects alcohol.

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\(^9\) [www.conservation.org]
\(^11\) [www.corriente.com]
\(^12\) Data collected from the Municipality of El Pangui, 2009.
Pepe, however, explains proudly that his family did not give in and sell their land to the company, since his father, an anti-mining leader in the province and a key figure in the social movement, drove those miners away! Both Pepe and Mauro are proud of their father, who is as he once put it, “a defender of life and nature”. Mauro, though only eight years old, is a leader in training. He is one of my most prized informants and a fieldwork companion. He knows who is who in town and what their stances on mining are. He talks of the latest political news and seems to know the strategies to take by social movement leaders. He has school fights and name calling squabbles with other kids whose parents’ have different views on mining. Mauro’s childhood is tainted by mining in ways that mine was not. For him, mining means a collective struggle.

Cris on the other hand is new to the issues related to mining. Like many Ecuadorians he went to the United States as an illegal immigrant and probably would have stayed there had it not been for the global financial crisis. He returned recently to try his luck again at home. His family has a store that is also a social gathering place. They sell things of all sorts, household products, fresh vegetables, bread, candy and ice cream. The store next door has nicer ice cream but I was told that the owner is in favour of mining. The store on the corner has fresher vegetables, but the owner was recently seen with a miner. El Pangui only has a handful of stores. Shopping had never been so complicated. In El Pangui, territorial conflict has, to a certain degree, become a routinized part of daily life. Daily activities such as the ones I mentioned all depend on whether “they are with us or not”. Of course, allegiances change. However, what is more continuous is that the calculations that underlie such choices are informed by where people stand vis-à-vis the mining question.

Cris’ mother and aunt are some of the most active of anti-mining leaders in El Pangui. They are also friends with Pepe and Mauro’s mother, herself a behind-the-scenes activist. Women share their stories of the mining struggle with me in a very matter of fact way, speaking directly, pragmatically and without the political discourse-performance typical of men leaders. Sitting in the store with the other ladies, watching the day pass by, a grandmother spoke of her memories of the war.
with Peru. She remembered feeding and supporting the young soldiers and expressed her frustrations with the mining conflict, since the same troopers she fed are today guarding the Cordillera, but this time as security guards for the miners. In her words, they now point their guns in the wrong direction. In El Pangui, mining conflict has brought about changes in the meanings ascribed to conflict and to physical changes in the landscape. While the Cordillera invokes memories of violence and international armed conflict, today it is just as likely to conjure up images of the physical force associated with mining conflicts.

I roll down the window for fresh air. In the distance, a waterfall looks like an open faucet gushing down to the Zamora River. Pepe stops the truck for me to take a picture. A Shuar leader I interviewed told me that Arutam lives in the waterfalls. Now I see why. Its powerfully beautiful Arutam is a Shuar deity, a god, a source of vital power. The Shuar are the largest indigenous group in southeast Ecuador and northern Peru with the Cordillera del Condor as part of what they consider their ancestral territory. Their boundaries go beyond those of the modern national states. Shuar cosmology considers the environment as multidimensional and part of a pluriverse\(^{13}\), where humans and nature are intrinsically connected. They see

\(^{13}\) I borrow the concept of pluriverse from various authors, which in a general sense refers to understandings and perceptions of the world/reality stemming out of indigenous cosmologies where many worlds may exist at once, with many centres such that diverse subjects or persons may apprehend reality from distinct points of view. More on this see: Mario Blaser’s book *Storytelling Globality: From the Chaco and Beyond*, as well as a range of works by Arturo Escobar, Philippe Descola, and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.

Notions of pluriverse are also relevant for new discussions and debates on political reconfigurations currently occurring in Latin America. Although these debates are to an extent discussed in chapter 5 of this dissertation particularly in relation to the concept of *sumak kawsay*, here I would like to briefly mention a few additional points the notion of pluriverse evokes. Firstly, the rise of indigenous notions into political practice is thought provoking in the sense that we may consider a shift from politics within a singular world to one where many worlds exist at once, or as Marisol de la Cadena (2010) writes, a pluriversal politics. Secondly, indeed if taken seriously pluriversal politics could mean a paradigm shift, above all if non-humans (Nature) also make it into the equation as important actors. Although fruitful for academic debate, I would keep a critical eye as to whether what is happening is an inclusion or absorption of indigenous cosmology into the dominant model of politics or economic development as a form of co-optation and in this way neutralize indigenous politics. The point I wish to make here is that it will be increasingly important that academics as well as indigenous leaders and intellectuals advance in debating in addition to finding ways to take pluriversal politics seriously and implement them such that the transformative potential is not neutralised made possible.
water sources, such as the waterfalls, as essential for the survival of their culture and spirituality. Since the arrival of the mining company Arutam is angry. He is sending out a warning: people must start to care for their environment, or run the risk of losing it.\footnote{Field note recording, Group interview in El Pungui, 20 March 2009.}

We are winding up a hill. Fat raindrops that I have only ever seen in the Amazon started to pour. Mauro is in the back of the truck and needs to get inside quickly. We stop, he gets in and we wait for the rain to pass. I ask Pepe and Cris to tell me more about how their families got to this place and acquired their lands. According to Cris, the arriving families just distributed the land among themselves. They agreed whose land belonged to whom and just like that the land was divided. He said previous to their arrival the land belonged to no one, and then afterwards when the land was distributed sometimes they would have disputes when someone else arrived. They didn’t put up fences because they kind of knew where the limits were, but later they did.

Thirty years ago, in addition to the search for available agricultural land, Zamora Chinchipe experienced a gold rush in the area of Nambija, south of El Pangui. Those two natural resources, land and gold, played a role in shaping territorial and settlement patterns. Indeed, many of the colonos (refers to mestizos or highlanders that settled in the Amazon) currently living in El Pungui are former small scale miners who moved there following a devastating accident in Nambija in which more than 200 workers perished under a land slide in May 1993.\footnote{Mineros habían convertido montaña de Nambija en colmena, 11 de mayo, 1993. Explored: Archivo digital de noticias desde 1994 [www.explored.com.ec] – reviewed March 4, 2010.} Pepe explained that his family used to live further south and his father worked as a small scale gold miner, but after the accident they came here. Families like Pepe’s, who were previously farmers-turned-miners, returned to farming. Today, these colonos with prior (or in some cases on-going) ties to small gold mining cooperatives are one of the strongest groups resisting large scale mining in the province.\footnote{As a general note, the colono farmers have varied positions in regard to mining in the country, though a vast majority were not in favour of mining. See VELÁSQUEZ, T. 2012. Going Green: Sustainable Mining, Water, and the Remaking of Social Protest in Post-Neoliberal Ecuador. Doctor}
I wondered about land distribution and appropriation. I asked about the Shuar, who were here before the colonos. Did they negotiate and agree with the Shuar regarding the distribution of the land? Cris and Pepe were not sure. Pepe said that they just went away, deeper into the mountains. Their parents recall the Shuar running around naked and living as if in Eden, but now they are more ‘civilized’.

Some people used to be afraid of them, the land here was vast and they could come out of nowhere. They are warriors and they shrink heads. Today though, for most colonos the Shuar are lazy, do not work the land, they originally come from China, their eyes are slanted and even their language is similar to Chinese. As an anthropologist who critically questions the Bering Strait theory and infuriated by the racist remarks it was hard to believe that beyond the cultural boundaries of acceptance and exclusion, the Shuar in El Pangui are key allies to the colonos in the struggle against big mining. They are important allies in part because of the indigenous movement legacy, their devotion and energy and the weight they put on indigeneity and identity politics.

However, there are also Shuar in favour of mining and who are active in pro-mining movements. I had encountered pro-mining groups back in January 2007 when I visited Ecuador for the first time with my husband (an activist from Argentina). The mayor of the canton of Gualaquiza, an “anti-miner”, promoted an international observation team - of which I was part - to assess the much criticized

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17 I heard comments like these from various people in provinces where the Shuar live: the remarks are not exclusively from the protagonists named here.

18 The debate here is in relation to the theory of how the American continent was initially populated millions of years ago. The theory holds that the continent was populated by people migrating from Asia by crossing the Bering Strait from Siberia to Alaska and then southward to North, central and South America. However, there are other scholars that challenge this theory with archaeological and anthropological evidence that the Americas was populated many years before the Ice Age, in other words before the Bering Strait was frozen to cross. The scholars that challenge the Bering Strait theory claim that it is discriminative to the knowledge of Native Americans in the United States and Canada and indigenous peoples in Central and South America whose stories of their origin say their people came from the South and some that even crossed the Pacific Ocean from Oceania. For further reading see: Vine Deloria (1995) Red Earth, White Lies
military presence guarding the mining camp of the Mirador project\textsuperscript{19}. Outside the municipality, pro and anti-mining groups just meters apart from one another screamed insults with catch phrases related to mining. Later, we met again on the bridge over the Chuchumbletza River, the political border between the provinces and the symbolic border between the mining factions. Separating us was an empty space on the bridge and two rows of armed military personnel. A delegation from each side eventually met in the middle, spoke and negotiated the anti-miners’ retreat. I didn’t get to cross that bridge until a year later as a PhD student.

The pro-miners, like the anti-miners, are also a heterogeneous, unstable and flexible group, made up of unexpected coalitions of indigenous leaders, small-scale miners and mestizo farmers. I wondered how people with these different backgrounds were mapped out physically and symbolically in this place, in this territory, and whether such processes shaped how people made their alliances and coalitions? Are past key experiences of conflict, land dispute and war shaping the ways in which mining investments are being contested? While specific coalitions emerge or unravel, the more general point is that, in an area where land and territory have long been objects of dispute and where layers of conflict have built up over time, the creation and demise of coalitions regardless of mining stances, is a volatile process. Such volatility is equally found in local politics where alliances are negotiated in huddles among men the night before elections.

We also had to make sure to invite to the workshop the recently elected local and provincial government officials. The majority of them are part of the Pachakutik party (the political arm of the CONAIE, the national indigenous organisation) which, during regional and national elections in 2009, had gained overwhelming support in most parts of the Amazonian provinces, coincidently just where mining and oil related conflicts are located. During the elections, the Pachakutik party in Zamora was synonymous with anti-mining and anti President Rafael Correa sentiments. Many officials won the elections partly because of their stance on mining and their alignment with the \textit{sumak kawsay} (good living principles). Indeed, many

\textsuperscript{19} [http://www.conflictosmineros.net/contenidos/12-ecuador/3695]
candidates’ campaigns piggy-backed on the popularity of the elected prefect, a well-respected indigenous leader from the Saraguro ethnic group openly despised by President Correa. Yet these candidates did not win everywhere, and while neighbouring parishes were successful in having their anti-mining leaders be elected mayors or councilpersons, in El Pangui the anti-mining leader lost severely. There could be many readings of this, but one particular reason was hard to accept: some Panguenses may want mining to move forward.

Or, I wondered, was it plausible I was placing too much emphasis on the mining issue as a determinant of the election outcome? Maybe people were more pragmatic and wanted to support a candidate they knew better, one who had served as town mayor in previous years instead of the uncertainty of supporting a new anti-mining leader with less experience in government. Maybe people were fed up with the struggle and wanted to settle for middle ground as the winning candidate offered with promises to make sure the company abide by the new Mining law and respect the rights of Nature. Or maybe it was true that the way in which local election campaigns are carried out mattered for the election results: that performing charismatic speeches loudly mattered, that it mattered how many T-shirts candidates gave out, how much alcohol was served during public talks, or how many deals were made for people’s vote. Our rounds came to an end. Pepe parked his red pick-up truck in front of his house on the main road in El Pangui. We had covered a good number of Shuar communities and colono neighbourhoods in the parish. Many were enthusiastic about the event and when it finally came to

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20 Salvador Quishpe Lozano
21 During the election campaign in 2009, President Correa made a visit by helicopter to Palanda located in the southern part of the province of Zamora Chinchipe in order to try to get more votes for the prefect candidate of his political party. It was clear at the time that this move was to challenge Salvador Quishpe, the Saraguro politician from the Pachakutik party also running for Prefect since his popularity in the province was beyond that of the President’s party. President Correa pleaded the public not to vote for Quishpe and insulted him in public. A caravan of Pachakutik supporters came together in El Pangui and drove in the night to Palanda. I did not travel with the caravan of cars unfortunately but did acquire a recording of the public speech. Confrontations between Correa and Quishpe occurred again during election campaign in November 2011 also in Zamora, this time they both screamed insults at each other and were held back by their security guards. See: [http://www.elcomercio.com/politica/Correa-Quishpe-cerraron-campana-Zamora_0_596940479.html]
pass, there had been about four hundred participants in the auditorium. I saw the usual faces of the anti-mining groups: local environmentalists, Shuar leaders with their extended families, women Andean farmers from nearby parishes, NGOs, foreign activists, and small scale miners. The auditorium also appeared to be a useful political platform for the newly elected local government officials from the Pachakutik party to perform their victory once again. People seemed inspired, energetic and above all hopeful that maybe, just maybe, they could stop the large scale project.

In the beginning of 2010 Corriente Resources sold all its shares to a Chinese conglomerate made up of both public and private funds. One of the mining companies in the group owns the controversial copper project Río Blanco (Bebbington et al., 2007, Bebbington, 2012) on the Peruvian side of the border. Currently the project is suspended after community resistance, human rights abuses and international litigation22. The expansion of Chinese investments in the Cordillera del Condor region will affect dramatically future territorial dynamics and have profound implications beyond physical and imagined borders.

Two years after the anti-mining event in El Pangui, on the 5th of March 201223, the Ecuadorian national government signed the country’s first contract for a large-scale mining project, Ecuacorriente’s Mirador project. The next day eight women activist were arrested after peacefully protesting the project in front of the Chinese embassy in Quito. On the 8th of March, International Women’s Day, citizens of Ecuador’s south east Amazon started their march24 to the capital to denounce the development of large-scale mining in the country. They performed an indigenous ceremony to launch their march to Quito along the banks of the Chuchumbletza River in El Pangui. On the 22nd of March, International Water Day, after two weeks of walking 700 km, thousands of marchers arrived in the capital.

24 Marcha Plurinacional por el Agua, la Vida y la Dignidad de los Pueblos.
Rafael Correa responded by making several statements questioning the marchers’ legitimacy. He claimed the march to be a failure from the start and argued that marchers were neither indigenous nor anti-mining, but individuals attempting to destabilize the government. He tried to show popular support for his government by calling citizens to a counter-march, leading to an encounter of marchers in the streets of Quito. Correa did not receive the marchers, but the president of Parliament Fernando Cordero did meet with a group of leaders and heard their demands. In spite of the response of President Correa, the anti-mining march reflects a growing polarization affecting Ecuadorian society and a serious discontent with the policies of Ecuador’s government on mining, water and indigenous peoples.

Ecuador is a good case of a country where the “mining issue” is impacting and transforming society and territoriality in significant ways and at different scales. The intense search for minerals by multinational mining companies is directing exploration to uncharted areas of our earth from glaciers to ocean floors as well as highly sensitive and bio-diverse ecosystems. The large scale mining industry with support from the national government is expanding for the first time in Ecuador and moving into sensitive ecosystems and lands of indigenous peoples. The Ecuadorian government, enchanted by the promises of development, supports and in some cases vigorously promotes mining projects in their national territories in much the same way and with similar discourses as it did in the 1970’s when oil was first discovered in the Amazon.

However, these efforts are resisted by a wide range of actors that, against the backdrop of years of oil contamination and related social mobilization (Sawyer, 2004) and litigation (Kimerling, 2006), critically question the extractive project. Social movement leaders have developed (new) discourses related to the environment, sovereignty and identity in an attempt to appeal to a range of actors and promote ‘alternative’ sustainable development. Indeed, the extractive debate in

26 Personal communication June 2013, with director Cesar Padilla of Observatorio de Conflictos Mineros en Latinoamerica – OCMAL.
Ecuador has had profound impacts on national policies regarding development and the environment, having incorporated Nature into the constitution and establishing the indigenous concept of *sumak kawsay* (good living) as its mandate.

The subject and points made above are what concern and motivate this research. The changes underway in Ecuador in relation to the politics of environment and development, resource extraction and social movements, in particular since President Correa took office, are at once novel and lamentable and make for a highly interesting context worthy of academic inquiry.

**Research, Findings and Argument**

Like much ethnographic research, this dissertation evolved in relation to themes that emerged in the course of field work. The initial objective of the PhD was twofold. First, I aimed to explore the relationships between people and their environment, and people’s perceptions of environment and development, when proposed large scale mining projects emerge and begin to threaten livelihoods and bring about changes in the environment. Second, I sought to understand the anatomy of social movements as they emerge to respond to mining conflicts in an area with a history of conflict and the presence of people with various backgrounds, ethnicities, and political and economic interests.

I chose to carry out the research as ethnography. I did so because the use of ethnographic methods is ideal to gain an understanding of the internal politics and relationships in the social movement in El Pangui. Perhaps more importantly, this approach would allow me to address and uncover the complexities of everyday life in ways that were likely to throw light on the complicated nuances of mining conflicts in the area. An ethnographic approach allowed me to participate in everyday activities as well as in activities related to natural resource use, gathering the opinions and interpretations that people had of the mining conflict, at various moments in time and as they were being constructed.
I found that the case in El Pangui was particularly interesting to study because although a violent struggle was unfolding and people were mobilising around mining issues, when I arrived in Ecuador in 2008, there was still no mine being built or even approved. In other words, a social conflict had erupted and managed to mobilise great numbers of people, motivate advocacy and political environmental change while not even one ounce of copper or gold had been extracted. Performing research in such initial stages of a mining project could be (and proved to be) a great opportunity to witness and understand what prompts social mobilisation in its initial stages, understand what is at stake for affected communities, see the process of discourse construction, and be able to document the moment when territorial transformations start to shift. Scholars of mining conflict literature tend to study cases when things have already gone irreversibly bad and understudy cases that just begin, with the reasoning that should a mining project not move forward there would be little to study. However, I believe that precisely this initial stage provides richness to the ethnography that may be lost once the mine is built.

I had assumed, from my prior trips to the area, that people’s perception of the threat that large scale mining posed to their livelihoods was enough of a source of grievance to mobilize people to reject the project, to unite them across ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and to help them jointly establish alternative modes of development. In the end, fieldwork revealed a much more complex reality filled with contradictions, nuances and histories that I had not initially considered.

contradictions and nuances that had emerged in the course of research and that I report on later in the thesis. In addition, I needed a methodology that would respond and adapt to the challenges of performing research in a context of social conflict.

In this context, I was drawn to thinking about territoriality as a conceptual tool that could help understand the subjects of this thesis: mining conflict and social movement. I was inspired by the use of the concept of territoriality and ideas of Amazonian political ecology by Paul Little (2001) in his book, *Amazonia: Territorial Struggles on Perennial Frontiers*. Little argues that Amazonia is considered a frontier that has seen not just one but many waves of social groups establishing human territories each with their own ways of appropriating geographical space. Because of this, Amazonia should be considered as a frontier constructed with the continuous arrival of modernity. As such, it is not merely opened and closed by the arrival of social groups, but reopened and reclosed again and again. Each new social group reterritorialises (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) an area through new and different ways of appropriation and interacts with the groups already there, provoking profound changes in both and generating new frontier dynamics (Little, 2002). These processes are highly fragmented and can produce territorial disputes, especially in contexts where power relations are asymmetrical.

This line of thought or interpretation of struggles in the Amazon is appropriate to understand the situation in my field research site. El Pangui is, in a double sense, a frontier. It is both an imaginative Amazonian frontier as well as a physical one located along the lines of national state boundaries. It is a young town in an area that has seen waves of social groups appropriating the same geographical space. Evidence of these waves of migration with their territorial implications are still evident in the physical landscape today: the Missionaries, the national state with its institutions and infrastructure, the farming colonos, gold diggers, the military, environmentalists, and more recently, multinational large scale mining companies. The arrival of each of these new groups or infrastructure projects has in many cases been accompanied by land struggles and contributed to shape the social dynamics in El Pangui as they are lived today.
However, the nature and characteristics of the relationships between these different actors seem less evident. I found though, that the emergence of the current mining conflict has helped make underlying, everyday social relationships and dynamics more visible in two ways in particular. First, since processes of delimiting and enclosing space are essential to mining projects, the arrival of this powerful new extra-territorial actor (Ospina Peralta and Hollenstein, 2012) threatened established territorial divisions. And second, a social movement arose that involved organising groups of people, building coalitions and networks, and mobilizing identity and politics in order to respond to the mining projects and, more importantly, to maintain control over the territory. My research was carried out in a place and at a time when territorial dynamics in El Pangui were shifting and transforming once more.

Little situates his work within Political Ecology and uses two main concepts to complement the analysis of Amazonian territorial struggles: human territoriality and cosmographies. I will keep discussion of the broad subject of territoriality for the next chapter on theory and methods, and here comment on his use of cosmography. Little states that cosmographies “encompass the symbolic and affective relationship a group maintains with its biophysical environment, which creates a bond of identity between a social group and a geographical area” (Little, 2001, P.5). Each chapter of his book describes in great detail the different and clashing cosmographies in the history of two regions of Ecuador and Brazil. He explores missionary cosmographies, nation state cosmographies, mercantile cosmographies of rubber, oil, gold extraction, and development and environmental cosmographies. He explains that cosmographies are part of a broader process, expressed in terms of Henri Lefebvre’s ‘production of space’ (Lefebvre, 1991) and that territorial disputes arise from clashing cosmographies.

Although his use of the concept of cosmography is valuable, it also seems very close to being another term for the process based ‘act of territory’ or process of territorialisation as understood by a handful of authors (Brighenti, 2010, Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, Kent, 2008, Forberg, 2003, Raffestin, 1982b, Elden, 2012, Peluso and Vandergeest, 1995, Sack, 1986). Furthermore, while Little defines
cosmography as the “collective, historically contingent identities, ideologies, and environmental knowledge systems developed by a social group to establish and maintain a human territory” (Little, 2001, P.5), I wonder whether the opposite might also be true: namely that identities, ideologies and environmental knowledge systems are in fact an outcome of the production of territory rather than developed to establish or maintain a territory. In other words, what is occurring is a social and historical construction, a particular way in which space and place are made and through which social and power relations are produced. In time, territory is constructed by the cyclical arrival of extra-territorial actors (Ospina Peralta and Hollenstein, 2012) that harbour and create identities, political and administrative apparatuses and knowledge systems. These processes can include particular understandings of the human-nature relationships which in one way or another influence how groups of people understand nature and how they ultimately use and transform natural resources and establish systems of territorial control. The unison of these elements and the outcomes of territory construction are what I have come to describe as territorial dynamics.

It is from this conceptual position that I have come to consider that territoriality has the potential to help understand environmental struggles. Territoriality is the analytical tool I was looking for, that allows me to consider social and political processes locally and then link them to national and global issues. It seemed flexible and comprehensive enough to include debates around development, natural resource use, and perceptions of the environment. It also seemed able to embrace cultural and social relationships and people’s relationship to their environment not only as expressed in daily life but also as part of a particular moment in time. Territoriality offered the possibility to bring nature and material biomass into the understandings of the construction of space and politics. It even seemed suitable to approach often ambiguous relationships between mining company and citizens, or to frame specific mining debates around issues such as corporate social responsibility and socio-environmental conflict.

In my research, I explore the use of territoriality as an analytical framework that can assist in the analysis of social movements that emerge in response to large scale
mining projects. It is not that territoriality is an all-encompassing concept applicable to all kinds of resource related struggles everywhere. But it can offer an interesting perspective to map out different issues and link them in ways in which social movement or political ecology literature fall analytically short.

Considering the mining conflict literature more specifically, territoriality can lend itself as a framework to link the current debates and different approaches to studying this topic. Scholarly research on mining conflicts accentuate either one or another aspect (resource curse, environmental degradation, indigenous politics, social movement etc.) and case studies tend to be chosen that exemplify an anomaly (debates on successful consulta or referendum case like Esquel in Argentina or Tambogrande in Peru) or look at similarities and attempt to identify trends (debates on cases that have escaped the resource curse, Chile, Botswana, Australia and Canada). Territoriality however -and as I discuss in the next chapter- has the potential to act as an interdisciplinary, multi-scalar, and holistic framework that can make connections visible between different foci of analyses and debates in addition considers the embededness of these analyses in a particular space and place.

This thesis can be located within the literature on political ecology, resource struggles and social mobilization in Amazonia. It is an account of the processes of territory making and the social relationships, alliances and networks that are formed under continuous and meaningful interaction with a particular biogeography. I am interested in looking at the constant and reciprocal encounter of the immaterial with the material. My research considers the ways in which the motivations behind, and the consequences of, the division of territory interact with the drawing of borders and enclosure of spaces. In my analysis of these interactions, I also aimed to include the discourses, debates and perspectives on development and the environment. The analysis considers the process of territorialisation and its frictions, struggles and dominations. It also focuses on the subtle side of territory and place making, when these social processes slow down, become naturalized, seep into the mundane and seem to disappear in everyday life, activities and needs.

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I consider that territories are not finalized products but rather on-going processes that can transform again and again. Territoriality is a process with a temporality that involves social and power relations, settlement patterns, forms of enclosure and exclusion that in part are shaped by the understandings of the human-nature relationship (Brighenti, 2010, Sack, 1986, Delaney, 2005, Peluso and Vandergeest, 1995, Little, 2002).

This ethnography will describe a series of transformations in Southeast Ecuador that have been set in motion by large scale mining projects. The unfolding resource struggle permits previous territorial dynamics to become more visible. I question how these very same dynamics are shaping social movements, new extractive policies and alternative development models. I examine the effects of the mining projects on pre-existing territorial dynamics and the influence of these territorial dynamics on the ways in which mining investments are contested.

I am particularly interested in the less visible dimensions of environmental struggle that are embedded in the routines of daily life, as well as in the ways in which the memory and history of territorialisation and settlement influence social movement organizing. I suggest that at the heart of territorial dynamics one finds differing understandings of, and meanings apportioned to, nature-society relationships that over time have contributed to a layering of conflicts in the Cordillera del Cóndor.

Throughout the thesis I will argue that conflict over the environment is in fact constitutive of territory. The ways that people view nature, resources and the physical environment influence settlement patterns and processes as much as development visions and models do. However, the materiality of the environment also plays a role (Bakker and Bridge, 2006). The physical geography of the Cordillera, with its mineral deposits, its biodiversity, its areas of particular ecological sensitivity and its environmental conditions apt for agriculture, all feed back into the forms taken by territorial dynamics and the axes of social conflict that constitute part of these dynamics.

I aim to show that mining conflicts are far from straightforward and that, just like human relationships, territories and environments have complex histories. These
complexities are as present in the mining question as they are in any other aspect of social life in El Pangui and the conflict over mining is affecting everyday life and is given new meanings that set it aside from previous land disputes and territorial struggles.

In a general sense my work seeks to show the ways in which struggles and social movements around mining are themselves artefacts of prior and on-going processes of territorialisation, as much as they are shapers of territory today. In this sense, because mining projects seek, through their own territorializing projects, to secure and enclose areas that themselves have already been struggled over, any struggle around mining must be understood as part of a long-sedimented set of struggles over space.

Methodology and Alternative Thesis Structure

The data in this thesis was collected through ethnographic fieldwork conducted between the months of September 2008 and July 2009. I was initially based in the city of Cuenca from where I made regular fieldtrips, between September and December, to various places along the Cordillera del Condor as well as to the capital city of Quito. During this time, I collected data from government institutions, conducted interviews with authorities and important leaders of both the social movement and institutions, and also made community visits. In January I decided to move permanently to the town of El Pangui, however I was not able to do so until the beginning of February for safety reasons. The new mining law was being fiercely debated and led to a month long social mobilisation, protests, road blocks, a hunger strike, and the militarisation of areas that coincided with my field worksite.

Once in El Pangui, I rented a place and settled in until the end of June. Performing research in a situation of social conflict, and in particular in a small town where gossip can lead to exclusion, brought about some methodological challenges and key decisions that shaped the course of my research. These difficult decisions were also guided by conversations with a fellow PhD student from the University of
Texas (Velásquez, 2012), an anthropologist studying another mining conflict near to Cuenca, and who had been in the country almost a year prior to my arrival. We talked of uncomfortable situations in which accusations lead her to lose access to certain areas and people. We became good friends and on a regular basis evaluated our research projects together and the methodology of researching mining issues in a situation of conflict. After consulting with my supervisor, I made certain decisions of how to address these methodological questions and continue with fieldwork.

My stance on mining needed to be clear and my activities transparent. Interviewing people with opposing mining stances could raise suspicion, lower my credibility and potentially limit my access to information or interviews. It was probable that should I have been seen interviewing individuals from opposing mining stances either group of anti or pro--mining factions would not share as much, deny my access to groups or areas, or even consider me to be a spy. This reasoning was not only based on my reading of the situation in El Pangui but also on my previous experience of research on extractive industry conflicts elsewhere. I also found it important to consider my personal safety. Following an evaluation of my situation with my supervisor and other academics in Ecuador, I concluded that it may be a good idea to make my political stance on mining clear and open. People already pinned me as being anti-mining since I had first visited the area a year prior to fieldwork as an activist and I was in the field with my husband, also an activist. This did mean though, that I already counted with access and credibility among the anti-mining group – though at the same time it meant that gaining access to the group in favour of mining would have been difficult. A consequence of taking this stance was that it became much less likely that I would be able to interview people in favour of mining or the company itself. All that said, as my daily life continued in El Pangui, I found that side-stepping and at times avoiding the mining issue all together proved to be strategic and allowed people to feel more at ease and comfortable with sharing information or opinions about life in general that in one way or another often reverted back to the mining issue.
During the time of my study, little mining activity was occurring in the area as the new mining and water laws were being drafted. Corriente’s concessions were suspended by the government, and the company was in the midst of selling its projects to a Chinese conglomerate. I had some conversations with police, military and representatives of the church of El Pangui, but because of the sensitivity of the conflict, I never secured an interview with a local company official. I reviewed and analysed a range of company documents from SEDAR[^27], shareholder online chat rooms, company reports, press releases, websites and Corriente’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme agreements.

One last point I want to note is that during the fieldwork period in El Pangui local and national elections were taking place. As a result, at least two months of my research period was absorbed by the political scenario. I followed social movement and indigenous leaders, who were local candidates, as they made their rounds to communities to give their grandiose speeches and performances regarding development and mining that could easily carry on to 3 or 4am. This allowed me to witness the construction of political discourses regarding mining that clearly overshadowed other issues.

Apart from the pro-mining factions and the company officials that have less of a voice in this thesis, there is one other relative omission. Indigenous communities are somewhat underrepresented in this research and I would have liked to include them more than was possible. I did work closely with indigenous leaders and made visits to communities, however ideally I would have wanted to spend more time in the communities themselves and understand in greater detail their sentiment and views on the struggle, on territorial history and on cosmology. This might have helped me to comprehend their motivations and understand their reasoning and actions within the social movements both in favour of and against mining activity.

[^27]: SEDAR is an abbreviation for the System for Electronic Document Analysis and Retrieval, which is a filing system developed for the Canadian Securities Administrators (CSA). The official site (www.sedar.com) provides access to most public securities documents and information filed by public companies and investment funds with the CSA in the SEDAR filing system.
This drawback is directly related to a final point that was both a limitation and a new opportunity for fieldwork: my pregnancy. This situation not only opened doors of access to talk to women and the elderly but it also shifted my focus toward the very mundane activities of daily family life. It allowed me to talk about household chores, farming responsibilities, family hopes and dreams, and relationships among neighbours that, in one way or another always ended up touching upon the mining issue.

All these methodological challenges and opportunities were present with me throughout fieldwork. Consequently, and in order to discuss and reflect on them in more depth, I dedicate the second chapter of this thesis to methodological issues, choices, and perspectives. I will open with a discussion about engaged anthropology and the role of the researcher in the field, in particular the role of anthropologists in mining conflicts. I also address the issue of performing research in the context of social conflict and offer some subjects for debate and recommendations for future research.

In the third chapter, I will introduce Ecuador and the topic of mining specifically. Ecuador is a country where the large scale mining industry is just beginning. Social movement responses to the top down extractive model are not a new phenomenon since there are parallels to be drawn with the oil related conflicts among companies, the state and indigenous movements that have been a feature of the Ecuadorian political economy since the 1970s (Sawyer, 2004, Kimerling, 2006, Fontaine, 2006). However, mining conflicts and the environmental/indigenous movement today differ from oil conflicts in important ways, affect a wider range of people, and seem to be having much more significant impact politically, socially and environmentally. Also, the current political scenario, with the Leftist government of Rafael Correa’s “socialism of the 21st century,” its promotion of “modern responsible mining”, and the passage of Ecuador’s new Constitution that gives specific rights to Nature, all present a new set of challenges for civil society mobilising and for the elaboration of policies for environment and development.
I suggest that changes in territorial dynamics can shape the ways in which groups respond to social conflict, influence the relationship between humans and nature, the ways we think and relate to territory, influence public policy and institutions, ways in which previous conflicts recycle into new ones, or have us rethink and propose alternative economic development models. These aspects of territorial dynamics I discuss in chapter three.

In chapter four, I look at the on-going territorial transformations in the parish of El Pangui and ask how conflict over mining has transformed local territorial dynamics and if and how these dynamics in turn influence the ways in which mining investments are contested? I analyse the ways in which conflicts over extraction, territorial change and everyday life have become mutually constitutive in El Pangui, and discuss the implications for political ecologies of social movement activity around the subsoil. Memory and history of settlement, land struggles and conflict also seem to influence social movement organizing and responses to conflict illustrating that environmental struggles are just as much about meaning as they are about resources. At the heart of territorial dynamics I found differing meanings of nature and society that over time helped consolidate a layering of conflicts in El Pangui, repeatedly reconfiguring territory. The entrance of the mining company and its objective to secure a physical space, have implications for issues known all too well to Panguenses: territorial control, land ownership, resource access and struggle. Responses to the mining conflict mobilise networks and coalitions, breaking and recreating existing relationships as well as contributing to the construction of identity and political discourse. People’s daily routines, government policies and social mobilization continue to unfold, and new and powerful actors arrive into this complex history of land, natural resources and conflict.

Thus chapter four is illustrative of how territory is not a given or fixed physical space upon which groups of people, policy, or companies intervene or around which they draw borders. The chapter demonstrates how territory making occurs and is deemed meaningful. I try to reveal that territory is a complex, continuous process that reconstructs and transforms people and space, both abstract and lived space. These dynamics influence and give form to social movements,
environmental struggle, and development models and policies. The latter brings me to the second subject I address in the following chapter.

Chapter five focuses on debates concerning mining, development and *sumak kawsay*. I ask whether Ecuador’s economic model based on mineral extraction is at odds with the visions and priorities of the people it purports to develop, and I explore how differences over the nature and meaning of development are being negotiated. The chapter analyses how the relatively new concept of *sumak kawsay*, recently incorporated into Ecuador’s new National Constitution, is framed within public discourses not only as a response to mining but as a means for achieving greater inclusion and equality. Local communities claim that their needs, interests and rights are not being considered in the formulation of economic development models. They have been constructing arguments to question the mining projects and also articulate their own economic options. While the social movement experiences ups and downs, the interests and needs of differently located groups across ethnic divides overlap, contradict and coalesce. How then are those differences consolidated and renewed proposals constructed to reach larger audiences? Local governments have increased their claim for inclusion in high level decision making and have revitalized their political discourses with the struggle for environmental justice. Whether “responsible mining” goes ahead or not, the at times tumultuous last few years may have created the foundations for a negotiated development model for El Pangui.

This fifth chapter contributes to the larger argument by proposing that conflicts around mining are a result of divergent perceptions, visions and models of development that include differences in approaches to land use, territorial control and environmental policy. Conflicts highlight and push forward the process by which groups of people, the state or mining companies establish, maintain and construct territory. Mining conflicts are also about whose rights matter most in political economic decision making and how these decisions further influence territorial dynamics.
In chapter six I aim to describe particular dimensions of the mining industry itself and the ways in which they are also driving transformations in territorial dynamics. I deemed the analysis of company logic and discourse, as well as that of the state, on socially and environmentally responsible mining important because these reflect the ways in which these two powerful actors proposed to reterritorialise El Pangui. In other words, both seek to reconfigure space, take control and enclose it. However, one result of such an endeavour has been that these actors were met with resistance and conflict, as well as acceptance, and through these engagements were absorbed into and formed part of the dynamic process of (re)constructing territory.

This chapter six focuses on describing the challenges to constructing a modern and socially and environmentally responsible mining industry in Ecuador. Mining companies operating in Latin America are giving more attention than ever to CSR, in part because of the global rise of mining conflicts and widespread criticism about the industry’s social and environmental impacts. Companies hope that CSR can play an important role in mitigating conflict or lessening its risk. This chapter argues that the opposite may also be the case. As the mining conflict in El Pangui, Southeast Ecuador transforms social and territorial dynamics, CSR becomes a new source of confrontation that can increase polarisation. I discuss the mining company’s actions and its CSR programs and rhetoric, and suggest that they tend to have adverse effects and ultimately deepen social conflict rather than mitigate it.

In the conclusions, I summarize my thesis, illustrate the main findings, and offer a reflection and self-critique on method, theory and the alternative format thesis.

Before I end this first chapter, I need to explain my choice of an alternative thesis structure. First, and as often occurs with fieldwork, I encountered many issues and findings, each of which could merit an entire thesis-worth of theoretical discussion and academic debate. At various moments during write up, I considered focusing on either one or another issue: debates around mining and development, perspectives on Nature and environmental policies, company-community relations and so on. Another ever-present subject was the nature of debates regarding
border conflict, memory and landscape, as well as ideas about the political ecology of minerals in the subsoil. As I explored these different theoretical tangents, I found myself being drawn back to the ideas of territoriality and territorial dynamics as avenues to approach these various themes. Territoriality, as discussed earlier, started to appear as the red thread that could tie together the different but related issues.

It is with this in mind that I chose to discuss three independent subjects and then weave them together with ideas about territoriality. These three subject areas constitute the themes of the core chapters (chapters 4, 5, and 6) of this thesis as well as being stand-alone articles, each with their own theoretical discussion but supporting the main argument as laid out earlier.

I discuss the first of my core subject areas in chapter 4. The theme here is how the dynamics and transformations of territory are motivated by mining conflicts and social mobilisation and how those changes seep into daily life experiences. I present five areas of analysis deriving from research findings that illustrate the idea of territorial transformation. My second theme is addressed in chapter 5, where I engage debates around mining and development. Here I suggest that territoriality can be found at the core of opposing concepts and views of economic development, and that this can lead to social conflict when such views are held by actors with uneven power relations. Social conflict, however, may also act as a catalyst for new ways of thinking about or relating to territory that can lead to alternative development models and serve as a platform for negotiating difference.

The last subject is discussed in chapter 6 and relates to debates over CSR in the mining sector. I explore the role of CSR in mining conflicts and suggest that historical processes of territoriality and its dynamics influence the ways in which CSR programs are perceived and responded to.

While what I have laid out above outlines the context of each chapter and how these weave into this thesis, it is also appropriate to explain the specific context, book or journal objectives in which my work was published.
Chapter 1 was a presentation in English to the Annual Conference of the American Geographers Association in a panel titled: Geographies of Extractive Industries and Development: Institutions, Territory, Justice. The aim of the panel was to examine how extractive industries play a role in the production of space, society and imaginaries, and to discuss the implications for processes of governance. Later this presentation was translated into Spanish and adapted for the Argentinean based THEOMAI journal. This journal proposed a special dossier with subtitle "Modes of accumulation, natural resources and colonial rule in Latin America and aimed to take a critical look at the "reinvention" of the extractive model". The expansion of the extractive industries in Latin America and the emergence of renewed outbreaks of dispossession have started to be an axis of reflection in the academic world. This dossier suggests that large scale mining or mega-mining is one of the most aggressive forms of permanent corporate encroachment on the environment and the population. The dossier seeks to elucidate the profound mechanisms that mobilise the renovated strategies of capital in its relentless pursuit of profit maximization.

Chapter 4 was first published as a working document for the Rural Territorial Dynamics Program, a Latin America wide research programme coordinated by the Chilean research centre RIMISP. The program goals were to seek to understand why some territories had managed economic development with social inclusion and environmental sustainability while others had not. One of the main purposes of the program was to promote academic debate and contribute to the design and implementation of public policies. Subsequently, this working document was adapted for the book *Subterranean Struggles: New Dynamics of Mining, Oil and Gas in Latin America*. This book examines the factors driving resource expansion and the socio-political, environmental, and political economic consequences of this expansion. The book explores the implications of extractive industry for: ideas of nature, region, and nation; “resource nationalism” and environmental governance; conservation, territory, and indigenous livelihoods in the Amazon and Andes;

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28 Panel organized by Jessica Budds and Leonith Hinojosa of The Open University and Tom Perreault of Syracuse University.
everyday life and livelihood in areas affected by small- and large-scale mining alike; and overall patterns of social mobilization across the region. The book as a whole argues that such struggles are an integral part of the new extractive economy in Latin America.

Chapter 5 was initially prepared by me as a presentation in the conference “Examining the Long-Term Impact of Post-Colonial Phases of Extractive Industry on Indigenous Livelihoods,” held at the University of Durham and organised by Dr. Emma Gilberthorpe. Later the conference was developed into a book, co-edited by Dr. Gilberthorpe and Professor Gavin Hilson and titled *Natural Resource Extraction and Indigenous Livelihoods: Development Challenges in an Era of Globalisation*. The chapter found in this thesis was later worked on together with Professor Anthony Bebbington. In general terms the book addresses the adverse development impacts that processes of natural resource extraction can have on indigenous livelihoods and well-being. The contributors seek to investigate possible sources of the problem including: the challenges faced by multinational corporations in implementing global social and environmental policy on extractive activity; the incompatibilities between development discourse and practice; the geographical/ecological limitations of extraction; and the conflict between the capitalist language of interaction and the non-capitalist principles of organisation on which they are often imposed.

Chapter 6 in this thesis was prepared for a Special Issue of the journal, Resources Policy that was titled ‘Corporate Social Responsibility in the Extractive Industries: Experiences from Developing Countries’ and edited by Professor Gavin Hilson. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the extractive industries has attracted significant scholarly debate and in countries across North America, Europe and Australia there appears to be a business case for embracing CSR. This special issue questions whether the same can be found in developing countries. It seeks to open the debate regarding the growing concern, particularly in civil society circles, over the precise role of CSR in the extractive industries in Latin America, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and on the relevance and function of CSR in the extractive industries in the developing world.
2 Theory and Methods

Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapter, this thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of natural resource struggles by offering a territorial approach to mining conflicts. It also illustrates the advantages of a territorial approach and aims to contribute to a greater understanding of natural resource struggles and mining conflicts. In the field of natural resource struggles, scholars have taken different approaches from a range of disciplines to study social conflict. The causes of these conflicts have to do with a range of issues such as struggles over the control of space, the governance of territory, access to land and water resources, the defence of human and citizenship rights, and discontent over the distribution of mineral revenues (Bebbington et al., 2008c). Attention is also drawn to the causes of these social conflicts and the socio-environmental impacts of the extractive industry (Ballard and Banks, 2003, Geddicks, 1993, Bury, 2004), the ways in which people seek environmental justice (Tsing, 2005, Bebbington, 2007b, Perreault, 2006, Peluso and Watts, 2001); the relationships among extractive industry, environment, livelihoods, and institutional change (Bebbington and Bury, 2009); and the bearing of indigeneity and identity politics on extraction (Ali, 2003, Sawyer, 2004, Kirsch, 2006).

In the narrow field of mining conflict research, different aspects are accentuated generally with the aim of understanding why or how struggles occur and of proposing less contentious ways forward, for instance through changes in the mining industry, public policy and governance or a rebalancing of stakeholder power dynamics. Many of the issues and approaches named above mention territory in some form or another as an important aspect of mining struggles. However, not enough attention has been given to territoriality as an analytical tool and its definition and meaning is often taken for granted. Territory can be loosely defined as a bounded meaningful space (Delaney, 2005, Gregory et al., 2009). This space can be used, organised and managed to control and restrict access to
people and places through the use of boundaries. Territoriality however, refers
more to the social phenomena involved in making territory as well as the
relationships between territories. This relational sense treats territory more as an
aspect of different dimensions of social life, and thus brings social practices and
processes more clearly into view.

My research has led me to think about these aspects of territoriality as relevant and
analytically stimulating in the analysis of resource struggles. This approach is
interesting since it allows a relational analysis of the physical space together with
the social processes and practices involved in producing space. In addition, since
this view implies actors or subjects that engage in producing space, we also can
consider power and meaning as fundamental part of the equation. A territorial
approach also permits multi scalar analysis of the social conflict around mining
since different scales are present in the production of territory, so one can for
example focus on how mining impacts national governmental policies or global
social movement activism as well as local livelihoods. A territorial approach can
help draw the links between social practice and space making, illustrate how they
relate and influence each other, and also make evident the conditions in which
territoriality is being produced.

Such an analytical approach is complemented by an ethnographic research
method, which can highlight the ways in which mining struggles can seep through
into even the most mundane of daily activities. I consider looking into daily
activities as an interesting domain of research because it is where territoriality is
played out, enacted and performed. The details of everyday life and regular
quotidian activities are not uninteresting and can say a great deal about how
territory is conceived and deemed meaningful to people.

The goals of this chapter are twofold. First, I will briefly review different approaches
to mining conflicts, follow this with a discussion of different aspects of the concept
of territory and territoriality and then present my argument regarding the
contributions that a “territorial” approach can offer to these studies. I will discuss
the work of various scholars who treat the concept of territory as more than just a
taken for granted term to mean space and instead view it as socially enacted through a process of territorialisation in a given space and time and through particular actors. Territory construction also has a great deal to do with power relations, identity formation, and daily life.

Second, this chapter will discuss the methodology used to conduct this fieldwork. There were two main choices I made for the design of my research methodology that I explain in this second section. I address my preference for an engaged anthropology and activist research and will also review issues regarding my positionality in the research process reported on here. Another key methodological choice was my preference for an ethnographic approach and a focus on the daily life of people in El Pangui.

### A Territorial approach to Studying Mining Conflicts

Scholars from Anthropology, Political Economy, Political Ecology, Environmental Studies, and Social Movements study mining conflicts by accentuating different aspects of mining conflicts. I will review some of these different approaches and then present my territorial approach. I will define territory and territoriality through a threefold analysis. I suggest that territoriality is: 1) relational, imagined and meaningful 2) a produced space that is not static; and 3) exists in movement. The section ends by answering the question as to how a territorial approach can be useful in studying mining conflicts and social movements.

### Studying Social Conflicts and Mining

Political Economy views conflicts as having to do with unequal distribution of benefits, correlations between mining and poverty and debates about wealth generation. Clear examples of such an approach are apparent in the “paradox of plenty” or “resource curse” thesis which suggests that countries with resource abundance tend to have less economic growth and worse development outcomes than countries whose economies exhibit less natural resource dependence (Auty,
In a similar vein is work exploring the social as well as armed civil conflicts that can occur over the control and exploitation of natural resources and the lack of transparency and corruption in the appropriation, use or distribution of state revenue (Collier and Goderis, 2007, Le Billon, 2006).

Although, some economists suggest that there are ways to escape the resource curse, for example by improving government institutions and public policies (Humphreys et al., 2007b), these changes remain challenging to say the least. With the continuing global expansion of large scale mining activities, there is ever greater pressure placed on the governance of resources but still weak institutional mechanisms to ensure a transparent use and more egalitarian distribution of benefits generated by mining (Bebbington and Bury, 2009). It is still common in resource rich countries to see that the political power of those who benefit from weak institutions and poor governance remains in place, and that there continues to be little capacity to transform mineral wealth into human development and environmental quality. In this scenario, social conflicts tend to persist and affected communities and social movements continue to make claims for fairer distribution and participation in wealth. This does not necessarily imply that institutional changes are not possible, on the contrary. Bebbington, for instance, has reiterated that in some cases, socially and environmentally progressive institutional change is possible and that social conflict and social mobilisation are motivating precursors to these changes (Bebbington, 2012, Bebbington et al., 2008c, Bebbington, 2007b).

Escaping the resource curse also touches upon the type of economic development model that is upheld and promoted by governments and industry. In this respect mining conflicts are seen by some as a result of competing or incompatible development models as well as the different knowledge systems and ‘cosmologies’ of industry and communities. This line of inquiry may have us think of what Ferguson (1999) views as contradictions of modernity, in which the mining town frequently functions as a symbol and promise of modernity while local communities often find themselves betrayed and disconnected from the processes. In a somewhat similar vein, Latin American scholars such as Arturo Escobar (Escobar, 2012), Maristella Svampa (Svampa and Antonelli, 2009), Eduardo Gudynas
(Alayza and Gudynas, 2012), Alberto Acosta (Acosta et al., 2012) and Jose de Echave (De Echave, 2011b), research and critique the extractive model of development and its negative social, economic and environmental impacts and urge for a paradigm shift towards a post-extractive and post-development era.

Questioning and challenging the extractive development model may also direct our attention to social movements that respond to or reject (aspects of) extractive activities. Social movements may have a variety of members, backgrounds and discourses, making claims grounded on human or environmental rights, the right to participate in decision making processes or the right to determine and choose an alternative development model. The causes of mining conflicts in this approach are understood as rights-based claims, both in terms of impacts or violations of national or international legal frameworks, as well as in normative terms by appealing to a sense of ethics or moral correctness. While a few decades ago, mining conflicts hinged largely around worker’s rights and the relationships between capital and labour, in more recent years the focus has shifted to human and environmental rights and in particular the rights of indigenous people. With the global expansion of the mining industry, social conflicts as well as social movements in response to mining have also increased in number, network breadth and scale and have diversified their membership and alliances (See for example Gedicks, 1993, Gedicks and Grossman, 2004).

Overall one of the pivotal sources of social conflict has had to do with land rights and natural resources. Since mining companies must secure right to lands in order to operate, conflicts arise between companies and local communities regarding the rights and ownership of land, water, resources and even the minerals extracted, as well as the use of these resources. Conflicts may not be about an abstract concept of rights or citizenship but rather over how a community decides to secure their future and their concerns about controlling their own destinies (Ballard and Banks, 2003). From a Political Ecology standpoint Joan Martínez Alier (2002) describes resources struggles as the study of ecological distribution conflicts. By this he means conflicts are about the access to, and control over, natural resources, particularly as a source of livelihoods, including the costs of environmental
destruction. As mining projects need vast amounts of water and energy for their operations, conflicts often come down to being a competition for natural resources between actors with unequal political and economic power.

Donald Moore (1996) points out that struggles over land and environment are also struggles over cultural meaning and processes of resource allocation. This may be the case if we consider that historical processes of resource allocation, access or the denial of access to resources play a part in shaping people’s understandings of rights, property, land and resource use. In effect, divergent understandings or definitions of development and conflict, justice, and rights seem to be activated in the context of mining struggles.

Social movements may be rooted in longer histories of struggles of subordinate groups to demand both participation and inclusion in, as well as the redefinition of, a political system (Alavrez et al., 1998). Such social movements may be considered as the “motor” of history, introducing new forms of life and fostering social transformation (Domingues, 2007), and may be deemed important since they challenge the dominant powers by accentuating other values and seeking to redefine development (Bebbington, 2007a).

Social movements are not only relevant for changes in economic development models but can also influence or induce changes in corporate behaviour. International activist networks including affected communities that mobilise around mining issues have been criticizing the mining industry over the last three decades. There are an increasing number of organisations that range in their activities from shareholder activism, to serving as watchdogs or coordinating global campaigns that increase pressure for corporations to change their behaviour. In some cases the industry has recognised some of the negative impacts of their activity and proposed new ways forward. The industry has responded to these critiques by developing their own set of mechanisms, tools and discourses in the hope of improving relationships with affected communities and lessening the risk of social conflict (Benson and Kirsch, 2010). Such mechanisms can be grouped under the heading of CSR.
The establishment of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), an initiative founded in 2001 to advance the mining industry’s commitment to sustainable development, reflects an interest in developing CSR guidelines as a result of global mining firms recognising the significant problems of reputation, sustaining profits, access to new assets and maintaining investor and employee confidence faced by the sector. The responses of the sector to critique have also helped create new areas of academic inquiry and debate. These include, for example, topics such as: voluntary codes of conduct; corporate self-regulation; the ways in which corporations replace government in promoting development; the environmental footprint of extractive industry; and the concepts of social licence to operate and free prior and informed consent.

The focus on corporations in the study of mining conflicts is relatively new and presents a stimulating area of research, in particular for anthropologists who have largely stayed away from the extractive business sector. Analyses of the responses of corporations and of the development of a CSR industry have also helped reveal the assumptions that mining companies have regarding the causes of mining conflicts (Li, 2010, Yakovleva et al., 2011). CSR practices and programs cannot be understood without considering the corporate rationales that underlie mining company discourses and actions. Closer scrutiny of corporate practice and rationales has helped show that many companies understand conflicts to be a result of local communities’ lack of information regarding mining activities, problems of communication, inadequate company engagement with local communities or the insufficiency of direct economic benefits for communities. The CSR industry has attracted academics from a range of disciplines to study mining conflicts and propose ways to improve company-community relationships and lessen the risk of social conflict. However, communities that continue to be affected negatively and activists that support communities remain largely unconvinced that CSR is enough to address the fundamental causes of social conflicts and as I will point out in a subsequent chapter, in some cases CSR can provoke social tensions (Warnaars, 2012).
In regard to an anthropological focus to studying mining, Banks and Ballard point out that despite the potential of ethnographic studies, the anthropology of mining remains largely under-researched and under-theorized (Ballard and Banks, 2003). Few anthropologist have researched mining conflict or companies and early research tended to focus on demographic, social, and political characteristics of mining or local communities as well as cultural aspects such as mining rituals and ideology (See the works of Nash, 1993, Taussig, 1983, Godoy, 1985). More recently, anthropological study of mining conflicts has address themes such as indigenous movements, indigenous knowledge systems, power/knowledge relationships or social and environmental impacts (Kirsch, 2006, Sawyer, 2004, Moore and Velásquez, 2012, Gilberthorpe, 2009, Crook, 2007).

Especially in recent years there has been prominent debate regarding the effects that anthropologist can have in their roles as researchers of mining conflicts or in their engagement with the industry (Coumans, 2011, Kirsch, 2002, Ballard and Banks, 2003). While the role of any social scientist in such a contested terrain is sensitive, Ballard and Banks (2003) note the circulation of two broad visions of an appropriate role for anthropologists: as intermediaries between stakeholders or as advocates for affected communities. However, I would suggest that many new roles have also emerged. Anthropologists seem to be the type of academic that companies prefer to hire for the task of designing and working in CSR programs, managing community relations for companies, and working as analysts in consulting firms hired by companies to assess the social and cultural impact of their operations. This is largely due to the dexterity of anthropologists regarding social aspects of mining operations, but also because of their ability to get close to communities, “understand them from within” and act as a communication conduit between the technical mining industry and the social-cultural realm of communities where operations take place. Multinational mining companies are increasingly financing universities around the globe (e.g. in Canada, United States and
Argentina), and this financing has been subject to critique by peers, activists and students^29.

Anthropologists are also having an increasingly important role in mining related work in government bodies. On the 27th of July in 2012, an anthropologist was appointed head of the Office for Social Conflict Management for the President of Council of Ministers in Peru. In the province of Rio Negro in Argentina, in the year 2011, an anthropologist was appointed director of the provincial government secretariat for mining. It would seem that anthropology is increasingly coupled with mining and the new roles of anthropologists in the industry are certainly worth further inquiry and debate (Coumans, 2011, Kirsch, 2002, Gilberthorpe, 2009, Crook, 2001, Ballard and Banks, 2003).

Territory, Territoriality and Territorology

In this section I will review some definitions and components of territory, territoriality and space as a prelude to defining these concepts and making them operational for the particular case of mining conflicts in El Pangui. Territory and territoriality have been central topics of inquiry in a range of academic disciplines. These concepts are increasingly being used to explain social phenomenon, however, some authors note that “territory” lacks rigorous definition and that theoretical reflection on the concept is largely under-developed (Elden, 2010). This may be because the meaning of territory has been considered self-evident, taken for granted to refer simply to an enclosed or bounded space.

Earlier I wrote that I understand territory as on-going social process that, as it is produced, or more precisely enacted, can repeatedly transform into new territories.

^29 In Canada, Barrick Gold funds the University of Toronto and was met with criticism, see [http://munkoutofuoft.wordpress.com/]. In Argentina Bajo La Alumbrera owned by Xstrata, Yamana y Goldcorp distributes funds to the national universities and is also openly rejected by academics see: [http://nounsamalumbrera.wordpress.com] and [http://www.minesandcommunities.org//article.php?a=10834&l=1]. In the United States BHP Billiton funds the Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute in the University of Michigan see [http://chronicle.com/article/Mining-Company-Involved-in/10103].
with new dynamics. From my review of a selected literature on territory I view it as a temporal process that is produced by social (power) relations and forms of enclosure and border making that are in part shaped by imaginaries and pre-conceived ideas of space as well as by understandings of the biophysical environment and the human-nature relationship (Brighenti, 2010, Sack, 1986, Delaney, 2005, Peluso and Vandergeest, 1995, Little, 2002, Lefebvre, 1991). Territory as a stable concept is highly contentious in meaning. It is, rather, transient and enduring, formal and informal, and is used to refer to scales that range from the nation state to people’s homes. More importantly, the making of territory is a meaningful process itself. The meanings produced are determined by the processes and the social and power relationship through which a territory is constructed (Delaney, 2005). Territory refers then, simultaneously to the physical or material aspects of a bounded space as well as the relational and immaterial (Brighenti, 2010). This raises questions of how territory is considered as a fixed space. It is this combination of meaning, space and power that gives the concept a complexity that can be especially helpful in the analysis of resources struggles and their place in the enactment, recognition and legitimation of territories.

Developing ideas such as these, Andrea Brighenti (2010) makes an interesting argument for a general science of territory and territorial phenomena - what he calls territorology. He provides an outline of the components of territorology, suggesting points to consider in order to establish lines of inquiry. He draws on insights from a range of academic disciplines and conceptualizes territorial components, technologies, movements, and effects as well as their interplay. Brighenti also makes a few points that cut across these components and that I consider important to mention and keep in mind as I review the concepts of territory and territoriality.

**Territory is relational, imagined and meaningful**

Brighenti argues that territory is relational, imagined and produced. It is the social relationships between a set of actors that define space. Brighenti warns us,
however, not to confuse territory with space or to see territory as the mere visible support for invisible social ties such as those occurring in the modern nation state. He illustrates this by saying that territory is not defined by space, but rather it defines spaces through patterns of relations. Once these relations are the key focus of analysis, instead of geometric space itself, then “it becomes possible to capture the ways in which spatial and non-spatial territories are superimposed one onto another and endowed with multiple linkages” (Brighenti, 2010, p.57). This is an interesting point because it accentuates the interactions and views territories as resulting from encounters. Brighenti points out that this relational focus should not obscure the dimensions of power, but can help to understand territories as more than just a space permeated with power.

Robert Sack (1986) also emphasizes the relational aspect of territory and supports the general idea that territories are produced. He offers a unique approach to territory and territoriality developed in his influential book *Human Territoriality.* Sack’s notion of human territoriality is defined as “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” (Sack, 1986, p.19). Territories require a “constant effort to establish and maintain…. [and] … are the result of strategies to affect, influence, and control people, phenomena and relationships” (Sack, 1986, p.19).

While Sack tends to have a more territoriality-as-spatial-strategy approach, Claude Raffestin understands human territoriality in terms of power relations. Raffestin incorporates a Foucauldian approach to power in his ideas on territory and space. He analyses the links between power, society and territory, and recognizes a multiplicity of powers at play and operating at different levels. This multiplicity of power, he argues, goes well beyond the nation State and becomes manifest through uneven flows of energy (understood as concrete structures and actions) and information (symbolic structures and actions) within social relations (Raffestin, 1980). Here, an analysis of territoriality allows for power relations to be made visible in such a way that symmetries and a-symmetries are revealed, but also
interesting is that in Raffestin’s approach these relational structures are highlighted in the latent activities of the everyday.

This said, however, territories are not only relational: they are also about form and process, are material and serve vital functions. They exist primarily as a bounded entity, although with a temporal character. The social relations and power interplay described above serve the purpose of establishing boundaries and delimiting space during particular periods of time. The process of territorialisation goes hand in hand with the phenomenon of boundary making. Brighenti (2010) points out that territory and boundary should be seen as complementary elements of the same process. This leads to an interesting point however, because establishing boundaries is a subjective, interpretative and imaginative process producing a construct that in turn influences decisions and actions (Corner, 1999).

Mining, for example, depends highly on maps and boundaries. Maps are key for asserting control over a selected bounded space. Mining needs maps to set physical boundaries, identify the location of minerals, set out infrastructure and determine flows of energy, people and capital. Land which has not been mapped in a sense is still savage and undefined and represents only a possibility (the possibility of a profitable mine). In other words, territory is attributed new meaning and new boundaries are constructed once mineral deposits are ‘discovered’. Once the land is studied, prodded and then mapped, it assumes a new form as well as new meaning. The land is no longer a space with secrets but its contents and purpose are revealed.

Mapping is then a key activity in constructing territory and can be understood as a project that reveals and realizes hidden potential. However, it is important to consider who is drawing the boundary, as well as how, why and what kind of drawing is being made. The process of mapping involves choices of what goes into a map and what does not, such that territory is re-made repeatedly. James Corner (1999) argues that mapping has agency and seen in this way we can appreciate that a mapping project is more relevant for what it does than for what it represents.

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30 Savage here allures to a social imagination of space as wild–particularly in the case of the Amazon- as uninhabited, unordered, and full of natural resources waiting to be discovered.
**Territory as a produced space**

If territory is seen as a bounded space, it is important to examine what this space is and how the making of boundaries becomes possible. Raffestin, like Brighenti, suggests that space and territory are not equivalent. Both authors contend that space is an anterior term to territory. Territory relies on space and is generated or produced from space by the actions of actors that territorialize space (Raffestin, 1982a). Territory defines spaces through patterns of relations, though both are continuously being produced as a result of social processes. As such, territories are produced through the interplay of actors that have power to effect territory. It is more than likely that there will be many such actors, operating at different geopolitical scales and having effects that are relative to the amount of influence they have over territory.

In the case of this thesis, the territory of El Pangui is simultaneously shaped by the global driver of increasing copper consumption (particularly in China), by Latin American regional interests in receiving foreign direct investment in the extractive sector, by national mining laws that facilitate and govern mining activities in the country, by a local layering of territorial conflicts in the border region with Peru, and lastly by individuals demarcating their lands for food production and by indigenous communities claiming their ancestral rights to territory. In this example however, there is little said about the relationship between the different ways in which actors think about or perceive territory (how the State thinks about El Pangui or how a local Shaman thinks about the same space) and the material effects of these actors. One approach is to consider territory as both mental and material constructs as suggested by the works of Henri Lefebvre.

Lefebvre’s starting point is the premise that territorial configurations or social space “is a (social) product” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.26). He seeks to contribute to an understanding of the modern world by analysing how space is produced and experienced. He held that the construction of space has as much to do with conceptual realms as with material activities, such that space incorporates both...
mental and material constructs. This led him to propose that space is produced in two ways: through social formation and, phrased in his terms, through “modes of production” as a mental construction or “conception”.

These analyses were refined into the development of a triad distinction of space: spatial practices, representations of space, and spaces of representation, also summed up as perceived, conceived and lived space (Lefebvre, 1991). The first refers to the concrete material or physical aspects of a space such as borders, walls and barriers and other structures enabling or limiting the flow of people, goods and information. The second refers to a conceived space or the space of abstract and mental processes as found among scientists, planners or urbanists - the ways in which we conceive territories through maps, abstract cartography and diagrams. The last division, spatial representations are spaces that are lived and experienced through symbols and images. Lefebvre’s division is a helpful analytical and methodological tool for approaching greater understanding of territory, since it gears us to thinking not only what a territory or a space is, but how these come to be.

Brenner and Elden sum up some of the key ideas of Lefebvre by stating that his analysis “offers a way to think about State, space and territory together; to conceptualize them through the relations between practices, representations and lived experience; to see them as historically interrelated rather than determined. There is, therefore, a continual production of territory rather than an initial moment. Territory is always being produced and reproduced by the actions of the state and through political struggles over the latter.” (Brenner and Elden, 2009, p. 367)

A complementary theorizing of space has been offered by the Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (1996) who describes space in broad and complex terms. His work is interesting since he also includes objects as having an important role to play in society (Schneider and Tartaruga, 2006). For Santos, space is the materialisation of human existence, such that people live to produce space. Santos conceptualizes space as a link between territorial configurations, landscape and society and as being in continuous movement. So, even the same territorial
configuration, the same society or landscape can offer different spaces with the passing of time (Santos, 1996).

**Territory in movement**

Another crucial point that I would like to present builds on Brighenti’s characterisation of territorology in regard to territorial movements. He describes territory as a mode or an act and claims that the “Emphasis on the act leads to the recognition that territories are not simply relational, but also and primarily processual, eventual and directional entities” (Brighenti, 2010, p.63). Brighenti argues that territories are in movement and process-based. Similar to Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), he explains that territory is a way of expressing a certain relationship with the world. The relationship that exists between territory and the environment (or “milieu”) is defined by three movements of opening (re-territorialisation), exiting (de-territorialisation) and territorialising a place. From this it follows that re-territorialisation is understood as the restructuring of a place or territory that has already experienced de-territorialisation.³¹

Sack also sees territory as existing in motion when he suggests that a place can be a territory at one time and not at others, just as much as a territory can disappear while the physical space continues to exist. In other words, territories are not static constructions, but flexible, cyclical and dynamic social constructions forged through interaction and struggle. However, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) would argue that one cannot leave a territory without at the same time creating another territory somewhere else and that territory is therefore always caught between the movements of de- and re-territorialisation.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out that new social groups, such as mining companies in the context of this thesis, arrive at a space that already is a defined territory, and they re-territorialize an area through new and different ways of appropriation of the land and through their modes of interacting with the groups

³¹ This is very reminiscent of Claude Raffestin’s description of territories as being in constant movement through a process of territorialisation, de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation (T-D-R).
already there, provoking profound changes in both new and old groups and generating new territorial dynamics. In a sense, Deleuze and Guattari’s interpretation of “de/re territorialisation” is helpful in that it demands that we read territory as being in a perpetual state of “becoming” rather than as something static. In addition, if we consider that territory is not only about guaranteeing access to resources contained within it but is itself also a resource for identity formation, the profound changes afoot in processes of de/re-territorialisation are also changes in processes of identity formation. Territory is then affective and meaningful as well a physical construct, transforming and moving.

In any given space there can also be a superimposition of territories in movement, resulting in competing power struggles and even the creation of new territories. This notion of territorial mobility is, as I have mentioned in the first chapter, what Paul Little (2001) employs when he argues that Amazonia is a frontier that has seen not just one but many waves of social groups establishing human territories, each with their own ways of appropriating geographical space and in the process producing territory.

_How can a territorial approach be useful in understanding and studying mining conflicts and social movements?_

Based on the above discussions, I suggest that there are several ways in which a “territorial approach” can help comprehend the workings of mining conflicts and social movements. First, mining projects necessarily involve measuring, codifying and analysing the biophysical environment and, eventually, the enclosure and securing of space. A given space is studied by different scientists, geologists or engineers who engage in spatializing practices and in a process of producing an imagined or (in Lefebvrian terms) a _conceived space_. They take soil and rock samples, drill holes, draw maps, and study both the topography and the underground mineral qualities. These material samples are then transformed into meaningful elements of capital with estimated and speculative monetary values of relevance (above all) to particular (foreign) actors and global markets. However,
this entire process occurs in a *lived space* that is already territorialised by other actors, - farmers, small scale miners and indigenous peoples in El Pangui - creating a superimposition of processes of production of space, meaning and power. This type of territorial reading of what is involved during mining project development offers insight into the areas of friction that can lead to social conflicts.

Second, some of the ways of viewing and understanding mining conflicts that focus on social relationships, power dynamics, and structures of resource governance seem to omit or give scant attention to territory in their respective analysis. Mining conflicts can be about whose rights matter most in resource access and control. For example, as I will discuss in a subsequent chapter, a central government can give preference to economically and politically powerful actors such as multinational mining companies. Certainly unequal distribution of wealth, corruption and weak governance of a mining enterprise can lead to grievances among local populations and spark social mobilisation and conflict. However, these processes are embedded in a particular (local) territory with a specific history and particular notions of local actors regarding their relationship with the environment and natural resources. This articulation with prior processes of territorialisation can also be a source of grievance.

Insofar as mining conflicts relate to questions of rights, a territorial perspective can provide insight into the local actors and the relationships, networks and social mobilisations (if applicable) through which they acquire, demand and exercise rights. It can also highlight why certain rights, say regarding land or water, are more valued than others. A territorial approach can do this more effectively or in a different way than other approaches because it puts emphasis on the reasons why territory matters to certain actors, on the historical processes (in some cases struggles) through which territory gained that particular importance and recognition, and on the links between the immaterial and the material, the perceptions of territory and the physicality of environment. This can in turn illuminate differences among mining conflicts. For instance, conflicts in the central Ecuadorian Andes hinge more on grievances regarding violations of water rights, while in the area of study for this thesis, South East Amazonia, land rights are more at the core of
grievances. The processes of territorialisation in these two areas are distinct from one another and are reflected in the greater emphasis that local populations place on one aspect of their environment and one relationship of resource access and control than others.

Third, the understanding of territory as an act and a process in movement can be a very fruitful way of conceptualising resources struggles that complements other approaches to studying mining conflicts. It takes us away from seeing territory or space as fixed or static, and helps view each as dynamic in both a material sense and in terms of the meanings that they convey. In other words, territorialisation can involve material interventions in a given space which alter the physical environment through, for instance, building roads, deforesting farm areas, or urbanisation, but the process can also influence how social actors conceive and experience that space down to the simplest routine activities of daily life.

The space of El Pangui has been simultaneously territorialised, de-territorialised and re-territorialised by different actors and their comings and goings at different times in its history. Large scale mining however, is a particular way of producing territory that, it seems, can only with great difficulty (if at all) accommodate and coexist with the other productions of territory that have been or are being elaborated in the same area. The mining project in fact, redefines El Pangui from being a rural periphery to the periphery of a mega mining project. A long list of micro adjustments also needs to be made in people’s daily life, their livelihoods and identity in order to form part of this newly produced territory once the mining project starts. These are the type of accommodations that this thesis has sought to explore.

Methods of Research and Positionality

When I set out to do my fieldwork in 2008 and study the mining conflict in El Pangui I was aware that my dual role as an activist and academic would shape the choices of my methodology. Even before starting, I considered that these roles
would be challenging to manage and would present tensions in the field. Indeed, at times I considered them somewhat antagonistic. I was aware from early on that I needed to carefully choose my position in the field and find a balance between political engagement and critical analysis. In this section I shall point out that the methodological choices I made for an engaged and activist research indeed were an integral part of developing the argument for this dissertation.

A second key methodological choice in this research project is in relation to my anthropological preference for an ethnographic approach. I initially aimed to immerse myself in the social movement that rejected mining, (which I achieved in the first few months of my arrival in Ecuador). Eventually however, I focused on the daily life of people living in El Pangui, the town near the mining concession of El Mirador. This choice was both intentional and happenstance, as my pregnancy during fieldwork played an important role in shaping my approach, methodological choices and the overall character of my research. I found that by focusing on the daily lives of people and at times side-stepping the “mining issue,” I came to learn more about the territoriality of El Pangui, and in fact more about the mining conflict, than when I focused directly on the subject. I did not however, abandon my interest in researching the political ecology of the mining related resource struggle and social movement. Rather, my research is a critical analysis at various levels. I incorporate a broader geopolitical, economic and social analysis of the resource struggle in El Pangui, and complement this with a focus on everyday activities and personal experiences of Panguenses.

In the following paragraphs I will first take up discussions on engaged and activist research and positionality, and then move to a more detailed account of the methodology applied in this thesis. After that, I will briefly discuss everyday experiences and daily life research in El Pangui, and will close the chapter by linking these themes to the arguments of this thesis on territoriality and the production of territory.
Engaged anthropology and activist research

It is becoming increasingly recognised within anthropology that engaged research is possible, empirically grounded, theoretically defensible, and ethically viable. A number of scholars that defend this stance (Hale, 2006, Low and Merry, 2010, Scheper-Hughes, 1995, Kirsch, 2002, Speed, 2006) have been calling for a renewed relationship between anthropologists and our research “subjects”, for more engagement and rethinking of anthropological methods and reporting and for the transformation of the postcolonial relationship between “researcher” and “subjects”. It is argued that engaged research can contribute to anthropology by addressing the politics of knowledge production in ways that can decolonize the research process. Some of these debates centre on whether and how anthropologists should align themselves politically with the people or groups we study and the extent of our responsibility for the different uses that are given to the research we produce outside of academia. Anthropologists have also debated about how to formulate a new way to work collaboratively rather than hierarchically with the communities we study and have our research contribute to the empowerment of marginalised groups (Kirsch, 2002, Hale, 2006, Scheper-Hughes, 1995).

I understand engaged anthropology as the collaboration between academics and individuals outside the academy for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. Such engagement may propose that the researcher take a political/ethical stance rather than being the “neutral” observer and may, though does not necessarily, gear research towards advocacy purposes. Engaged anthropology may promote reciprocity, exchange and active participation during fieldwork in activities carried out in the day to day (Low and Merry, 2010). However, in my view engagement may not necessarily require one to take a political or ethical stance, but refers instead to the nature of the relationships between “researcher” and “subject” and the extent of the researcher’s involvement with the groups studied. In my research, I engaged with my research group and also aligned myself politically with their struggle.
Feminist theorists have motivated anthropologists to acknowledge our representations of others as products of our own social position but more significantly have pointed to the powerful and concrete effects of those subjective representations (Speed, 2006). This has reiterated the difficult and even impossible goal of scientific objectivity and the potentially harmful political effects of the knowledge that anthropologists produce about those people researched. In the light of this dilemma some anthropologists have developed a more collaborative or activist approach to their work. This implied assuming greater responsibility for the effects of knowledge production on our “subjects” and their culture (Kirsch, 2002), contributing to decolonizing the relationship with the people we study (Hale, 2006) and lastly, making a greater commitment to emancipatory goals (Scheper-Hughes, 1995).32 Two complications may exist with this arrangement however. First advocacy can assume a singular position in such a way that factions and differences among local populations may not be accounted for; and second the question arises as to how the anthropologist decides who they are supporting and why.

Speed (2006) contributes to these discussions by proposing a critically engaged activist research. She describes critically engaged anthropology as one that contributes not just to theoretical understanding of social dynamics but also to concrete political objectives on the ground. She distinguishes this from activist research which in her view is the overt commitment to an engagement with our research subjects and directed toward a shared political goal. Ultimately she merges these concepts and argues for a critically engaged activist research since as she points out it “provides an important approach to addressing the practical and ethical dilemmas of research and knowledge production, and an especially useful one for anthropologists of human rights” (Speed, 2006). She points out that merging these two research approaches can be practiced together in a productive manner. While this undertaking does not erase the tensions and contradictions that exist between the approaches, the anthropologist could benefit analytically from

32 It is important to note here that much of the work of Scheper-Hughes is contentious in Anthropology since she tends to take a moral high-ground and ignores complex issues.
those tensions. It is this tension that Hale acknowledges as making research harder to carry out, but also as giving an insight into processes and generating scholarly understanding that otherwise would be difficult to achieve (Hale, 2006).

Another distinction made in the literature on engaged research is that between policy-oriented activist research and participatory research. The first is a research model that seeks changes in the legal realm and where researchers lend their products and expertise to the service of marginalized groups seeking specific policy changes. In contrast, there is a research process that aims to transform relationships between “researcher” and “subjects” as mentioned earlier, and expand the capacities of participants to make change in their own communities. This participatory research model, as it is known, makes a shift in reconsidering research subjects as co-researchers in a collective process of inquiry, reflection, and action (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991) and aims to use anti-oppressive approaches to contribute to the decolonisation of knowledge. Unlike models of activist research in which researchers advocate for change on behalf of community groups in participatory research, the community members themselves are agents of change.

Kirsch (2002) argues that anthropologists should be aware of the responsibilities they have regarding the information that they collect and of the potential role they may have in the dynamics of an environmental struggle. Anthropologists can facilitate communication between, for example, mining company, government and indigenous affected communities. Kirsch states, “Ideally, anthropologists can also provide local communities with information and resources that will assist them in presenting their own claims more effectively. There is always a risk of political fallout for anthropologists who adopt an activist stance, but this may be muted.

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33 Decolonisation of knowledge here rests on the assumption that knowledge production is part of the Western colonial expansion/colonisation over the rest of the World that denies the epistemic diversity of other knowledge systems. The decolonisation of knowledge calls into question the principles that sustain the current dominant knowledge and is presented as a task and a process of liberation from assumed principles of knowledge and understanding of how the world is or should be. For further reading see the works by: Arturo Escobar, Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo, Ramon Grosfóguel, Alejandro Vallega and Boaventura de Sousa Santos.
when focusing on the responsibilities of one’s own society to regulate business and industry, including their impact abroad.” (Kirsch, 2002, p.178)

I prefer to see my research approach as both engaged and activist. Although I appreciate the objectives of the action-orientated and participatory research model, my research instead focuses on collaborating politically and engaging with my research group by aligning myself with them in ways motivated by my own ethical drive for human and environmental justice. Firstly, while I am aware of the structural inequalities facing marginalized groups in any effort to attain changes, I preferred to view the “subjects” of my research as having a certain level of agency and with real possibilities to bring about the changes they seek, regardless of my research project. In other words, my research was not a joint project with the people I studied, in which they helped shape each phase of the research process in seeking for policy changes. Nor was the sole purpose of my research geared towards social change, in say, mining policies, human rights or environmental protection. I considered that should I want to contribute and collaborate with my research group, then the best way to do this was – as far as it was possible- to first understand the problem from their point of view, and be sensitive to the many avenues of change that the varied groups proposed. As such I had to realize that I would inevitably be drawn into the particular circumstances of the political process. Also it was important to be aware of the inherent differences of research relationships and to act, consciously, from my privileged position as a foreign activist and academic.

Lastly, in relation to these discussions and other scholars studying mining conflicts there tend to be various positions that range roughly on a scale from activist and politically engaged to scholars that are critical but less politically engaged, to academics that are less engaged or work for the industry as consultants and claim certain political neutrality. This dissertation joins the first mentioned group of scholars. The pros and cons of these positions have to do with the level of access to information; accountability for the knowledge produced and the way it is disseminated, reported or interpreted. Considering that scientific research is increasingly influenced by social, economic and political forces shaping its direction
and controlling its applications –particularly bearing in mind the increasing amount of academic funding deriving from the mining industry and raising issues of censorship-, this dissertation engages and contributes to the discussion around the politics of scientific research by showing that mining conflict studies are political; that politically neutral or objective positions are blind to possible harmful consequences to local populations; and that clear and transparent positionality is important for the researcher’s legitimacy and trust relationships with local populations.

**Positionality**

Another issue directly related to an engaged approach and activist research is the question of an anthropologist’s position in the field and whether or not this engagement should be explicit. Hale recognises that scholars who practice as activist researchers have dual loyalties, to their discipline and/or academic community and to a political struggle (Hale, 2006). Hale states, “dual loyalties to an organized group in struggle and to rigorous academic analysis often are not fully compatible with one another. They stand in tension, and at times, the tension turns to outright contradiction. At the same time, such tension is often highly productive” (Hale, 2006, p.105). In my research I was aware that my activist background and political commitment on the one hand, and my academic training and critical analysis on the other, had inherent contradictions. However, in the course of fieldwork, I handled that contradiction by finding ways to have these roles complement fieldwork rather than allow the tension to inhibit my research from moving forward. It was through being open and transparent with the people I researched and being prudent about both roles that made my research both viable and productive.

I would agree with Shannon Speed when she says that “rather than seeking to avoid or resolve the tensions inherent in anthropological research on human rights, activist research draws them to the fore, making them a productive part of the process” (Speed, 2006, p.66). Anthropologists have reached some consensus
regarding the importance of our position in the field or how we situate ourselves in the sense of recognising how our position affects the knowledge we produce. Speed points out that this includes considerations of our power and authority in the relationship with our research subject (Speed, 2006). In addition, it is worth noting Charles Hale’s argument in relation to this point, when he notes that “formulating explicitly activist research alliances, making our political commitments explicit up front, and maintaining the social dynamics of the research process open to an on-going dialogue with the research subjects is simply taking “positioning” to its logical conclusion.” (in Speed, 2006, p.74)

My activist background in mining related conflicts made me consider my academic role as political and feel that the results of my study should somehow be at the service of the struggle for environmental justice and human rights. Of course this is also the result of the romantic spirit of my work. In my experience as an activist, it was not uncommon to hear criticism by indigenous leaders or fellow activists regarding academic researchers to the extent that they were, in some circumstances, unwelcome. This was generally because researchers come and go without reciprocating and it was unclear, at least to mining affected community members, what their motivations were for studying the mining conflict or what they did with the information they collected34.

As an academic in training, however, I value critical research, producing valid, verifiable and legitimate knowledge which requires a rigorous methodology. Of course during fieldwork, I also understood and wanted to adhere to the university requirements for this doctoral thesis. Initially, I took this to mean that I needed to be an objective researcher, keep a certain distance from the anti-mining mobilisations, diversify my informants, and be careful about sharing my political stance. I soon learned however, that I could still practice a rigorous methodology by choosing a position and going along within one faction of the mining conflict. In other words I believe I found a middle ground between my roles as an activist and academic and made them complementary rather than problematic.

34 I recall a saying, that just as mining companies extract minerals, academics extract information and when they are done they never come back.
There was a downside to this immersion and explicit positionality. It meant that researching groups in favour of mining or interviewing the company could be challenging. There was the risk that interviewing these groups could compromise the trust I was building with activist networks, organisations and indigenous leaders in resistance to mining. The access to networks that I was aiming to establish could easily be shut off should rumours spread that I was some sort of spy infiltrating the anti-mining movement. My own paranoia was further stimulated by the fact that I thought that if my family ties with the mining industry were uncovered it could be misinterpreted and support any possible theory of my supposed subversive intentions. Luckily I was not considered a spy although, even in spite of my positionality and political alignment, while living in the small town of El Pangui I was kept on close check by rumours and comments about who I should or should not be engaging with.

Taking a political position was also a conscious choice to keep myself physically safe during some tense moments of the mining conflict. At the beginning of the research period, there was a great deal of tension between people holding different views on mining and increased manifestations, protests, and actions occurred all leading up to the passing of a new Mining Law in early 2009. At times protests became violent, police and military intervened, confrontation occurred and people were hurt. I found that staying close to and clearly aligning myself with a well-defined group kept me safer than insisting on hovering in ambiguity between being an engaged activist and a “neutral” observant.

During the first few days of January I was returning to my rented apartment in Cuenca after spending the Christmas Holidays just over the border in Peru. I was aware of the plans for protest actions by the anti-mining factions but had no idea how these would also affect me. What should have taken just one bus ride of 8 hours to go home, turned into a trip of four days. Ironically the protest I was trying to get to and support was the same one that impeded me from protesting, let alone from getting home.
Once I arrived in Cuenca, I was immediately called out of bed by a friend who urged me to go to the central plaza where there was a press conference being given by two leaders regarding the road blocks. I grabbed my trusted research tools - notebook, pen, recorder and camera - and arrived to find the main plaza full of people. Two leaders, the Saraguro leader, Salvador Quishpe, and a leader from the Cuencan highlands, Carlos Perez, announced that they were heading to the Court of Justice to start a hunger strike. The crowd pushed me along in that direction, and before I knew it I was inside the building with Salvador and a small number of community members, mainly elderly ladies, clumped together to one side on the floor with our arms behind a gate interlocked as chains. An exaggerated number of police and military rushed in, evacuated the workers from the building and barred the outside door shut with metal chains. There was a mixed sense of uncertainty, fear and determination to continue protesting. The ladies and I started to cry. People were screaming and outside the gate there was a row of about 20 policemen and behind them the smoke of tear gas.

I released my arms, stood up and called my friend by cell phone to let him know where I was. I became the point of contact between the protestors and the outside activist network. I recorded messages, took pictures, offered my phone for coordination and gave live radio interviews. Then, by phone I was told that outside the military had chased after Carlos Perez, forced him into a car and were now coming to the building where we were. After a short while, fully armed military undid the chains, opened the doors and came in. The elderly women and I latched on to each other fearful, but were forcefully separated and placed outside. The police grabbed Salvador by his neck and kicked him to the street. There was a lot of confusion, pushing and screaming. A group decided to buy time and march around the plaza followed by community members, indigenous people and activists. I followed and we huddled inside the Cathedral on the plaza. Unfortunately, the priests in charge did not allow us to stay and we headed for the Iglesia San Roque.

This Iglesia or Church was run by a European priest who had been supportive in protest marches years ago against the Free Trade Agreement with the United
States. However, he was not that sympathetic to the mining struggle and did not allow us in straight away. A group of people surrounded the priest and they all debated about whether mining brought development or not. Eventually we convinced him of the anti-mining cause and were allowed to stay in the church, but we could not disturb regular church activities. Almost 7 days of hunger strike followed. We set up camp, the large benches were moved to one side, mattresses and blankets were brought, a television installed, and nurses and doctors came from the Medical School faculty of the University to check on the protestors. One day a well-known actor came to give a small show. I regularly prepared the sugar water for the protestors, donated my sleeping bag and laptop. Each day brought a new person deciding to join the hunger strike. I looked around and found our new infrastructure on the Church floor bizarre. The strangest however, was the marriage of a young couple who had their ceremony right next to the indigenous men and women on their mattresses to one side of the Church floor. Church activities indeed continued as normal! Some months later Salvador Quishpe was elected Prefect of the Zamora Chinchipe province. I decided at that moment, that trying to be a detached objective researcher was not only ethically difficult but maybe even practically impossible. At the end of that week I was incredibly tired with nausea from what I thought was the stresses and strains of helping the hunger strikers full time. Little did I know, I was already six weeks pregnant.

**Phase One: Fieldwork Methodology**

Upon arrival in Ecuador in the summer of 2008, I initially decided to make Cuenca my base for logistical reasons. I could easily travel to the two focal areas in the provinces of Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe that initially interested me, as well as travel easily to Quito for interviews with government institutions and other organisations. The geographical centrality of the city also made it a popular location for reunions, meetings and activities of actors involved in the growing campaign to reject mining. Cuenca was itself increasingly alarmed due to another
large scale mining project located in the higher páramo areas (Moore and Velásquez, 2012, Velásquez, 2012)\(^{35}\).

In the first three months of my research, my aim was to immerse myself in the social movement, identify and get to know the various actors as well as gain a better sense of the geography, the location of communities and the mining projects. I attended meetings, assemblies, and activities across the country, planned by the various environmental and youth organisations and indigenous federations resisting mining. I spoke informally with people from a variety of backgrounds, careers, positions and interests that had been in some way or another involved with the mining mobilisation. These included: urban youth, students, environmentalists, indigenous people (both leaders and community members), mestizo leaders, ‘colonos’, small scale miners, local government officials, academics, activists, local journalists, social workers, mining company workers, police, mining engineers, store owners and small business owners.

I spent a lot of my time getting to know the communities along the Cordillera del Condor from Morona Santiago down South to Zamora Chinchipe (see Figure 1.2). I visited communities affected by mining conflicts, communities within concessions within their borders (even communities that will no longer exist because of the mining project, like San Marcos which is the area destined to be the project leach pad), as well as communities farther away but active in resisting the extractive activity. During these visits I had conversations with leaders who chaperoned me in their area, ran spontaneous focus groups interviews, and participated in indigenous community assemblies. However, these contacts were mainly with mestizo leaders and I realised early on that they were more accessible than indigenous leaders, both in terms of relationship and geographical distance.

I managed to meet and interview indigenous leaders from the base federations of CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) but it was slightly

\(^{35}\) See various articles by Jen Moore on mining struggles in Ecuador [http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/andes/publications/dispatches/]
more challenging to cultivate those relationships due my lack of a good contact person that could introduce me to communities and organisations.

I also spent time in Quito. I established a formal relationship with FLACSO (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales) as a visiting student and signed a memorandum of understanding that made them my official sponsors in the country. I spent time in the library collecting information and interviewing professors. I had agreed with the professor with whom I coordinated –Prof Luciano Martinez- that I would give a day workshop to Master’s students of his department and if possible tutor a student. Towards the end of my research period I did give the course\textsuperscript{36}, but tutoring another student was not possible. In addition, I co-organised a conference with Teresa Velásquez, a fellow PhD student, anthropologist and activist from the University of Texas who was studying the Quimsacocha mining conflict near Cuenca, and we presented our initial fieldwork findings.

In Quito I spent some time in the offices of RIMISP - the organisation that funded my fieldwork. I spoke regularly with the coordinator of the Rural Territorial Dynamics programme –Manuel Chiriboga- and received a broader picture of the Ecuadorian context, the politics around mining and suggestions about how to proceed with fieldwork. I interviewed key informants from NGO’s such as Pachamama, Acción Ecológica and, Ecumenical Commission of Human Rights-CEDHU. With Acción Ecológica I maintained a more regular relationship. Throughout fieldwork, they kept me informed about developments in Quito and I kept them informed about what was going on ‘on the ground’.

The engagement described above with Acción Ecológica was one of the types of collaborative activities I had with actors in the field. My fluency in Spanish and English also helped me to collaborate with translations of press releases and articles that they wanted to disseminate as part of the anti-mining campaign. Another type of collaboration was through my support of a group of activists that had spontaneously come together in Cuenca called Quizha Quizha -made up of

\textsuperscript{36} Seminar FLACSO Ecuador - University of Manchester - See: http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/andes/news/
young foreign and Ecuadorian activists, journalists, artists and anthropologists - that agreed to help document and report marches, protests or activities in our areas of work. Throughout my fieldwork, we maintained in contact and some of our joint reporting made it into national and international news.\textsuperscript{37}

One other form of collaboration that I performed in the last month of my fieldwork was with a group of activists, journalists and human rights advocates from different Quito based NGO’s (Comisión Ecuménica de Derechos Humanos -CEDHU, Acción Ecológica, Instituto Regional de Asesoría en Derechos Humanos INREDH) and in collaboration with two international human rights organisations (International Federation for Human Rights-FIDH and Rights & Democracy from Canada) to write a report on the case of El Mirador (the mining project that I studied in my fieldwork). The purpose of the report was to put pressure on the then Canadian company to take responsibility for the human rights abuses they were involved in. The report was not made public until after the project was sold to a Chinese conglomerate in 2010 and it was translated into Spanish, French and Chinese to facilitate campaigning and advocacy activities (CEDUH et al., 2010).

In Quito, I collected various forms of written data such as books, articles, reports, etc. from different institutions, NGO’s Universities, and government institutions. I visited government institutions such as the Ministry of Energy and Mines, where I spent a good amount of time getting concession maps and lists of companies working in the country. At the National Geological Institute I got different kinds of maps, with more varied details, like political divisions, topography, protected areas and indigenous communities.

Regionally, in the province of Zamora Chinchipe, I collected information, statistical data, reports, development plans, evaluations and financial reports from different government institutions and of the different cantons or districts. I collected data and interviewed government officials from regional Departments of Mines, of the Environment, Agriculture and Tourism. These visits took place in the capital city of

the province, Zamora, and in the municipalities of Yantzaza, El Pangui, as well as in Gualaquiza from the neighbouring province of Morona Santiago. In the city of Zamora I was also given access to electronically review a national data base of agrarian information, which helped me get an idea of the economic activities in the province. At the time I carried out my research, the National Plan for Good Living 2009-2013 from the National Secretariat for Planning and Development (SENPLADES) was still being carried out, so I reviewed this document on the internet after leaving Ecuador.

I also made a trip to the north of Quito where another mining struggle was brewing between conservationists and small scale mining, located very near the emblematic mining case of Intag. Although these relationships were quite good and there was real promise in collaborating with them, I decided it was too far away from my area of interest in the south of the country.

One of the last areas I travelled to before settling in El Pangui was in the very south of the country: Zaruma – Portovelo in the province of El Oro. These towns have the oldest history of mining in the country dating back to Inkan times and where mining continued throughout Spanish rule to present day by both small and medium scale miners and Ecuadorian companies. The town of Portovelo is at a lower level of the valley where miners would live and work. Today one finds numerous mining processors along the river Amarillo. In 1560, Spanish Captain Salvador Román founded San Antonio del Cerro Rico de Zaruma and in 1595 King Philip II brought the city to the status of Villa. The city was built higher up, 2100 meters above sea level, at a safer distance from the mining activities. The most important gold producer in the area was the South American Development

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38 The Intag case is probably the best studied mining conflict case in Ecuador. The mining struggle that has spanned over 3 decades managed to stop 2 large scale mining projects and as a result various alternative economic activities arose in the valley which have been quite successful. See www.decoin.org The Intag case is studied for the relevance in social movements, indigenous politics, transnational activism and alternative economic development models. For further reading see: Bebbington, A. (ed.) (2007) Mineria, movimientos sociales y respuestas campesinas. Lima, Peru: IEP Instituto de Estudios Peruanos y CEPES Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales. Also see: Kocian, M., Batker, D., Harrison-Cox, J. (2011). Estudio ecológico de la región de Intag, Ecuador: Impactos ambientales y recompensas potenciales de la minería. Earth Economics, Tacoma, WA, Estados Unidos.
Company (SADCO) from 1897 to 1950. Zaruma housed SADCO’s US management and higher class workers and their families. The town maintains beautiful colonial architecture and is to be recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. In the town of Zaruma I interviewed some small scale miners and their families regarding their work in the mines and asked their opinion about the debates on large scale mining in the county. I visited old shafts and museums in the town and collected basic information. I considered it important to be aware of this mining history which often gets forgotten or strategically left unmentioned in the general debates and discourses on the mining issue in present day Ecuador.

Lastly, once I settled in the province of Zamora Chinchipe I collected secondary information and visited various local public and elementary school libraries in El Pangui, Yantzaza, Gualaquiza and the Evangelical Mission of Bomboiza. As mentioned earlier, I held formal interviews with a range of government officials in these towns, and in El Pangui I also sought interviews with members of the military, police and the church. It was not easy to interview the military or the police as they were suspicious of my intentions and outright denied interviews on the grounds (they argued) that they had nothing to do with the mining issue.

Priests also varied in their opinions regarding large scale mining and were just as suspicious of my research. In the town of Tundayme inside the concession area and further south of El Pangui in Los Encuentros, the local priests were crucial to the anti-mining mobilisations and spoke critically of the mining projects. The previous priest appointed in El Pangui was key to motivating people to think critically about the projects and was a cohesive force in congregating people to discuss and mobilise around these issues. Unfortunately I did not manage to interview him since after the conflict of 2006 he was transferred to a less politically active Diocese. The priest that came in his place denied an interview claiming that he and the Church had nothing to do with the mining question. I then attempted to speak to priests of the Evangelical Mission of Boimboiza and the professors of their school, located right in between the towns of El Pangui and Gualaquiza. The

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priests and professors of the Mission tended to support and align themselves politically with the indigenous communities and their federations against the mining projects. However, it took me a few visits to convince the priests and school director in charge of the Mission as to the real purpose of my research and that I was not a spy. After these conversations, I was allowed interviews and access to their vast libraries.

The company Ecuacorriente S.A: (ECSA) had an office in El Pangui. However, throughout my entire stay it had its doors and windows barred shut. I was told by Panguenses that after the conflict of 2006, whenever the company tried to open that office, it would be bombarded by tomatoes, rocks and eggs. I decided that it may be more viable to try to interview company workers in their larger office in Gualaquiza. ECSA had a rather large building with four floors of office space and a large sign outside with their motto “a Fair Deal”. I went a few times looking for an interview, but did not have any luck either because the person I was told to talk to was not there or the person I did manage to talk to, like the secretary, gave me the same kind of general information as found on their website and brochures.

I wanted to meet with mining companies more directly, so I decided to attend the Convention of the Prospector and Development Association of Canada (PDAC) in Toronto, Canada, which is the largest convention where the world’s mining industry meets. I met with the various representatives of companies operating in Ecuador such as Corriente Resources and Kinross Gold, the owner of the Fruta del Norte gold project just south of and adjacent to El Mirador. I did not manage to have formal interviews, but had informal conversations about their mining projects and their general opinion about Ecuador, the new Mining Law and possibilities for developing a mining industry there. I attended workshops on corporate social responsibility, indigenous relationships, and social licence. This was an extremely useful experience in order to better understand the industry’s point of view. In addition, it allowed me to stay clear of any type of critique or breach of trust of my relationships with my research group.

40[ http://www.pdac.ca/]
Phase Two: daily life research in El Pangui

I rented a place in El Pangui from February until July 2009 when my fieldwork came to an end. Living in El Pangui helped me participate in, and pay more attention to the experience of everyday life. Earlier I mentioned that my choice to focus on daily life in El Pangui was both conscious and happenstance. My pregnancy was an experience that played a larger role than I had initially anticipated in affecting my approach and shaping the course of my research methodology. It was helpful in the sense that the more I talked about motherhood or focused my conversations on children, family dreams and history, and the more that I accompanied women in their daily activities such as giving water to the cows in a highland pasture or laying out the coffee beans to dry, the more I captured the diverse ways in which the mining issue appeared as a subject of concern. I became aware of how people experienced and lived the mining issue and of the divisions in opinion that this produced, by paying attention to how the topic was present in the most routinized and mundane activities like farming chores or grocery shopping.

I paid attention to the lived experiences of material practices and of the most banal, monotonous and routine activities to understand the relationship with the land and how mining activities may have an impact on this relationship. I was becoming aware that it was also through these experiences that territory was deemed meaningful. In addition, I started to consider that the construction of territory as a space of action and being, be it at the scale of nation states or local farming communities, is also enacted or performed through the smallest and most trivial activities.

The study of the everyday implies looking at an unapparent contradiction. The everyday is both cyclical (with days and nights and seasons) and repetitive. The monotony of daily life and the repetitive motions of work and production seem to overshadow the cyclical character of change, so that days follow one another seemingly the same but inherently different. However, participating in or even
becoming part of the monotony of everyday life also allows one to perceive these differences and variations, and to appreciate what is extraordinary.

Here, I am thinking for example about the times in which a regular activity such as grocery shopping becomes tainted by the mining issue such that family and neighbourly relationships or even friendships are interpreted (at least for some time) in new ways. Another example is how the daily walk to the cattle pastures is experienced differently when memories of the violent confrontation related to the mining struggle is relived with each step – an experience that can be even more laden with meaning if that physical place is the same one as where the war with Peru was fought. Indeed, I would argue that focusing on everyday activities (at least in my research) can be deemed significant and an important source of information for the analysis of environmental struggle and its social impacts.

I then started to think about how everyday activities and lived experiences of the Panguenses referred to ideas around territoriality, to the production of territory and space. While everyday life has often been regarded as trivial and inconsequential by some social science, Lefebvre argued that it is central to how and where the production of space ‘plays out’. Everyday life allows us to see social life as a texture, a totality in which the complexities of society can be envisaged from the perspective of lived experience. Lefebvre sees the everyday with potentialities to look at economic, political and ideological forms and structures (Lefebvre, 2008a, Lefebvre, 2008c, Lefebvre, 2008b).

Lefebvre considers everyday life as the primary place of domination and struggle, enlarging questions of social transformation to more socio-cultural processes (Lefebvre, 1991). In this sense we need not be limited to studying extraordinary events or the political ecologies of mining struggles at a geopolitical level, and instead (or in addition) through investigations of everyday life we can frame an adequate understanding and an even deeper comprehension of “extraordinary” events and their significance for concrete examples of lived experience.

Researching daily life was a methodological choice that added value in the analysis of the environmental struggle experienced in El Pangui. However, I did not
abandon my aim to research the politics of environmental struggle, territorial disputes and the social movement regarding large scale mining. In this respect I view my overall research methodology as a conjunction of analytical layers or a multi-level analysis of the mining struggle and El Pangui’s territoriality.

Of course one may argue that ethnography is the quintessential research approach that studies daily life, routine activities and lived experiences because it requires the researcher to immerse themselves and participate in everyday activities in order to understand the world from the perspective of their research group. Historically, doing ethnography has involved living and talking with people, being there and observing as a participant, in an attempt to understand how the people studied see and account for their world, which includes the anthropologist. I believe my approach builds on this tradition in the sense that I was not only aiming to understand the people of El Pangui, their culture or behaviour through participating in their lives or chores, but tie these to large geopolitics and multiscalar analyses to understand the mining struggle, the anti-mining mobilisation and their impacts through lived daily activities and experiences in El Pangui. Indeed what I found was that mining struggles and social mobilisation cannot be seen as isolated extraordinary events: rather they are integral processes of a longer history and continuous production of territory which is made meaningful through everyday life experiences and activities.

Concluding Remarks
In this chapter I have presented elements of the theoretical framework that underlies this research project and the papers that constitute the core of the dissertation. I have also examined the methodological choices I made in carrying out fieldwork in South East Ecuador. The main argument of the theoretical section has been to illustrate ways in which a territorial approach could contribute to a greater understanding of natural resource struggles, and in this way to present the concept of territoriality as a useful analytical tool. Different approaches to mining conflicts were reviewed and different aspects of the concepts of territory and
territoriality were discussed in order to substantiate my argument. In the methodological section I justified my choices regarding research design and explained details of the fieldwork. I have also discussed different scholars’ understandings of engaged anthropology and activist research as a means of positioning the stance taken in my own research. Studying daily life, everyday activities and lived experiences in the field became a central part of the research through which I gained an understanding of the construction of territory and space and of El Pangui’s territoriality. In the next chapter I turn to ground these discussions and describe the particular context of Ecuador and more specifically of El Pangui.
3 The Territoriality of Ecuador’s Southeastern Amazon

The English word for ‘copper’ originates from the Ancient Roman name cyprium, meaning ‘from Cyprus’, as it was historically mined on the island.

(Visual Capitalist, 2012)

Introduction

Cyprus Minerals carried out mining exploration throughout Ecuador in 1988, towards the end of a decade marked by low mineral prices and a global stagnant large scale mining industry. The Cyprus Mines Corporation was established in 1916 two years after a prospector “discovered” copper on the European island by reading ancient books and studying Roman slag heaps. Amoco Corporation, formerly Standard Oil 41 acquired Cyprus Mines Corporation in 1979 and expanded it into a global diversified mining company. Phelps Dodge then acquired Cyprus in late 1999, which in turn was acquired by Freeport-McMoRan in 2007 to form the world's largest private copper producer.

My father was contracted by Cyprus as a consultant to scope out resources and to evaluate the possibility of developing large scale mining projects in Ecuador. He travelled all around Ecuador visiting sites, taking rock samples, evaluating maps and talking to “locals”. Some months later he was hired as a staff member in Cyprus’ department of Metals Exploration for Latin America. This decision changed my life at age 13 having to endure yet another move this time to the state of Colorado, where the company had its headquarters. My father was excited about Ecuador since it was a country that had incredible potential in resources of gold and copper and an incipient mining industry.

41 Standard Oil was the first foreign company to obtain oil concessions in the Ecuadorian Amazon in 1922. See among others GORDILLO GARCIA, R. 2003. ¿El oro del diablo? Ecuador: historia del petróleo, Quito, Corporación Editora Nacional.
Ecuador was, and still is, a country with no large scale metallic operations. That, my father argued, could have been an advantage for Cyprus, since as one of the first multinationals to work there they would have almost no competitors. He compared that opportunity in Ecuador to his work as Geologist Supervisor in Chile in the late 1970’s when he made the recommendation to the company that he was working for then, Exxon Minerals, to buy the Disputada de Las Condes project at a time of the Pinochet dictatorship when there were few other foreign players. The Compañía Minera Disputada de Las Condes was sold to Anglo American in 2002 and renamed as Minera Sur Andes. The London based miner is the second largest private copper producer in Chile and one of the major contributors to the lucrative Chilean copper mining industry.

My father specialized in the exploration of copper, the industrial metal. The copper deposit he found in the Cordillera del Condor was confirmed about 15 years later by other companies as one of the largest reserves in the continent. Were my father’s findings the groundwork that preceded the discovery of the Mirador project copper deposits that this thesis focuses on?

Cyprus however, did not invest in Ecuador. The key reasons included little government support, lack of a mining law and problems with land titles, superimposition of concessions and conflicts between property owners. In order for copper and gold exploration projects to become worthwhile investing there has to be a balance between opportunity and stability. When a rise in metal prices was about to take off in the late 1980s, exploration geologists working in Ecuador, like my father, found enough mineral resources that offered great potential, but the country did have enough political stability to attract direct foreign investment. During exploration, instability and risk are manageable but then when a project nears implementation, then country stability becomes strategic, at the least to secure the area of the project.

43 Personal communication Fred W. Warnaars.
Since then, Ecuador has tried to achieve the type of stability investors require (and desire) through neoliberal reforms in the 1990’s and World Bank funded projects like the Mining Development and Environmental Control Technical Assistance (MMSD, 2002, Babelon et al., 2003, WorldBank, 1994) known as PRODEMINCA for its Spanish acronym. I would argue that in spite of record high copper and gold prices today, Ecuador’s political uncertainties, weak extractive laws and governance, a history of social mobilisations and Indian uprising responding particularly to resource extraction, continued land disputes at the local level, and power struggles between central and regional governments continue to be challenges for the development of a large scale mining industry. Today, the government’s efforts to reduce these risks seem to slowly have results when considering that a Chinese conglomerate bought the Mirador project in 2010⁴⁴ and seem eager to begin exploitation. This is the country’s first large scale mining project to have permissions to start the exploitation phase⁴⁵.

A lack of new large discoveries has pushed copper exploration into higher risk areas like Ecuador. The amount of copper ore mined today in the world, yields about 30% less than it did around ten years ago. The growth of copper consumption in the last decade occurred primarily in China, though also in Brazil and India, and it is estimated that it will only continue growing exponentially (Visual Capitalist, 2012). Consequently, the constrained global supply and growing Chinese demand have significantly changed the global copper market and as I suggest in this thesis, impact (and continue to impact) the territorial dynamics in El Pangui.

In the previous chapter I described what I understood by the concept of territoriality and suggested that it could be a helpful analytical tool to understand mining

⁴⁴ Corriente Resources was sold to CRCC-Tongguan Investment Co. Ltd., a jointly owned subsidiary of Tongling Nonferrous Metals Group Holdings and China Railway Construction Corporation, in March 2010. See www.corriente.com.
conflicts. I argued that the making of territory is a meaningful process and that the meanings produced are determined by the processes through which a territory is enacted and constructed. In this chapter, I would like to build on these theoretical discussions and adapt or apply them to the territoriality of Ecuador’s south eastern Amazon and more specifically of El Pangui. My aim is not an exhaustive review of every element to El Pangui’s territoriality, but to point out what I consider some of the fundamental building blocks of this particular part of Ecuador.

In this chapter I attempt to answer, using Robert Sack’s notion of human territoriality[^46], who and what has been affecting, influencing and controlling El Pangui’s territory? Who and how is the geographic space being delimited and controlled, and with what purpose? How and by whom is the territory enacted? I aim to lay out here what I consider key elements to understand the territorialisation processes in El Pangui. I pursue this line of questioning because I believe they can give an indication as to what kind of territory the mine will produce and how El Pangui’s territoriality is and will continue to shift and transform in relation to the mine.

Earlier I have argued that, a territorial approach to studying mining conflicts permitted me to consider social and political processes locally and then link them to national and global issues. In addition, I made the case, at least in theory, that territoriality allows me to include into my analysis, local power dynamics, social relationships, networks, and identity construction. Also, it may make visible the types of understandings and relationship people have with their environment as expressed in natural resource use and even in daily life activities.

In this chapter, I would like to build on these propositions and suggest that the territorialisation processes in Ecuador’s south eastern Amazon have been constructed by factors and processes operating at a range of spatial scales and across different historical times. Territorialisation processes have been affected by a series of global and national phenomena that range across the dynamics of

[^46]: “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” SACK, R. D. 1986. Human territoriality: its theory and history, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
global copper markets, national indigenous politics, environmental movements, and international and internal migration. In the following sections I have chosen to discuss a few of these aspects and then I finalize the chapter with El Pangui more specifically.

**Ecuador**

When elected end of 2006, the young and charismatic President Rafael Correa personified a revolution that broke with the oligarchy of the past and started Ecuador onto a new path in its history. He won the elections in part thanks to the support of social movements, indigenous peoples and environmentalists. He aimed to change Ecuador and have the country shift, as he describes in his book, from a “Banana Republic to the No República” (Correa, 2009). He writes that he aimed to bring the country to true liberation of all Ecuadoreans and end the long night of neoliberalism. Since his taking to power, Correa indeed made many significant and progressive changes. Six years later, we find the populist president is adamant on developing a large scale copper mining industry. One driving idea is that mining industry can provide for the much needed funds for the government to implement its social programs and political reforms. Another push factor is that seemingly Ecuador’s needs to diversify its export orientated economy based on exploiting oil reserves and make a transition from oil to a metallic mineral industry.

Ecuador is a country blessed with natural resources and developed its economy on the export of raw materials ranging from bananas, coffee, cacao and oil (Larrea Maldonado, 2006, Acosta, 2006). This type of economy makes it dependent to global trends and a changing emphasis from one export commodity to another responding to the distinctive capitalist boom and bust cycles of global markets.

According to Alberto Acosta (2006), Ecuador has had various processes of transition from one commodity to another, or put differently from one modality of accumulation to another and each one determined by internal socio-political dynamics. Each of Ecuador’s exporting commodities has their own set of socio-
political characteristics, global chains, and economic driving forces, even particular social and environmental impacts. For example, the banana, cacao or oil industries each have their own set of social and political networks within Ecuador that manage the political economy of each commodity. The environmental considerations and impacts of banana exploitation differ starkly from say oil, mangroves or even cacao. They also respond to their own global networks and consumption trends that drive exploitation. However, they have in common the fact that their continued extraction is driven by external markets making the national economy vulnerable to changes occurring elsewhere. On various occasions Acosta has pointed out that one of the fundamental problems of Ecuador’s economy lies in the tendency towards the export of natural resource. If Ecuador were to develop a mining industry, it would seem likely it follow the same pattern.

The history of the oil industry in Ecuador is more than one hundred years old, with the discovery of the first oil well in 1829 along the coast of Ecuador in the Santa Elena peninsula. Oil exports for commercial purposes did not occur until the 1920s by the company Anglo who for 67 years exploited, sold and refined crude from the coastal peninsula. Between 1928 and 1957, Ecuador exported 42 million barrels of crude, about the same amount it exported in 1972 alone. Amazonian oil was first discovered by Shell in the late 1930s but it was not very productive. Later in 1967, the same year that the company Anglo declared that their wells along the coast were drying up, oils was found by Texaco in the Amazon with the first well in Lago Agrio.

The news of the discovery attracted a number of companies and inspired a debate in the country by all kinds of experts declaring that the oil industry would bring economic development for Ecuador and lead them to prosperity. The hydrocarbon law was passed in 1971 and the state corporation was formed a year later.

Ecuador currently has a processing capacity of 157,500 barrels of oil per day. The main products are gasoline and diesel fuel used mostly in transportation. The hydrocarbons sector contributes to 71% of national energy requirements, while the remaining percentage derives from biomass and hydropower. In the past 10 years
the export of oil and petroleum has fluctuated between 43 and 66\% of total exports and between 43 and 59\% of the overall national governmental budget (Gordillo Garcia, 2003).

However, the initial economic success of the oil industry in Ecuador was accompanied by environmental degradation, social conflict, forced relocation, military repression, criminalisation of leaders and severe health impacts. Although the royalties may have contributed to the national economic development the costs were high.

Upon this backdrop the similarities of the development of a large scale mining industry are interesting. However these similarities are for the most part social and political since no open pit mine has yet been built and there are no (at least not yet) severe environmental impacts. The mining industry is also accompanied by contestation by indigenous and environmental groups, there is the same kind of state violence, and the same promises of economic development. It is still hard to say however, whether the materiality of each industry can account for the similarities and differences, since no copper or gold has been extracted. In other words the large scale mining industry is currently mostly conceptual, an idea, a promise of prosperity and a perceived threat to livelihoods and environment.

Certainly there are differences in the nature of the industry, mining being more speculative than oil, developing different commodity chains, markets and actors. Should the large scale copper mining industry move forward, the differences with the oil industry will be mostly visible in the territoriality each industry produces.

Territorially speaking, Ecuador has had a challenging time in delineating and controlling its national territory in particular incorporating its Amazonian territory into the nation state. In the south eastern part of the country, border issues with Peru was cause for a number of wars and the national border was undefined for almost 50 years. Internally, border delineation has been just as uncertain where, for example, the southern Amazonian provinces since just twenty years ago are still undergoing new political divisions into yet smaller territories. Along the Cordillera del Condor, there are other attempts to delineate and border territory
through the establishment of conservation parks as well as indigenous land titling initiatives. Determining territory at even the smallest of scales such as plots of farmlands between neighbours and family members can be just as volatile. Just as challenging for State territorialisation and its nation building project is the idea that for one territory to occur, it takes the place of the previous one and so they would inevitably cease to exist (Delaney, 2005). In the case of Ecuador’s Amazon, this means the need to erase and absorb all previous territorialities such as of those of indigenous peoples in order to render the new Nation State territory dominant.

Ecuador is ethnically very diverse with many indigenous peoples, nations and languages including uncontacted indigenous peoples and peoples living in voluntary isolation. The 1998 constitution recognizes Ecuador as a pluri-ethnic nation and the ethnicity was included for the first time in the 2001 census that according to the official numbers given by Ecuadorian Integrated System of Social Indicators (SIISE), indigenous people represent 6.6 per cent of the population. However, according to the Confederation of the Indigenous Nations of Ecuador (CONAIE), indigenous peoples comprise somewhere between 25 and 30 per cent of the total population (Van Cott, 2005). In the Cordillera del Condor live the Shuar and the Saraguro indigenous peoples, the former being Amazonian of origin and the latter of Andean decent.

Ecuador is the vanguard on indigenous and environmental issues. The indigenous peoples and their territories have not become erased or absorbed by the nation state. Instead they have, through much hardship and social mobilisation, achieved recognition, inclusion and political participation in ways that, next to Bolivia, no other Latin American country has achieved for their indigenous population. They take the lead with their new Constitution that gives special rights to Nature and includes novel concepts such as sumak kawsay resulting in large part from indigenous and environmental mobilisation. Indigenous mobilising has primarily become relevant and acquired force as it responded to the oil industry. This history or memory is being relived with the mining projects today.
The country also has a history of internal migration of actors with diverse ethnic backgrounds that treat land and resources in dissimilar ways (Descola, 1985) – which in part can account for land disputes. Internal migration particularly to Amazonian lowlands by people from the highlands had intense impact on the environment due to rapid deforestation from clearing cattle ground (Jokisch and Lair, 2002). Particularly in the province of Zamora Chinchipe immigrants have arrived from all over the country and abroad attracted by the prospect of mining gold. The area of Zamora, Nambija, and Yantzatza are well known for small scale and artisanal gold mining which for the most part is an activity carried out informally and where the State for decades has lacked a legal structure to control and regulate the activity (Babelon et al., 2003). In the 1980s the gold rush increased reaching an estimated one hundred thousand people working in small scale gold mining in Nambija, Portovelo-Zaruma, Ponce Enríquez and the gold washers in the coast, highlands and lowlands (MMSD, 2002, p. 27) and that had devastating environmental and social impacts (MMSD, 2002, p.43, 44).

In addition, Ecuador has experienced a notable emigration primarily to United States and Spain since the 1990’s to the extent that currently family cash remittances are the second source of foreign currency (global Edge, 2013, Acosta et al., 2005). Emigration has changed the rural and social landscape of the Andes and Amazon with the typical view of new large American style houses boarded shut on unproductive farms (Jokisch and Kyle, 2005, Jokisch, 2002). Cuenca and Loja, for example, are promoted abroad by the Ecuadorean government as havens for retirement. Rafael Correa and government media supporting large scale mining in the country present the mining industry as alternative to emigrating and conjure up feelings of patriotism for people to stay. However, in the light of the global economic crisis in 2008 many Ecuadoreans started to return to their home country while host countries like Spain provided economic initiatives and aid for migrants to return.
Territorialis and Amazonian Imaginaries

The history of nation State construction and border making in southern Ecuador is bound to territorial transformations, discourses and imageries about nationhood (Radcliffe and Westwood, 2005). The process of being established symbolically and geographically as one space or one unit under the idea of a nation state has been more than challenging for Ecuador considering the variety of cultures, indigenous nations and territories found within it. This endeavour has also involved the construction of a single national Ecuadorean identity and language as means to assist in the nation building project. Delineating national borders and incorporating the Amazonian space into the nation has had a particular place in the history of Ecuador.

The place of the Amazon in Ecuador’s national imaginary, territorial consolidation and identity has long been fragile and contested. Ever since it splintered off from Gran Colombia after independence from Spain in 1830, its borders were continuously redrawn in favour of its neighbours after wars and foreign invasion and at each redrawing, its claims over the Amazon have been reduced. Ecuadoreans still describe their territory as having been lost or stolen by their more powerful neighbours. The sense of an Amazonian Ecuadorean-ness started to take shape towards the end of the last century with the discovery of oil, through the border wars with Peru and later with the indigenous movement and ecological conservationist agenda that brought the jungle territory into the national limelight.

Ecuador as a nation developed with its social, political and economic power focused on the axes between Quito and Guayaquil, territorially speaking between the Andes and the coast (Báez Rivera et al., 2004). Ecuador’s Amazon was not officially included into its national territory until formal recognition in the Constitution of 1861, some thirty years after independence. The formal recognition was through the establishment of the Province of the Oriente, as the Amazon is locally known. However, in practice the Amazon continued to be neglected by the national government, for example the many planned infrastructure projects between 1860

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47 Reference is made here to a chapter title in Susana Sawyers’s book Crude Chronicles.
and 1912 were not carried out until the Shell Oil Company finished the first road from Ambato to Puyo in benefit of their exploration activities in 1947 (Gordillo Garcia, 2003). The Amazonian region was not integrated into the political administrative structure of the Ecuadorean state and even the governor of the Oriente province was headquartered in Quito for many years after its official recognition (Radcliffe and Westwood, 2005). Ecuador’s many attempts to incorporate the Amazon was not put in practice, as there was an absence of government institutions and political will to effectively implement public policies or laws (Restrepo, 1993). Although the articulation of the Amazon was proposed by central governments throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century as an essential task for the nation state building project, the Ecuadorian government repeatedly failed in its attempts to it carry out (Radcliffe and Westwood, 2005, Little, 2001).

Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the image of the Ecuadoran Amazon was of an inhospitable place and dangerous (Cleary, 2001, Uquillas, 1991, Hemming, 2008). It was considered a place of savages and full of mystéry as well as curiosities that allured the more adventurous people to discover its riches. Like frontier lands, the Amazon has historically conjured up a social imagination as uninhabited but full of natural resources and riches waiting to be taken advantage of. These images were a continuation from those during Spanish conquest, where the stories of El Dorado (Vásquez, 1987) drove conquistadors to navigate the serpentine waters and enter into the depths of the Amazon searching for gold and other riches. At the same time the Amazon conjured up images of the unknown and deadly diseases and mysterious devilish forces. For governmental institutions, it was an inaccessible place, threatening and mostly problematic. President Galo Plaza announced in 1949 that “the Oriente is a myth” which can be understood as justifying its neglect and constant loss of territory to neighbours, since in addition to being problematic, was of little economic consequence to the national economy (Little, 2001).

However, this threatening image began to change to one of hope and promise once natural resources were found in the Amazon that were of economic interest.
for national and global markets. As Sawyer notes, the Amazon gained symbolic value as Ecuador’s national pride after oil was discovered. In a way, the symbolic value became linked with the region’s economic value. (Sawyer, 2004).

In both the Peruvian and Ecuadorean side of the border, oil exploration activities began in the first half of the twentieth century and concessions were given to a handful of multinational oil companies. The search for oil became intense and drove companies and their governments into competition over the vast tracts of land (Kimerling, 2006). Although not explicit, these interests played a prominent role in the border war of 1941-42 between the countries. To end the war Ecuador was forced to cede territories to Peru, and the redrawn border coincided with the oil concessions given by each country to the Standard Oil of New Jersey and Royal Dutch Shell (Gordillo Garcia, 2003, Little, 2001, Rubentsein, 2001).

The unfavourable result of the 1940’s war for the Ecuadoreans is understood by Little (2001) as the turning point in the history where the Ecuadorean Amazon entered the national consciousness as an integral and important part of the nation. In the 1960’s, the slogan “Ecuador was, is and will be an Amazonian country” was adopted that also found its way to government letterhead and in other fields of state actions such as education (Radcliffe and Westwood, 2005). This discovery shifted new attention to the eastern part of the country and brought new dynamic to the existing bipolar centres of power of Quito and Guayaquil. In a sense, spatially, the discovery of oil pulled the Amazon into being more actively part of the nation.

Another movement that brings attention to the Amazon are global environmental and ecological interests. The emergence of a worldwide environmental movement during the 1950s and 1960s and its subsequent consolidation gained importance for world politics. Interest in protecting and conserving the Amazon from perceived dangers and threats grew and the Amazon began to be valued for its unique

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48 The Peace agreement Rio de Janerio Protocol was signed in January 29 1942. A few days later, February 3, the Ecuadorean government under President Arroyo del Rio authorised the concession to be given to International Petroleum Company (the name it operated under in Ecuador) a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey. In the same year the Peruvian government granted concessions to the same company in the areas that had been Ecuadorean before the war. The national border coincided with these concessions.
biodiversity and environmental and cultural value and even more recently for the global carbon trading market\textsuperscript{49}. The social movements campaigning to protect and conserve the environment have contributed to the politicising of the Amazon (Fontaine, 2006). The international conservation community is looking at Ecuador and experts identified it as one of the 17 “megadiverse” countries in the world\textsuperscript{50}.

The protection of the Amazon began to appear on the agenda of international environmental organizations in the 1990’s accompanied by a broader movement towards conservation objectives or sustainable forest use (Fontaine, 2006). The conservation movement promotes protected areas with underlying contemporary ideas about nature and wilderness that need to be protected from human intervention. The implementation of protected areas in Ecuador represents a change in land management that turns territorial control into an administrative process that occurs in Quito with the involvement and promotion by conservation organisations. In some cases the delimiting process clashes with indigenous people living within park limits due to disregard of their territories and lack of consultation (Cárdenas et al., 2008).

The relevance and importance of conservation strategies grew in popularity at a global scale such that Parks were considered to have the ability to propagate peace in previously war stricken areas (Ali, 2011). This experiment was carried out in the Cordillera del Condor, a mountain range shared by Ecuador and Peru, where Parks for Peace were established as a means to contribute to the peace negotiations to the 1990’s border war. The proposal is that peace can be built through shared conservation interest in areas with intractable conflicts, explicit threats to the environment and traditional diplomacy is not working (Ali, 2007, Carius, 2006-2007). For the first time in diplomatic history explicit environmental conservation measures were used to help resolve the territorial conflict between Peru and Ecuador that had previously spawned several decades of armed conflict (Ali, 2011).

\textsuperscript{49} See the works of Carlos Larrea, Laura Rival, Kevin Koenig, Joan Martinez-Alíer, Piet Boedt, Esperanza Martínez, among others.

\textsuperscript{50} Conservation International identified 17 megadiverse countries in 1998.
Another innovating experience that has brought the Ecuadorean Amazon into attention of the international community is in regard to the Yasuní-ITT (Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini) Initiative (Larrea et al., 2009, Rival, 2010, Vogel, 2009, Acosta and Martinez, 2010). The Yasuní National Park borders Peru in Ecuador’s northern area and is regarded as one of the most biologically diverse places on earth. It was created in 1979 and declared a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve in 1989. Scientists agree on the Park’s unique value due to its extraordinary biodiversity, state of conservation and cultural heritage. However, large deposits of heavy crude oil have been recently confirmed in the ITT field, located under the core of Yasuní National Park. This threat lead to the development of the Yasuní-ITT Initiative, a proposal that seeks to leave the ITT oil fields untapped in exchange for compensation from the international community for lost revenue (Larrea and Warnars, 2009, Rival, 2010).

**Territorialisation and its consequences**

**Settlement**

Many attempts have been made to invade and colonise the Amazon by the Incas, the Spaniards, missionaries and mestizo settlers although, particularly in the territory of the Shuar indigenous nation, these attempts were unsuccessful. In Ecuador there have been many processes of territorialisation in the Amazon brought about by the search for its rich natural resources such as rubber, wood, oil, minerals and lately water; the adventure in conquering and taming the Amazon through highways and infrastructure; the search by mestizos for more pasture and “empty” lands; and lastly the government attempts to set up live borders in the southeastern Amazon as a military strategy in its disputes with Peru.

Ultimately, settlement by “outsiders” was promoted in the last century by various Catholic missions such as the Salesian, Franciscans, Jesuits and later Evangelical missions. Missionaries made sporadic attempts to convert Shuar throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, but with little or no success. In 1869 the Jesuits
established missions in Macas and in Gualaquiza although a native uprising in 1873 forced the abandonment of the mission at Gualaquiza, and another in 1885 forced the abandonment of the mission at Macas. The Dominicans established a mission in Macas in 1887, but they abandoned it in 1898. The Franciscans established their Mission in Zamora for a few years from 1892 to 1897 but found stability from the 1920’s onward. In 1893 the government granted the Salesian Order, dedicated to the education of orphaned and homeless boys, the 'Apostolic Vicarship of Mendez and Gualaquiza' which has continued functioning up until today.

The Salesian Missionaries took on specific roles in “taming” both the Amazon and the Shuar, making the area inhabitable for settlers. While the Missionaries took up the task of making Christians out of the Shuar, the government expected the missionaries to educate the Shuar and “transform” them into Ecuadorian citizens (Rubenstein, 2005). Rubenstein argues that the assistance of the mission to form the first Shuar Federation served the dual and contradictory function of incorporating the Shuar into the Ecuadorean State while setting themselves apart from it (Rubentsein, 2001).

In 1935, during President Velasco-Ibarra’s first administration, the government created a reserve for the Shuar -located in the Cordillera del Cóndor- and gave the Salesians control over this land and its inhabitants. In other words, the Salesian mission has been in charge of mediating land issues in the name of the Shuar to the extent that the Ecuadorian government assigned them official faculty to settle land disputes and land distribution in the area - a role the mission still employs even though the legal competence formally ended in 1969.

In addition to having the role of administrating territories, the Salesian Mission also played other roles such as interlocutor between the Shuar and the State and between Shuar and non-Shuar. The state needed the missionaries to establish an enduring presence to support its claim over the Amazon, in particular during the border war of 1941 with Peru. As colonos began to settle in the Amazon they called upon the Church to provide services that the government would not offer at
that time\textsuperscript{51} and so, the Salesians entered the province to establish hospitals and schools. The latter was even more important in the wake of the wars with Peru, when the border area gained political and military importance.

\section*{Delimiting Territories: the Nation State, Parks and Mining Concessions}

In 1941, Ecuador and Peru went to war after several failures to demarcate the international border. Efforts include arbitration before the King of Spain, direct negotiations and discussions with the President of the United States, among others. After ending the armed conflict, in January 29 1942 the countries signed the "Protocol of Peace, Friendship and Boundaries" in Rio de Janeiro, with Argentina, Brazil, Chile and United States as guarantor countries.

However, in 1946, while trying to demarcate the border, a geophysical anomaly was found in the upper Cenepa. Both nations asked the United States Air Force to investigate the area and make an aerial photographic map of the region that was delivered in 1947. The new maps showed that between Zamora and Santiago rivers there was an unknown independent river system, over a length of over 190 kilometres, the river Cenepa, with its headwaters in the Cordillera del Condor. The presence of this anomaly prevented the geographical demarcation of the border.

In a period of 50 years from the signing of the protocol, several skirmishes arose and in 1960 the then President of Ecuador, José María Velasco Ibarra proclaimed a unilateral annulment of the protocol, to which the guarantor countries reiterated their validity. However, as mentioned earlier, the conflict in the second half of last century is understood to have had a great deal to do with the natural resources found in the area.

Since 1960, Ecuador argued that the Rio Protocol was not enforceable and that the peace accord had been signed under political pressure. Ecuador raised the claim over a vast territory in the Amazon basin while Peru affirmed the validity of the

\textsuperscript{51} Fieldnote recording visit to the Salesean Mission in Bomboiza and interview with Prof. Sarmiento June 15, 2009.
protocol and its sovereignty over the disputed territory. There was a confrontation in 1978 and then another in 1981 in Paquisha, Machinaza, and Mayaycu, the area where no border was demarcated.

Ecuador maintained that their territory extended beyond the demarcation under the Rio Protocol and its official maps used to teach at schools, shows that Ecuador’s borders reach far into “Peruvian territory”. The border line was referred to as the “false border” as shown in the following map.

Figure 3.1 Ecuador Map showing the disputed border with Peru with a dotted line.\(^{52}\)

A new armed confrontation occurred in 1991 and then again a skirmish between Ecuadorian and Peruvian patrols in 1994 in the south eastern sector of the Cordillera del Condor (Bonilla, 1996). The dispute was finally resolved through diplomacy and peace negotiations on February 17, 1995 and Ecuador and Peru

signed the Itamaraty Peace Declaration, officially ending the conflict. With the ceasefire, both countries accepted the offer of the guarantor countries for sending an observer mission (known as the Military Observer Mission\textsuperscript{53} to the conflict between Ecuador and Peru - MOMEPE) (Chicaiza, 2011, Moncayo Gallegos, 2011). The international team undertook the task to separate the fighting forces, initiate a gradual and reciprocal demobilization of the units deployed in military operations and overcome the impasses that led to the armed dispute.

However, it was not until October 26, 1998, that the signing of the Brasilia Accord sealed the peace between Ecuador and Peru. The two countries also signed the “Agreement on Border Integration, Development and Neighbourly Relations” which states that priority would be given to irrigation, tourism, transportation, agriculture, energy and “coordinated exploitation of the mining resources found in the border areas between the territories of both countries.”\textsuperscript{54}

The Peace Agreement established two protected zones governed by the same treaty. These new Ecological Protection Areas or “Peace Parks”, include the 2,540-hectare “El Cóndor” in Ecuador. In June 1999, under Ministerial Agreement No. 936, the El Cóndor Binational Park was created (Chicaiza, 2008). Other parks also created following the Peace Agreement were the Protected Forests “Cordillera del Cóndor”, the Refuge for Wildlife “El Sarza” and the Biological Reserve “El Quimi”. In Peru, in addition to the 5,440-hectare Ecological Protection Area, the Peruvian government through Supreme Decree 005-99-AG, created the Santiago Comaina Reserve Zone with a total area of 863,277 hectares, and a year later increased to 1,642,567 hectares\textsuperscript{55}.

\textsuperscript{53} It is upon this backdrop that the same name was given to the Mission – the international observation mission - that I was part of in 2007 to do an ocular inspection of the Mirador camp site to confirm the use of the military as security forces.

\textsuperscript{54} Original text: “i) Aprovechar de manera coordinada los recursos mineros que se encuentran en las zonas fronterizas de los territorios de ambos países conforme al marco jurídico que establezcan las Partes a través de un Convenio sobre Integración y Complementación Minera.” Found in Acuerdo de Integración Fronteriza de Desarrollo y Vecindad firmado entre Ecuador y Perú title.11 - i). \{http://www.mmrree.gob.ec/pol_exterior/com_ecu_per/AcueAmpEP.pdf\]

\textsuperscript{55} See Servicio Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado [http://www.sernanp.gob.pe/sernanp/contenido.jsp?ID=63&C=ANP]
However, the areas not included within the lands protected under these conservation categories were turned to mining areas. A subsidiary to a large multinational mining company, Billiton Ecuador B.V.\(^5\), began mineral exploration in south eastern Ecuador in 1994 and identified a number of possible porphyry copper targets in the region. Only six months after the signing of the Brasilia Agreement, in April 1999, mining giant Billiton signed a one-year contract with the Shuar community of Warintz (located along the border area adjacent to the El Cóndor Park) to perform exploration activities on their land (Chicaiza, 2008).

In Peru, there was a proposal to partially classify the Zona Reserva Santiago Comaina as the Ichigkat Muja–El Cóndor Mountain Range National Park with an area of 152,873 hectares. This Park was reduced to by more than half to 88,477 hectares. That same week a series of mining explorations claims had been approved of the area that was left outside of the Reserve which was later given in concession to the Canadian company Minera Afrodita (Durand, 2011). In 1992 and 1995 the Ecuadorian Ministry of Energy and Mines granted mining concessions in the provinces of Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe 25 kilometres from the Peruvian border. The concessions were granted to Gatro Ecuador Minera S.A., a subsidiary of South African-owned Gencor and Antemin Minera de los Andes Cia. Ltd. south of Gualaquiza. Antemin, was a company with mixed U.S. and national capital – whose owners included Alicia Durán Ballen, daughter of the former Ecuadorian president (Chicaiza, 2011). In 1992 Antemin purchased the rights to 1250 hectares gold-mining concession located in Morona Santiago in the county of Gualaquiza, on a site known as "La Misionera" alongside the Bomboiza River.

In the Zamora Chinchipe province, the Podocarpus National Park was created in December 1982 by the Ministerial Agreement No. A-0398\(^5\). However, in the same year the Ecuadorian Mining Institute granted mining concessions to several domestic and foreign companies. Almost the entire Park was allocated in concessions. One of the companies, the Norwegian company Ecuano S.A. that

\(^5\) BHP and Billiton merged in June 2001 becoming the world’s largest diversified mineral resources company. See: www.bhpbilliton.com.

operated under the name of their subsidiary Cuminamasas S.A. started exploration activities in the park. Later, Cuminamasas struck a joint venture deal with British mining giant Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) in order to expand its project early 1990’s (Chicaiza, 2008). The mining activities were not widely known until students from the Imperial College of Science in England made an expedition to the Park in search of parrots but found the miners instead. Concerned for the environment the students together with ecologist organisation Arcoiris in Loja, Acción Ecológica in Quito, and London based activist organisation MineWatch and Partizans (People Against Rio Tinto and Subsidiaries) started an international campaign to protect the Park.58

Although this park is located slightly farther away from the Cordillera del Condor, it is relevant in the sense that it established a precedent of anti-mining mobilising in Southern Ecuador59, where a conservation-colono-Shuar alliance joined a global activist network to stop the project. RTZ pulled out of the Park, after being confronted in their Annual meeting in 1992 with a delegation from Ecuador and have not shown interest in Ecuador since then.60 In addition, after eight years of mobilising, the Ministry of Energy and Mines halted the project.

In April 2000, Billiton and Corriente Resources entered into a joint venture agreement, including the area of the Mirador property in El Pangui (Chicaiza, 2011). By 2002 the transfer of over 60,000 hectares located within the copper belt along the Cordillera del Condor was completed. The projects owned by Corriente Resources and their subsidiary Ecuacorriente (ECSA) was subsequently bought in 2010 by the Chinese conglomerate CRCC-Tongguan Investment Co. Ltd. jointly-

59 Few other experiences exist in Ecuador of these types of alliances and mobilisation regarding mining that resulted in the ceasing of mining activities, expulsion of the company or governmental decisions to halt projects. Emblematic case is in relation to Bishimetals and Ascendant Copper in Intag Valley, Junin. Networks of broad base alliances are also present in Azuay relating to the Quimsacocha project owned by IAM Gold and in both provinces of Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe regarding projects owned by Corriente Resources, Lowell Minerals, and Antemin.
60 PARTIZANS Ecuador archive.
owned direct subsidiary of Tongling Nonferrous Metals Group Holdings Co., Ltd. and China Railway Construction Corporation Limited61.

Between 2002 and 2004 a new “Peace and Conservation” project62 was undertaken in the Cordillera del Cóndor region, with the objective to consolidate the peace process through the establishment and management of natural conservation areas and promote sustainable development in the local communities. The main premise of environmental peacemaking is that there are certain key attributes of environmental concerns that would lead parties in discord to consider them as a means of cooperation (Ali, 2007). Thus environmental issues could play an instrumental role even in cases where the conflict does not involve environmental issues. However, in the case of Ecuador and Peru it could be argued that joint environmental concern did not create the basis for cooperation and peace, but the need to have clear boundaries for resource extraction to be possible.

In both countries, the indigenous communities and federations were sceptical at first of the creation of the conservation areas, since these would superimpose on their ancestral territories (Cárdenas et al., 2008). However, once convinced that the indigenous communities could also benefit from the legal status of protection the parks would receive, most of the communities participated in the process. In Ecuador, the Shuar communities and representing Federation saw this as an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination and establish a Shuar Peoples of Arutam government (CGPSHA)63. Other communities saw this as an opportunity to have their territories recognised by the state.

I want to draw attention however that while the process of the Peace and Conservation project was remarkable in the sense that it made a substantial effort to include the active participation of the indigenous communities as equal partners,

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62 A joint initiative of the Ministry of the Environment, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), which was responsible for funding, the Ecuadorian organization Fundación Natura, responsible for executing the project, and Conservation International (CI), responsible for international coordination.
63 Concejo de Gobierno del Pueblo Shuar Arutam.
the State did not include them when delimiting their territories for mining concessions they would later grant to multinational mining companies. The power of delimiting territory and determining its use occurred elsewhere in Quito without indigenous people’s participation. This fact contributed to the frustration and disappointment of the indigenous communities living along the border that had ceded to participate in creating the Peace Parks and who fought in the war proving to the state their allegiance as patriotic Ecuadoreans. These peoples were lead to believe that having formal recognition of their territories in addition to enjoying the legal protection conservation park status could mean to have control over their future. However, the mining projects now present in their territories suggest otherwise.

Colonisation

As mentioned earlier, the discovery of oil in the Amazon Basin in the late 1960s drew interest and brought along with that high expectations for transnational companies and government. In addition, it brought along with it the colonisation and settlement of the Amazon. The State began to participate directly in oil exploitation through the establishment of the Ecuadorian State Oil Corporation in 1967 and to promote migration to the Amazon. The oil boom provided infrastructure in order to enter previously inaccessible and remote areas and the funds to support the Ecuadorian military and bureaucracy. In 1978, the military junta decreed a Law of colonization of the Amazon region. In this way the State made settlement of the Amazon a national imperative and imposed colonization as a national priority.

Settlement took place more systematically and chaotically through the government “program of colonisation” together with the Agrarian reform of 1964 paving the way for mestizos and highland people to inhabit the Amazon. The Agrarian reform was claimed to be needed after the bonanza of cacao and banana economies. There

64 Fieldnotes of conversations with with Shuar leaders, Domingo Ankuash and Julio Tiwiram Taish.
were also other reasons for land reform, such as resistance and pressure by indigenous populations to end the hacienda system\textsuperscript{65} which was often accompanied by exploitation (Bebbington, 2004). In general, reforms lead to a series of changes among them the acquisition of land in the Amazon. The low population density of the Amazon led the government to classify millions of hectares as “tierras baldias”\textsuperscript{66}. This strategy was encouraged by the national government and imposed agricultural colonization as a substitute for land reform (Fontaine, 2006, Báez Rivera et al., 2004).

The governments that subsequently came to power after the oil boom have continued to view the Amazon as a frontier to be conquered, a source of wealth for the State, and an escape valve for land distribution pressures in the highland and coastal regions. However, in the absence of planning, colonisation had distressing effects with lack of technical assistance that prevented many settlers to overcome obstacles such as lack of capital, low yields and lack of labour to ensure sustained production rates. Consequently, many lost their lands to most powerful interests or abandoned them by low productivity and inability to ensure their own survival (Pinchon, 1993).

The government colonisation program and agrarian reform that came to promote the “settlement” of Amazonian lands opened the doors for people to gain access to lands not only for subsistence farming but to gain large territories that would be larger than needed or capable for production. The importance of land titles cannot be understated since these provide for legal recognition of the squatting enterprise, are a source of family security, provide needed collateral for bank loans, and can be sold if the colonist decided to abandon their farm or needed quick capital. As a consequence, land acquisition was seen as a business in itself and land trafficking continues to this day.

\textsuperscript{65} Haciendas generally regulated access to land mainly through the \textit{huasipungo} system, which entailed sharecropping where indigenous farmers or peasants gave their labour in exchange for a small plot of land for subsistence farming.

\textsuperscript{66} Spanish meaning lands with no owners or no man’s land, though also a legal term to refer to the lack of ownership.
Land reform is largely responsible for deforestation since it forced farmers to cut down trees and convert forests into ‘productive’ grassland and in that way receive legal recognition as property owners. The speculative land value in the context of hyperinflation that characterized Latin American economies in the 1980s also contributed to the increase in deforestation. Under the combined effect of colonization and massive commercial exploitation of timber, agriculture and extensive livestock in Ecuador, deforestation rate reached annual 2.3% in the years 1970-1980 (Wasserstrom, 2010). The treatment of land and increase of deforestation not only intensifies the competition for land but also builds upon the existing tensions between indigenous and colonos regarding control and access to land and resources.

The colonists that settled in the southern Amazon provinces included not only mestizos but highland indigenous people, like the Saraguro, that are much more cattle based economies than the Shuar. There are less social and cultural conflicts between the Saraguro people and the Shuar mainly because they occupy very different territories and have not competed for lands in the same way as with the colonos. The Saraguro are mostly located further south in the province of Loja and in the southern area of Zamora Chinchipe and as highlanders prefer to work lands at higher altitudes. Different to the Saraguros, the colonos that came to Amazonian and Shuar territories preferred to acquire wide areas of flat lands and close to the larger rivers like the Zamora River. As a result, the Shuar (along with them also animals and birds) were displaced out and upwards toward the Cordillera del Condor.

Indigenous Political Organising and the Catholic Church

Before turning to the details of indigenous political organising and the rise of their federative structure and relevance, I would like to offer a brief summary of the history and culture of the Shuar peoples, as they are a prominent group in the indigenous movement in Ecuador and in this dissertation.
In south east Ecuador, the Shuar are the most abundant indigenous peoples, with a population of about 110,000\(^{67}\), and their territory comprises approximately one million hectares, in the eastern provinces of Napo, Pastaza, Morona Santiago, Zamora Chinchipe and Sucumbios.

The Shuar are often grouped together with the Huampis, Aguaruna, Achuar peoples as part of the Jivaro linguistic group of western Amazonian basin (Harner, 1973). These four tribes represent the largest population of Amazonian Amerindian groups (Descola, 1996) and are one of the most studied indigenous groups of low land Latin America (Harner, 1973, Hendricks, 1993, Karsten, 1935, Stirling, 1938, Salazar, 1981). Archaeological evidence suggests that a portion of Shuar territory was occupied by pottery-making, horticultural populations 2.5 millennia ago (Salazar, 1981).

Shuar households were polygamous and traditionally organised in dispersed groupings, and operated relatively autonomously. Labour was divided by gender such that women were in charge of cultivating manioc and chicha (manioc beer), that together provided the bulk of calories and carbohydrates in the Shuar diet. In other words women were in charge primarily with subsistence agriculture and food preparation and their labour was crucial to Shuar biological and social life.

Men on the other hand hunted, fished and participated in war. Young boys were initiated into warfare by going on a journey with their fathers or uncles to nearby waterfalls, where arútam, the spirit God resides. At some point the boy would be given maikua -the spirit which brings visions- in the hope that he would have visions. If the boy were brave enough he could see or even touch arútam, and acquire the arútam wakaní. A boy with arútam wakaní would be very strong and possession of several arútam wakaní would make the boy invincible. Arútam wakaní however, could easily be lost so the ritual was often repeated.

In the past, the Shuar fiercely defended their territory against foreign invasion. Part of their warfare rituals involved the shrinking the heads -called tsantsa- of their

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enemies. Harner (1973) states that the Shuar practice of shrinking the heads after inter-tribal war raids which aimed to contain the avenging soul of the victim. Killing was thus seen as a necessary action to acquire 'arutam soul power' contained in the head. Rituals conducted with the tsantsa were believed to transmit power to the killer and his family. The preparation of the tsantsa also had the purpose to paralyze the spirit of the enemy attached to the head so that it cannot escape and take revenge upon the killer. This would prevent the spirit from continuing into the afterlife and harm dead ancestors or prevent the spirit taking new form after having left human form. However, Shuar men also believed that control of the victim's souls would enable them to control their wives' and daughters' labour, which as mentioned above was fundamental for Shuar diet and survival.

It has been argued elsewhere that the Shuar are the only peoples that resisted being conquered by the Inkan empire and the Spanish colonial invasion (Harner, 1973, Karsten, 1935). Indeed, during the colonial period the Shuar resisted conquest by the Spanish conquistadors as well as early the missionaries (Salazar, 1977). Such opposition culminated in a Shuar uprising in 1599 when more than 20,000 Shuar destroyed the mining town of Logroño, killing over three quarters of the population, and poured molten gold into the mouth of the governor so that he died causing the Spanish had to retreat to the highlands.

Eventually however, the Shuar territories were invaded and colonised in the 20th century due to a series of events such as the discovery of oil, Peruvian claims to the region and the subsequent wars, and pressure by the Ecuadorean state to colonise the Amazon and connect it to the rest of the country. Catholic priests from the Salesian order, with support from the Ecuadorean state, established missions in an attempt to contact and convert the Shuar to Christianity and into Ecuadorean citizens. However these same religious groups that were responsible for "taming" the Shuar and preparing the Amazon for colonisation also assisted the Shuar to counter the colonist invasion, by urging the Shuar to reorganise themselves.68

The first move towards unification of the Shuar was in the city of Sucua, in the early 1960’s where families decided to establish small property-owning administrative units called centros. Later the centros united into a government recognised entity called the Asociacion de Centros Shuar de Sucua in 1962 (Rubentsein, 2001). The Salesian missionaries encouraged the formation of the centros and played an important role, even a leading role, in the formation of this first Association. The results were well received and workshops to work on forming federations in other areas of the Amazon were duplicated. Today, the Church, continues to play its part in supporting the indigenous federations and their struggles to protect nature and indigenous rights.

The Shuar recognised the need for a higher level administrative unit to coordinate activities of all Shuar Associations and so the Interprovincial Federation of Shuar Centres (FISCH) was born in 1964\(^69\). The Federation primary purpose was to enable the Shuar to establish legal ownership of their land. It is of no coincidence that the creation of the Federations occurs in the same year as the Agrarian reform, 1964. To show that their land is productive and prove they adhere to the necessary condition for ownership under Ecuadorian laws, the Shuar turned to cattle ranching. The Federation emerged as the culmination of a series of attempts on the part of the missionaries to protect the Shuar from the colonists. Had the Missionaries not been present and colonisation continued the Shuar probably would have fled further into the forests. This type of situation would have deprived the Missionaries of converts and labour for haciendas.

As oil extraction grew in the 1970’s so did the founding of indigenous organisations at regional levels, such as the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Pastaza (OPIP), the Union of Natives of the Ecuadorian Amazon in the Napo among others. Later in 1980 after the first congress of indigenous peoples, these

\(^{69}\) There are various Shuar organizations, the largest four being: Interprovincial Federation of Shuar Centres (FICSH), representing 490 centros (centres or villages); the Independent Federation of the Ecuadorian Shuar People (FIPSE), representing approximately 47 centros; the Shuar Organization of Ecuador (OSHE), which represents 40 centros; and the Shuar Federation of Zamora Chinchipe (FSZCH), which represents 18 centros. Of the groups mentioned above, FICSH and FIPSE make up part of CONFENIAE.
federations grouped together as the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE). In the highlands, the first regional indigenous organisation to form was Ecuador Runacunapac Riccharimui (ECUARUNARI) and in the coast the Coordinator of Indigenous and Black Organizations of the Ecuadorian Coast (CONAICE) was formed.

In Zamora Chinchipe, the FSHZCH was not founded until 1980, much later than their counterpart in Morona Santiago. One reading for this has to do with the difference between the Salesian and Franciscan Missions, in Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe respectively. The Franciscans tended to promote colonization more than the Salesians such that colonisation had been more intense the Shuar territories were more fragmented, the communities less cohesive. The formation of the indigenous Shuar Federation is simultaneously a story of the incorporation of Shuar into the Ecuadorian state. According to Rubenstein (2001) the formation of the Shuar Federation and Shuar ethnicity, territorially as well as institutionally, is `state formation'.

In 1986 the three federations, CONFENIAE, ECUARUNARI, and CONAICE joined to form the Confederation of Ecuadorean Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE). It was not until ten years later that the CONAIE founded Pachakutik, the political arm of the organization. This confederation has been a prominent interlocutor of Ecuador's indigenous peoples and instrumental in organizing indigenous uprising. CONAIE, a prominent actor in Ecuadorian politics and subject of academic research (Ogburn, 2001, Van Cott, 2005, Yashar, 2005, Whitten Jr., 2003, Sawyer, 2004) has demanded and achieved land restitution for indigenous peoples and envisaged a national economy based on territorial autonomy.

The struggles of the indigenous peoples was supported in many ways by the Catholic Church not only in their role to help create the federations, but evolved to be more explicitly political. In the context of the mining struggle today, the Salesian

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70 CONAIE in turn forms part of the Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), which represents nine organizations from the nine countries that share the Amazon basin: AIDESEP, Perú; APA, Guyana; CÍDOB, Bolivia; COIAB, Brazil; CONFENIAE, Ecuador; CONIVE, Venezuela; FOAG, French Guiana; OIS, Suriname; and OPIAC, Colombia.
order has this continued role\textsuperscript{71} in the anti-mining struggles in Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe. Other priests have also played crucial organising and educative roles regarding the mining struggle throughout the country. The role of the Church grew such that the Ecuadorian Episcopal Conference, after an analysis of the role of the Church in environmental struggles, made a Declaration in April 2012 ratifying their support to affected peoples and setting guidelines for their work\textsuperscript{72}.

During the conference the bishops also discussed a working document on “Caring for Our Planet,” in which the “delicate, complex and controversial” issue of mining in Ecuador was raised. Sharing their considerations the bishops state that “the great challenge for the governments and the mining and oil companies continues to be the extraction of the metals of the earth without negatively affecting human life and that of nature. It is not a matter of giving a categorical and uncritical YES or NO to mining and oil exploitation, but rather one of being well informed in detail as to their benefits and damages and to then take intelligent, opportune and brave decisions, taking into account that the life and health of human beings and the balance of the environment are more important than all the metals. One of the most beautiful resources that we should take care of, for example, is that of the sources of water, because we can live without gold, but without water, never.”\textsuperscript{73}

The statement by the bishops further points out that "as shepherds of a Catholic Church, Mother and Teacher of all God’s children, we want to ratify our commitment to continue accompanying the sisters and brothers who are affected

\textsuperscript{71} In the Ecuadorean Amazon the support of the priest Juan de la Cruz has been vital mostly through his work of awareness raising regarding the social and environmental impacts of oil and mining activities.


\textsuperscript{73} Ibid –translation by author.
by the social problems and by the dangers of petroleum and mining for their life and dignity, by means of the forming of an ecological conscience.”

**Environmentalist movement**

The environmental movement started in Ecuador around in the late 70s, and is related to the emergence of the rise of international environmental NGO’s. Organisations emerged in Quito and later in the southern city of Loja and whose social composition is mostly urban and highly educated (Varea, 1997). In the beginning, its main concern focused on the protection of species and ecosystems, as well as environmental awareness. During the mid-80s, with the emergence of new activist NGO’s, a supportive network was established with the populations affected by the advance of the extractive frontiers (Latorre Tomás, 2010).

The Ecuadorian Environmental Movement, the Green Party and the Ecuadorean Committee for the Protection of Nature and the Environment (CEDENNA) were created. At first, these were established with the aim of opening a space for discussions that was participatory and served to coordinate the proposals in relation to environmental issues, but these experiences, with the exception of CEDENMA was short lived (Latorre Tomás, 2010). Other coordination mechanisms appeared and environmental networks and international campaigns began to grow. Regarding the latter, the campaign "Amazon for Life" stands out as an influential experience, which was established as a reaction to the social and environmental impacts of oil activities.

The campaign "Amazon for life" was created in 1989 with the participation of 12 national environmental organizations as well as international groups and support

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74 The full Spanish text of the pastoral statement released by the April 16-20, 2012 Plenary Assembly of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Ecuador can be found at [http://www.iglesiacatolica.ec/web/]

75 In Quito: Tierra Viva, Acción Ecológica, Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones sobre Movimientos Sociales Ecuatorianos (CEDIME); in Guayaquil: Espol, Semilla de la Vida, BIOS, Hippocampus, FEMM; in Cuenca: Tierra Viva, Janan Urin, Amigos de Marzan; in Loja: Arcoiris; and in Riobamba:
of indigenous and farming organizations. In practice, the campaign focused on three areas: protecting the Yasuni National Park from oil activity, legalizing Huaorani Territory of nationality, and reporting of environmental impacts by "Texaco". These campaigns achieved the articulation of an environmental movement through the Front for the Defense of the Amazon (FDA for its Spanish acronym). Later in 2005, in a context of political instability due to the fall of President Lucio Gutierrez, a more formal environmental body was created called the National Environmental Assembly (ANA for its Spanish language acronym). One of its greatest achievements was to group the environmental organisations and jointly submit a proposal for the new Constitution during the drafting process of the National Constitutional Assembly in 2007-2008. During the drafting process there was a continuous lobby by civil society organisations, most notably the environmental and indigenous organisations at the Natural Resources and Biodiversity working group. The lobbying achieved the incorporation of environmental demands for the "Rights of Nature" and prioritized issues of water and mining.

It is apparent that the roles of the environmental as well as the indigenous organisations in national politics have been fundamental as they have contributed for the incorporation of the Rights of Nature in the constitution. In addition, it is also notable the role of the environmentalist organisations in the social mobilisations responding to large scale mining.

El Pangui: “Orquídea de la Amazonia”

Pangui or Panki is a Shuar word meaning boa, also whirlpool that are formed in Rio Zamora

-Julio Tiwiram Taish, Shuar leader

Green is for our rich vegetation for agricultural production, Yellow for the riches of gold and the bright sun of hope, Red is for the blood spilt in the wars with Peru.

Acción Ecológica. International NGO´s Rain Forest Network (RAN), World Wide Foundation (WWF), and National Resource Defense Council (NRDC).
El Pangui has a young history. The first colonos arrived in El Pangui in the 1960’s from other neighbouring provinces. The first Mission was built in 1960. Monseñor Jorge Mosquera hired Francisco Caamañor (apparently a Shuar), to lead the building of the Mission and a school slightly north of what is now the centre of El Pangui town (Municipalidad El Pangui, 1996). This Mission, similar to the Salesian Mission in Bomboiza was responsible for the evangelisation of the Shuar and their integration into life in El Pangui. The migration of more colonos intensified by 1968 due to droughts in Loja and Azuay and the mining disaster in Nambija and their permanent presence eventually displaced the Shuar even more into the forests resulting in further reduction of their territories.

The colonos, under direction of Monseñor Mosquera created the first cooperative in 1974, named La Cooperativa de Produccion Agricola y Pecuaria “San Francisco de El Pangui” (Municipalidad El Pangui, 2009). The objectives of the cooperative were to defend territories, promote education, fish production and the construction of a town. A year later, a committee in favour of the construction of a town was established with Mr. Caamaño as their first president. The Cooperative together with Mr. Caamaño decided to donate lands owned by the Cooperative for the construction of the first governmental institutions such as a school, a health centre, a Mission and other areas used today by the police and the town market (Municipalidad El Pangui, 2009).

One of the principal ways for colonos in the Amazon to improve their living conditions increase their political power is to petition for the creation of new provinces, cantons, and parishes76 and gain greater local control over the territory they inhabit. This process can also be seen as a catalyst for gaining access to

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76 The Ecuadorian government is divided into three political-administrative levels: province, canton, and parish.
economic and political resources offered by the national government. This means, as Little (2001) has argued that an important political resource colonos have is the vote, and this increases in strength as their numbers grow in a given territory. As a consequence, the rapid colonization of a particular area can be understood as an implicit political strategy by the colonists. This strategy also brings the colonists in closer contact with their political leaders and increases the possibility of local colonists gaining positions of power. In this manner they presumably gain more representation within the government, access to financial resources for each governmental administrative unit, and greater control over local affairs, since the decision-making bodies are located within the region.

For decades the settlements in El Pangui depended politically from Morona Santiago and as their numbers grew so did their claims to the provincial government for services. However, town’s people fed up with feeling marginalized and unattended by their governing provincial government, in 1978, organized themselves and decided to separate from Morona Santiago and request to become part of the province of Zamora Chinchipe. The town’s people took advantage of the visit of the then president Jaime Roldos Aguilera, and pressure him to sign an agreement to re-delineate the provincial limits at the Rio Chuchumbletzaza making El Pangui to be part of Zamora Chinchipe. Two years later, the organizing group that had promoted the re-drawing of the provincial limits, was successful in founding El Pangui as a parish and Yantzatza as canton through Decree no. 55 in Official Registry No. 388 of February 26, 1981 (Municipalidad El Pangui, 1996). El Pangui remained as a parish of the canton of Yantzatza for the next ten years.

A committee in favour of becoming a canton, the Comité Pro-Cantonización was formed in 1990 in order to promote the change of political administrative unit of El Pangui from parish to canton. The president of the Comité, Leonicio Heredia Brito and later president of the Municipality of El Pangui describes the incentives for the cantonization in a Municipal newsletter not only as a response to the growing population but also as the need of establishing “live borders” to defend the borders and fight off the enemy (Peru) (Municipalidad El Pangui, 1996).
On the 14th of February 1991 the petition for cantonization was approved through constitutional decree found in the Official Registry No. 622. El Pangui today is a canton with four parishes: Tundayme, El Guismi Pachicutza and an urban parish of El Pangui. There are 15 Shuar communities, 27 rural neighbourhoods and 5 urban neighbourhoods. There are 25 organisations registered in El Pangui from the colono farming sector (Municipalidad El Pangui, 2009).

The anthem, flag and shield of El Pangui were designed following the founding of the canton and make reference to the history the town and key aspect of El Pangui’s identity. First, there is reference that El Pangui is located in the Amazon and that its’ founding is a product of hard working people. Another reference is made to the gold in the rivers, and the pride of serving the country as “live borders” in the honourable defence of their national territory (Municipalidad El Pangui, 2009). There is no mention of the Shuar however, as part of El Pangui’s identity beyond the use of the word Panki for the name of the town and the canton. It would seem that their participation in the cantonization was limited or rather inexistent, much like their absence in delineating mining concessions, national borders and even agricultural plots. Today, the basic description of the canton in tourist brochures, newsletters and the Municipal website, present the Shuar as a touristic attraction. One can download a tourist map of El Pangui (see Figure 3.2 below) and in addition to the symbol of Orchids, waterfalls, and caves is an icon of a person to represent a Shuar community.

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77See also Municipality of El Pangui official Website [http://gobiernomunicipalelpangui.blogspot.com/]
In El Pangui, the establishment of organisations for different purposes are used as springboards to local power and where people recycle themselves from one area of power to another and moving from one struggle to the next. The Committee for Cantonization that achieved political independence of El Pangui is the predecessor of the Committee for the Defense of Life and Sovereignty that opposes the mining project. The president of the Committee for cantonization, Professor Heredia Leoncio Brito, later was elected as the first mayor of El Pangui. The vice president of the Committee for cantonization was Segundo Encarnación, who was later elected mayor a few years later. The President of the Committee for the Defense of Life and Nature of El Pangui who had been councilman in the Municipality, Rodrigo Aucay ran for mayor in 2009.

There are several sensitive issues for the people of El Pangui that the current mining conflict will revive and generate a series of changes in meanings that have existed in the local political discourse and even in El Pangui’s identity. These have to do with the tense relationship between local and national government and the role of the people of El Pangui in the war. A particular relationship developed between the centre-Quito and the periphery-El Pangui involving issues of decentralisation, sovereignty, and the national border. On the one hand the central government supported the development of towns in the Cordillera del Condor that functioned as “live” borders. And on the other, people in El Pangui were aware of that role and its significance in the military strategy to protect the border from invading Peruvians. However, they also made claims to the central government not to ignore the Amazonian towns, reminding them that the rich natural resources of oil in the lowland Amazon (and yet to be exploited gold and uranium in the Cordillera del Condor) provides the country with its finances. In other words, the strategic need to strengthen Ecuadorian presence along the border and the source of wealth derived from natural resources legitimized the claim of local colono leaders for cantonization and local development (Municipalidad El Pangui, 1996).

The purpose of governmental decentralization also served to justify the creation of the new canton of El Pangui to reverse a “centralized political model of dependency” as local leaders have described. Years later in the context of the mining conflict this concept against which Panguenses fought to defeat and achieve cantonization, was reformulated as "the government sold out to transnational mining companies."

The local development and progress that the canton could achieve would also serve to defend the territorial integrity of the Nation. In the early 1990s, El Pangui, according to the town’s history texts, was the area of southern Ecuadorian Amazon that grew exponentially with a rapid population growth and with an

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79 Fieldnotes conversations with election candidates March 2009 including Rodrigo Aucay.
80 Ibid
81 These text include the Municipality newsletters, printed material found in the school library of the Colegio Fiscocomisional Ecuador Amazonico” history books in El Pangui’s municipal library.
overflowing influx of new settlers. Providing health services was urgent as was the need for sewage, sanitation, housing, and roads.

The prevailing political discourse at the time of cantonization was: "El Pangui, unequalled guardian of the live borders with the southern neighbour". Another popular catch phrase later recycled into terms of mining was "El Pangui, not a step back!, an example of Ecuadorianess" (Municipalidad El Pangui, 1996, p.87).

In the news magazine of the Municipality of El Pangui from February 1996 reads: "With the rebirth of the patriotic spirit of those that face the enemy, the idea of establishing living borders to defend the borders, to live next to them, work along them with love, with the mysticism of service and to fight for its integrity."(Municipalidad El Pangui, 1996, p.34)

The protection of the border legitimized the claim for political independence by the Committee for Cantonización and served also to claim to the central government the financial support for infrastructure. In the 1990s, El Pangui was the protagonist of the war story because there was a border to defend. It was important for the National state to support its people and El Pangui became the destination for the National government to send aid and resources, as it was the destination for the soldiers fighting in the war to rest and feed.

Once the borders were drawn and the national limits resolved, the national government granted concessions to foreign companies along the border in the same territories that the people of El Pangui vowed to "defend with their life". The nation boundaries that the Panguenses defended ceased to be political and military problem. However, with the arrival of the mining company and the social conflict that arose, a new type of political and military problem took its place.

The mining project in a sense has made the territory that the population so firmly defended feel distant and controversial. Now it would seem then that the border stability and the development of large scale mining are two faces of the same coin.

Twenty years later, with the discovery of the mineral deposits, El Pangui is redefined as a place to obtain resources. Symbolically, there is a reverse movement of resources. Today, resources must leave El Pangui and Cordillera del
Condor to feed the public policies of the national government and the governing political party of the Citizen’s Revolution. In the axis of mining-public policy, territory and natural resources are at the disposition and at the service of all Ecuadoreans and so the resources must be exploited.

**Conclusion: Producing an ephemeral Territory?**

I started this chapter by telling my own story and how it was shaped by the mining industry when my father worked as an exploration geologist and drawn to study minerals underground in different parts of the globe. In a sense I follow his footsteps and am drawn to areas with mineral deposits, but I differ in wanting to investigate what happens above the ground and understand more about the life of people living near a mine. Of course, as I write this thesis there is still no mine in El Pangui and copper has yet to be extracted from the subsoil. Way before any copper is extracted, the mine has however, already played a role in co-producing and transforming the territory in which it is located. Given the short life cycle of copper mining, how ephemeral will this territory be?

I have been driven to study the ways in which territorial dynamics influence and shape the development of mining projects and vice versa, how the mine impacts local territorial dynamics. In this chapter I have aimed to present what in my view are some of the fundamental factors that intervene in the territorialisation processes in Ecuador’s Southeastern Amazon. I have done this in order to gain greater understanding of El Pangui’s territoriality and how the proposed mine will co-exist, erase, or intensify other producers of territory.

I have suggested that the territorialisation process of this part of Ecuador operates at a range of spatial scales and across different historical times. I aimed at presenting a mosaic of social processes involved in the production of territory. I discussed the State construction and border making; symbolic images of the Amazon and its slow process of incorporation into the Ecuadorean nation state; the role of the various churches in the indigenous movement; the “discovery” of the
Cenepa River the war with Peru and the establishment of Parks for Peace; the agricultural expansion and the colonisation of the Amazon. I have wanted to suggest that local relationships like those between the Shuar and the colonos intersect with global processes like the international copper market driven in part by the infrastructure expansion of China.

The mining project renews or revives the conflict over the use, control and access to resources and the distribution of land as well as redefines the relationship between the town of El Pangui and Quito. EL Pangui’s history is tainted by its historical and patriotic mission of protecting the national borders. While before El Pangui enacted the military strategy of acting as live borders and protects the Ecuadorian territory from Peruvian invaders. Today, much to the dismay of the national government in Quito, some of the same actors enact a strategy to protect its same territory from another type of foreign invaders: Canadian and Chinese mining companies.
4 Territorial Transformations in El Pangui, Ecuador: Understanding How Mining Conflict Affects Territorial Dynamics, Social Mobilization and Daily Life

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Introduction

The lush green mountain range of the Cordillera del Cóndor lies in the very southeast of Ecuador. With its valleys and steep cliffs covered by the dense cloud forest air, the Cordillera has become host to mines of various forms and guises. In the 1990s, these mountains were covered in landmines placed by the military during the war with Peru. Today, in these same mountains, transnational companies seek to develop mines in order to extract gold and copper on both sides of the border. The arrival less than ten years ago of large-scale mining projects owned by the Canadian companies Corriente Resources and Kinross-Aurelian has triggered resistance among local populations. Social and armed political conflicts are once again becoming part of everyday life for people living along the Cordillera.82

This chapter seeks to understand the ongoing social transformations in the parish of El Pangui in Zamora Chinchipe province that are, I argue, a result of increased mining conflict and social mobilization. I examine the effects of these mining projects on pre-existing territorial dynamics and the influence of these territorial dynamics on the ways in which mining investments are contested. I am particularly interested in those less-visible dimensions of environmental struggle that are embedded in the routines of daily life, as well as in the ways in which the memory and history of territorialisation and settlement influence social movement organizing. I suggest that at the heart of territorial dynamics one finds differing understandings of, and meanings apportioned to, nature-society relationships that over time have contributed to a layering of conflicts in the Cordillera del Cóndor.

The editors of this volume call for a deeper engagement with the subsoil because of its immense power in and significance for societal and territorial transformations.

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82 Corriente Resources and its subsidiary Ecuacorriente (ECSA) were bought in early 2010 by CRCC-Tongguan Investment Co. Ltd., a jointly-owned direct subsidiary of Tongling Nonferrous Metals Group Holdings Co., Ltd. and China Railway Construction Corporation Limited.
This chapter reiterates that call by presenting a case study\textsuperscript{83} in which the presence of subsoil mineral deposits has set in motion a range of transformations. The case is particularly interesting from the perspective of a political ecology of the subsoil because the minerals in question have not yet crossed the earthly boundary in any material sense to interact with human practice or the global economy. Symbolically, however, they have long since crossed this boundary and, in the process, have triggered profound societal transformations. Following a brief conceptual discussion, I introduce the region of southeast Ecuador and my methodological approach to studying mining conflicts. On that basis, I then analyse the ways in which conflicts over extraction, territorial change, and everyday life have become mutually constitutive in and around El Pangui, discussing implications for political ecologies of social movement activity around the subsoil.

\textbf{Literature review}

Studies of struggles over natural resources have drawn attention to a range of issues: the causes of these social conflicts and the socio-environmental impacts of extractive industry (Ballard and Banks, 2003, p.19, Bury, 2004, Geddicks, 1993); the ways in which people seek environmental justice (Tsing, 2000, Perreault, 83)

\textsuperscript{83} Fieldwork started in September of 2008 and lasted until July of the following year. I had bases in the city of Cuenca, Azuay province (see chapter by Moore and Velasquez) and in El Pangui. The field research was carried out using ethnographic methods. I used first-hand observation and daily participation and conducted different types of interviewing methods, ranging from casual conversations to structured interviews. I collected data and reviewed archives from local municipalities, libraries and schools in El Pangui and Gualaquiza, as well as in other government institutions and NGOs in the cities of Zamora, Loja, and Quito. The first four months was dedicated to: travelling throughout Ecuador; interviewing key actors, organizations and government institutions; participating in forums, workshops and meetings; visiting the sites of the proposed mining projects; participating in actions and protests; and conducting group interviews in affected communities. Towards the end of January, I moved permanently to El Pangui and associated mainly with colonos and Shuar peoples who had “neutral” or critical views of mining, though on occasion, I engaged with individuals who worked in the companies or supported mining activities. As my fieldwork period coincided with local, regional, and national elections, for about six weeks I accompanied key candidates in their political electoral campaigns. I spoke regularly with local government in the cantons of El Pangui, Yantzaza and Gualaquiza and, when travel permitted, in Limon Indanza. In spite of my efforts, I was not successful in securing interviews with key actors in the company, the church of El Pangui, the police and military, or leaders in favour of mining.
2006, Bebbington, 2007b); the relationships among extractive industry, environment, livelihoods, and institutional change (Bebbington and Bury, 2009); and the bearing of indigeneity and identity politics on extraction (Ali, 2003, Sawyer, 2004, Kirsch, 2006). While the argument of this chapter is located in these traditions, its particular concern is to push their boundaries forward. In particular, it seeks to show: (1) the ways in which struggles and social movements around mining are themselves artefacts of prior and ongoing processes of territorialisation as much as they are shapers of territory; (2) the importance of memory, popular ontologies, and everyday practices in determining how mining and territorial dynamics affect each other; and (3) that territory (its identity, its control, its physiognomy, its meaning) is constituted at the interface of the territorializing projects of mining companies and local populations. In the following three subsections, I explore some of the ideas that underlie this analysis, relating them to other currents of thought within the broad fields of political ecology and social movement studies.

**Environmental struggles and struggles over meaning**

Political ecology understands that conflicts involving the environment are as much about meaning as they are about land and resources (Peet and Watts, 2004). Here, values and beliefs can shape people’s identities and mobilize actions, such that cultural meanings become constitutive forces. As Donald Moore argues, “struggles over land and environmental resources are simultaneously struggles over cultural meaning” (Moore, 1996, p.127). While there are many different meanings at the core of environmental struggles, in this work I focus on two main realms. First, struggles have to do with the various and often contradictory views of “nature” and of natural resource use held by people in El Pangui. These views have had an important role in processes of territorialisation, settlement, investment, nation building and their impact on the environment. Put in other terms, contrasting ontological assumptions about the world and nature play a significant role in social conflict and environmental change. At the same time, nature itself also has a

The second area of meanings is in relation to how people experience, remember, and understand conflict. In the canton El Pangui, land has long been disputed and highly politicized. Prior to the arrival of the mining company, the town and various communities in the canton had already witnessed many struggles and conflicts over land ownership, rights, demarcation and natural resource use. These struggles are a product of a long history of the coming and going of different actors, but also of the boom and bust cycles of natural resource-based frontier capitalism. These disputes over land and resources affect how social actors relate to each other and to their environment and seep into mundane, daily life in ways that are hidden from view. I will suggest that memories of previous conflicts can be significant for the ways in which current mining conflicts are experienced and understood, and can motivate human actions and social mobilization.

**Territorialisation and cosmographies**

The concept of territorialisation used here rests upon definitions of human territoriality that I borrow from Paul Little’s (2001) political ecology of Amazonian territorial disputes. Little defines human territoriality as “the collective effort of a social group to identify with, occupy, use, and establish control over the specific parcel of their biophysical environment that serves as their homeland or territory” (Little, 2001, p.4). He builds his definition on Robert Sack’s notion of human territoriality as “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” (Sack, 1986, p.19). In these definitions, territories are considered as both processes and products.
However, as this case study will show, territories are not fixed and finished products of human endeavour. Rather, territories are continuous processes in which both humans’ and nature’s agency plays a role. They are constantly being produced, contested, negotiated and demarcated. While Ecuador’s war with Peru brought an end to decades of boundary disputes between the two nations, other frictions over the enclosure of a given territory continue among inhabitants of El Pangui. These disputes are currently taking violent forms as the mining companies try to assert control over a certain biophysical space.

Brogden and Greenberg (2003) describe territorialisation as being the “historical product of contestation and negotiation for access and control over natural resources among competing groups, interest and classes” (Brogden and Greenberg, 2003, p.291). Conflicts, they argue, develop not only on the ground, but also in political arenas, where people with different interests seek to influence or gain control over agencies, laws, or regulations that govern natural resources. This theme is also present in the work of Little, who describes contestation over territory as being due to a clash of different “cosmographies,” which he defines as “collective, historically contingent identities, ideologies, and environmental knowledge systems developed by a social group to establish and maintain a human territory” (Little 2001, p.5). In these “clashes,” different interest groups exert power and push for the hegemony of their cosmography on the basis of which they then make territorial claims. The result is a layering of conflicts and territorial disputes as new actors, each with their distinct cosmographies, arrive in a region and seek to forge a new territory in areas where people have already established their territories.

I maintain that implicit within the “cosmographies” of different social actors are different understandings of and engagements with nature which influence the processes of human territorialisation. Little suggests that Amazonia has been impacted by a history of colonization, development, and environmental cosmographies leading to different patterns of human territorialisation, shaping the settings within which contemporary social mobilizations take form.
Social movements, networks and identity

Social movements have the ability to challenge dominant powers by accentuating other sets of values in pursuit of alternative forms or models of development (Bebbington, 2007b). Bebbington et al. (2008b) argue that social mobilization in the mining context can be understood as “a response to the threats that particular forms of economic development present, or are perceived as presenting, to the security and integrity of livelihoods and to the ability of a population in a given territory to control what it views as its own resources” (6). The case study presented in this chapter allows us to witness the process through which a social movement manages alliances and networks, as well as strategically constructs discourses and identities, all set on the stage of a particular set of territorial dynamics.

Mining-related social movements in Ecuador appeal strategically to existing collective identities, while also constructing new ones through the articulation of discourses that range from sovereignty, land rights, indigeneity, environment, democracy and participation to the rights to employment and development. Movement strength and cohesion seems to derive from a strong identity in “which members are aware of sharing a number of cultural and socio-political commitments and attributes” (Bebbington et al., 2008a, p. 14). That said, any given collective identity ought not be understood as a stable, unified form of solidarity since this would overstate the extent to which values and individual identities are shared (Jordan, 2005). Indeed, the experience in El Pangui shows how identity, whether individual or collective, is constantly negotiated, activated or constructed through the production of meaning (Foweraker, 1995).

Identity construction plays a delicate role in the (re)configuration of alliances and networks. In the canton El Pangui, as a result of territorialisation and settlement processes, key strategic social and political relationships have been established in relation to land (its acquisition, colonization, titling and varied uses). This is reflected, for instance, in the important role of the Salesian Missionaries in the
management of indigenous land in the absence of the state, civil society mobilization (mainly of *colonos*) through cooperatives and ecological initiatives to gain land,\(^4\) ecological organizations interested in teaming up with indigenous communities to establish conservation parks, and illicit land trafficking. Since the arrival of mining projects, social mobilization has strengthened some of these alliances, put other ones to the test, and built new networks and relationships. Some *colonos* seek alliances with indigenous communities, and some indigenous leaders seek alliances with artisanal and small-scale miners (ASM) to fight a “common enemy,” even though prior to the mining conflict these alliances might not have been so straightforward. In yet other cases, previous alliances or simple everyday relationships among indigenous communities, or *colonos* and indigenous families, break down when the rising price of land drives individuals to sell lands to the mining companies and so upset the dynamics of family or communal property. Alliances and networks that have been forged through the historical processes of territorialisation and settlement, therefore, change as mining induces new axes of conflict and new territorial dynamics. The larger point here is that while social movements may have internal contradictions or *blurred zones* (Rubin, 1998) that affect movement organizing, movement dynamics are also an artefact of the extent to which existing and prior territorialisation processes themselves affect alliances, resources, and local politics.

**Mining and social conflict in southeastern Ecuador**

Located in the provinces of Morona Santiago (cantons Limon Indanza, San Juan Bosco and Gualaquiza) and Zamora Chinchipe (cantons El Panguí, Yantzaza, Centinella del Cóndor and Nangartiza) along the border with Peru, the Cordillera del Cóndor is part of the Tropical Andes Hotspot that runs from Colombia to Chile, one of the richest biodiversity zones on Earth (Mittermeier et al., 2004). Along the border of Ecuador and Peru, it is known as the Conservation Corridor of Abiseo-

\(^4\) *Colonos* are people who have moved into the area from other parts of Ecuador.
Cóndor-Kutuku that covers thirteen million hectares. The area, however, is also rich in minerals (Figure 4.1 on the following page). Ecuador’s southeastern “copper belt” extends over a 20x80 kilometre area and is considered by the mining industry as one of the only undeveloped copper districts available in the world today. In Zamora Chinchipe, south of this copper belt is a “buried system of gold.” In the cantons of Yantzaza and Zamora, there is small scale alluvial and tunnel mining of gold deposits that are most likely connected to the underground gold system of the Cordillera del Cóndor. The canton of El Pangui is located within and adjacent to mining concessions held by the Canadian companies Corriente Resources and Kinross Gold.

Corriente has four known copper and copper-gold deposits targeted by the Mirador Project in the parish of El Pangui, and the Panantza and San Carlos Project in the adjacent province of Morona Santiago. The Mirador project has a measured and indicated amount of eleven billion pounds of copper and the Panantza San Carlos project has an inferred 14.4 billion pounds of copper. Kinross’ gold and silver project Fruta del Norte consists of thirty-eight mining concessions totalling approximately ninety-five thousand hectares across four parishes, including El Pangui. The Cóndor Project (previously known as Fruta Del Norte) consists of a total measured and indicated amount of 13.7 million ounces of gold and 22.4 million ounces of silver. The projects are both in the exploration stage and have the permits that Ecuador’s new Mining Law requires for them to move forward. Kinross Gold has experience in exploration and production in other countries and is advancing with their project in Ecuador. Corriente, on the other hand, is mainly an

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86 See www.corriente.com.
87 TNM’s Mining Persons of the Year: Aurelian’s Anderson, Barron, Leary, The Northern Miner, Dec. 4 2008
89 The new Mining Law was passed in January 2009 and its regulations in September 2009. The Law was issued almost a year after the passage of the Mining Mandate that was supposed to have halted all mining activities, reverted all concessions to the state, and put in place a review of contracts. Much to the dismay of environmentalists appealing for the Mandate, it was not carried out in full. The anti-mining movement demanded that the government carry out the Mandate and opposed (rather violently, in some parts of the country) the Mining Law for various reasons, including legal contradictions with the Constitution.
exploration company and (after looking for a buyer since 2008 for all their Ecuador projects) eventually sold to a Chinese state-owned mining conglomerate in May 2010. Both projects started with exploration work around the year 2000, although it was not until the end of 2006 that mining conflicts became visible and violent.

Figure 4.1 Map of Mining concessions, protected forests and wildlife in southeast Ecuador.\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{90} Source: Acción Ecológica
The Amazon in Ecuador, as in other countries in Latin America, has experienced many conflicts over land and resources. However, this current mining struggle is new to the Ecuadorian Amazon; indeed, the scale, intensity and speed with which it is growing is striking. For an area that had previously not experienced any large-scale mining conflicts prior to 2005, the mining conflict in El Pangui – as well as other towns running north along Ecuador’s southeastern border – saw increased protests, armed confrontations, burning of camp sites, physical abuse, and progressive militarization towards the close of 2006. The first set of grievances and actions took place in the province of Morona Santiago over a much questioned hydroelectric energy project which had direct links with the Corriente mining projects. The actions, meetings, and mobilizations in Morona had a significant impact on the development of the mining conflict in El Pangui (and in southern Ecuador, in general). They helped to build shared networks and resources, and helped to cultivate a common sense of perceived threat.¹¹ Unlike the important indigenous mobilizations of prior periods (Bebbington et al., 1992, Perreault, 2002, Andolina, 2003, Van Cott, 2005, Yashar, 2005) – including those over oil (Sawyer, 2004) – ecologists, small scale miners, indigenous people, farmers, cattle growers, men and women of all ages, the church, and some universities all seemed to be speaking with the same “voice” in these struggles over mining.

In El Pangui, the conflict became violent and militarized in the first few days of December 2006. Following three days of meetings and marches, open confrontation occurred, pitching a large group of people from El Pangui and Gualaqueza against company personnel and paramilitaries. The most violent actions, with human rights abuses, kidnapping, paramilitary intervention, and physical abuse, took place in Tundayme near the camp site of the Mirador project and a few kilometres from a military post.¹² Following negotiations, the Ministry of

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¹¹ By threat, I mean the perception that mining activities and the development of the projects would bring about socio-environmental impacts, increased conflict, breakdown of livelihoods, etc.

¹² These allegations come from varied sources collected during my fieldwork, although, some information also comes from my own visit to Gualaqueza and El Pangui in January of 2007, prior to my PhD studies. The sources range from documents, interviews, statements, reports, audiovisual material, and press releases in the months of December 2006 and January 2007 from: Provincial Police Comando of Zamora Chinchipe, Comité de Defensa de Naturaleza, Salud y Vida del Pangui,
Mines and Petroleum (Ministerio de Minas y Petróleo, MMP) ostensibly suspended all of Corriente’s mining activities in both provinces (though the suspension was never fully implemented).

Subsequent to this event, there have been other violent confrontations, but none as severe as those of the first few days of December 2006. Running through these confrontations, a range of discourses are used to frame arguments and enrol supporters. Patriotic discourses once fabricated and used during the war are mobilized to tap into a memory and sentiment of sovereignty over “our” natural resources. Ecological discourses are cast by various groups (e.g., indigenous people, small-scale miners, farmers, cattle raisers, or loggers) to resist large-scale mining on environmental grounds. These discourses also sustain an argument about “the people’s” right to choose the model of development they want. Constructions of collective identity are fostered to further strengthen group formation and mobilization. Meanwhile, those who mobilize in favour of large-scale mining also build discourses that similarly argue that “the people” have the right to choose a model of development – arguing that people would chose mining if they were properly informed about its modern technologies and the benefits it could bring, rather than being fed disinformation by their leaders.

For its part, the government of Rafael Correa vociferously promotes Corriente and Kinross, heralding them as the most important large-scale mining projects in Ecuador and ones that will establish the modern and socially and environmentally responsible mining industry that the country needs in order to bring about economic development to fill gaps in an economy dependent on depleting oil reserves. On 15 March 2008, Correa stated in his weekly radio program that “At this moment the largest copper reserves in the world are in Chile. The initial

studies tell us that we have larger reserves than Chile. We could become the principal exporters of copper in the world.” He went on, “responsible mining in the country could become the future of our country and open the doors to come out of underdevelopment.”

93 . . . “We cannot sit like beggars on a mountain of gold.”

**Territorial dynamics of El Pangui settlement**

The Ecuadorian Amazon has experienced many processes of settlement and territorialisation: *Mestizos* and highland *campesinos* have sought its pastures and “empty” lands, oil companies, and government have sought its hydrocarbon wealth, and the military has attempted to establish “live frontiers” as a strategy in its border wars and disputes with Peru. The establishment of Salesian, Franciscan, Jesuit, and later Evangelical missions also became an important part of the “taming” the Amazon and of making the area inhabitable (Báez, Ospina, and Ramón 2004).

Settlement took place more systematically in the second half of last century through government colonization programs and the Agrarian Reform of 1964 which paved the way for *mestizos* and highland people to inhabit the Amazon. It was not uncommon for indigenous peoples to be cheated into selling their lands, signing over communal deeds under the effects of alcohol. The loss of land has meant drastic changes in the lifestyle of the Shuar, the primary indigenous group of the region. As a collateral effect of promoting “settlement” of the Amazon, these government programs and agrarian reform also created conditions for land speculation and accumulation. Land acquisition came to be seen as a business in itself and land trafficking became increasingly significant (Báez, Ospina, and Ramón 2004).

In the 1980s, in addition to the search for available agricultural land, Zamora Chinchipe experienced a gold rush in the area of Nambija, south of El Pangui.

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94 This claim has its source in various interviews of indigenous leaders like Doming Ankuash former president of CONFENAIE, Julio Tiwiram a local shaman in Gualaquiza, as well as interviews with Salesian professors and priests in Bomboiza and implied in academic literature such as A.C. Taylor, Rubbenstein, Descola.
Indeed, many of the *colonos* currently living in El Pangui are former small-scale mine workers who moved there following a devastating accident in Nambija in which more than three hundred miners perished under a landslide. On arriving in El Pangui, these previously farmers-turned-miners returned to farming. Today, these *colonos* with prior (or in some cases, ongoing) ties to ASM mining are one of the strongest groups resisting large-scale mining companies in the province either because of their knowledge of the harmful effects of mining, their painful memories of mining, or their desire to protect their ASM interests. Still others have become ardent proponents of an ecological discourse calling for an alternative form of development. As one informant said, when asked why he rejected mining, “We are no longer miners, we are ecologists.”

**Economy and natural resource use**

The Cordillera del Cóndor has vast areas which have been transformed by the chaotic and unorganized expansion of animal husbandry and subsistence farming. Most land, however, is dedicated to subsistence farming and grain production for cattle; meanwhile, agricultural products that could be transformed or processed in Zamora Chinchipe promoting an internal market are imported from neighbouring provinces of Loja and Azuay. According to the Integrated System of Social Indicators of the Ministry of Social Development Coordination, the Amazonian provinces overall have the lowest total gross agricultural production per hectare cultivated in the country.

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97 The current prefect of Zamora Chinchipe province, Salvador Quishpe, is a key actor in the anti-mining movement. As one of the discourses against mining is the promotion of agricultural activities, Quishpe, as well as the indigenous political party Pachakutik, envisions the province as a producer and manufacturer of agricultural products. The idea behind this is that it would break the dependence with the export market in Loja, strengthen the agricultural sector of the province, and thus, strengthen the argument/position against large-scale mining.
Around El Pangui, large areas are deforested in order to make way for pasture lands, and the thin layer of rich soil nutrients that once covered the jungle floors is being depleted as a consequence of the need to clear more and more land. Some anti-mining actors are aware of the environmentally devastating effects of their animal husbandry and happily express that they are becoming more ecological (strategically incorporating a new identity), since they do leave some trees when they clear grasslands. Ironically, it is in-part thanks to the entrance of mining projects that these actors have revalorized their agricultural activities and begun to reflect (albeit, minimally) on the physical impacts that their activities have on the environment. Nevertheless their ideal vision for the future is shot through with discourses of development and progress that imagine an ever-expanding agricultural frontier coupled with industrialization. While taking a walk on the lands of a young colono, he explained to me, “I am saving to build a proper pig pen and have each pig lined up in individual corrals over there [pointing]. I already have the design! Then I want to get one of those automated milking systems for my cows, so I can produce more, and [chuckling] so I don’t have to wake up so early to milk them.”

Shuar use of land and resources is just as complex. For instance, in the critique of the idea of the “Ecological Noble Savage,” Redford (1991) argues that as indigenous people become more acculturated and their traditional lands more populated by mestizos, they also begin to exploit the Amazonian forests in much the same way as do their mestizo neighbours. The process of acculturation is not only a result of an imposed education system controlled by missionaries, but also a combination of forced sedentary lifestyles in which groups of families were reorganized, grouped into centres, exposed to and adopted monetary and market-based economies (Descola, 1985, Taylor, 1985). This is evident in land use in El Pangui, as well as neighbouring cantons. Previously, indigenous communities used land for horticultural activities, but have slowly substituted these activities to clear land, plant pastures, and acquire cattle. However, in spite of these trends, the Shuar tend to reforest their lands, cultivate former garden crops like coffee and

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99 Fieldnotes during a visit to the farmlands of a colono family in El Pangui, November 2008.
cacao as cash crops, and thus, maintain more biologically diverse landscapes than do their mestizo neighbours (Rudel, Bates, and Machinguiashi 2002).

While acculturation and the adoption of new practices mean that Shuar and colono production systems do not appear substantially different, land use clashes continue as a result of different modes of understanding nature. For instance, colonos value water sources in productive (and reproductive) terms, a value reflected in the price of land; while Shuar see water sources, such as the waterfalls where the Spirit of Arutam dwells, as spiritually important for the survival of the Shuar culture. In addition, Shuar cosmology considers the environment as multidimensional and part of a pluriverse, where humans and nature and intrinsically connected. On more than one occasion, Shuar spiritual leaders expressed concern that mining will disturb the delicate balance of local ecosystems and water cycles and that this will have repercussions in the continued existence of their people: "Arutam is angry, the environment cannot continue to be destroyed like this, we need to care for it . . . he [Arutam] is going to come and teach us a lesson, why else do you think this [meaning the mining conflict] is happening?"\(^\text{100}\)

**War, peace parks and a mountain of gold**

In addition to the confrontations and struggles that occur among social groups and over the physical and cultural boundaries that define them, the region has also experienced violent national border disputes with its southern neighbour Peru, with wars fought in 1941, 1981, and 1995. The 1941 war was temporarily resolved by the Protocol of Peace, Friendship and Boundaries signed in Río de Janeiro in 1945. However, hostilities resumed that eventually lead the Ecuadorian government to demand the annulment of the Rio Protocol. Although these wars can be understood as a consequence of each nation’s interest in expanding their sovereign territories and controlling space, locally it was believed that the war had a great deal to do with the existence of minerals, such as gold, copper and even

\(^{100}\) Field note recording, Group interview in El Pangui, 20 March 2009.
uranium. The ex-president of Peru, Fernando Belaúnde, once stated in 1995, “It is not true that the disputed area contains oil. But there is a mountain of Gold.”

The most recent, and apparently final, Peace Accord between Peru and Ecuador was signed in Brasilia in 1998 and sought to promote peace through development of the border region, transport integration between the two countries, and the promotion of free trade across the frontier. The Accord makes specific mention of the promotion of mining, as well as the creation of a transboundary protected area on both sides of the border. However, the creation of such “Parks for Peace” has not halted mining interests from advancing within the conservation areas. On the contrary, in Ecuador (notwithstanding Nature’s new constitutional rights), the president has the power to declare a mining project in the public interest even if it is located within a conservation park, reserve, or on indigenous lands. A very similar situation occurs on the Peruvian side of the border (Figure 6.1.), where mining concessions have also increased and where the government uses similar faculties to Correa’s in order to allow international mining projects to operate close to the frontier on the grounds that they are in the national interest. Indeed, the terms of the Peace Accord would appear to have become functional for the mining industry, as government institutions responsible for implementing the Accord prioritize mining activities along the border.

**Post-war Pangui**

The local population in El Pangui is quite aware that their settlement, serving as a “live border,” was part of a military strategy to protect national boundaries against the constant threat of Peruvian invasion. Furthermore, many Shuar participated vigorously in the war in part to demonstrate their commitment to Ecuador and so counteract national discourses that considered indigenous people’s claim to land as a threat to national sovereignty. Having actively protected their sovereign lands,

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102 See document “Acuerdo amplio Ecuatoriano-Peruano de integración fronteriza, desarrollo y vecindad”, Anexo 5 under the Project of the Program D of the Bi-National Ecuador-Peru, as well as http://www.planbinacional.gov.ec.
many (both Shuar and colono) now feel betrayed by the national government when the same lands are being “sold off to a new foreign invader.” The promotion of mining by the national governments, in both countries, instils resentment among the population that fought in the war or offered to go and live in border towns to be part of the “live border” military strategy.

Memories of the war are still alive among the local population, and particularly in women who remember feeding and supporting the troops. During interviews, this memory was repeatedly called upon by women as they expressed their frustrations with the mining conflict, since the same troopers they fed during the war are today security guards for the mining company and, in their words, point their guns in the “wrong” direction. Although the company claims to need the security forces to protect them from vandals and violent protestors, for those who lived through the war with Peru, like the El Pangui movement leader Rodrigo Aucay, the use of armed security guards is a clear sign that they are in the midst of another armed conflict.

Disputing territory, meaning, and movements

The core questions addressed in this chapter are: how has conflict over mining transformed territorial dynamics and how do these territorial dynamics then influence social mobilization (or, in the language of this book, subterranean struggles). My fieldwork revealed changes in territorial dynamics in five main domains. These changes are analysed in the following sections, reflecting the themes noted earlier in the opening conceptual discussion to this chapter.

Environmental struggles and struggles over meanings

Firstly, conflicts involving the environment are about both land and meaning (Peet and Watts 2004); that is, symbolic struggles affect material transformations. In El Pangui, mining conflict has brought about changes in the meanings that are ascribed to conflict as well as physical changes in the Cordillera. The meanings
associated with land disputes during settlement processes, with the wars with Peru, and with contemporary mining in the same geographical area are quite different. Key words (e.g., sovereignty) in one conflict continue to resonate in subsequent conflicts, though with different significance. While the war left its marks in the physical geography of the region, with trenches and land mines, mining will leave its own marks. And while the Cordillera invokes memories of violence and international armed conflict, today it is just as likely to conjure up images of the physical force associated with mining conflicts.

During one trip on the way to the mining camp, four women that accompanied me sat in the back of the truck and talked about the confrontation with the paramilitaries during the mining conflict in 2006. They also pointed to the mountain range in the distance where the war was fought, they made jokes about the Peruvians and how silly they were, “they just sat there like hens and our men shot them from the trees”. They laughed and joked that if their husbands do not behave they would place them in the trenches that are still here from the war. I didn’t pry into their stories as it seemed their jokes were probably hiding deeper scars and pain. At times I could not follow the conversation as they passed back and forth from memories of the war to the mining conflict, from a far past to a recent one, all conjured by the same mountains, trees, roads and rivers. When we arrived at the bridge over the Zamora River, we got out and walked, retracing the steps of the confrontation in December 2006. They pointed to the place where they stood scared, watching the paramilitaries approach them. We stopped where they got down on their knees to pray for the violence to stop. We paused at the place where a group of protestors were beaten and kidnapped. My beautiful sight of the lush green Ecuadorian Amazon turned eerie.¹⁰³

Processes of resignification also occur at a much more local scale, as in land disputes between neighbours. In one case, I witnessed a longstanding disagreement over boundaries when I would accompany one family regularly to their lands to give water to their cows and each time their neighbours physically

¹⁰³ Fieldnotes during visit to Tundayme and ECSA camp site November 10 2009
moved the boundary fences causing a great deal of annoyance and frustration. The family I had accompanied explained the renewed boundary disagreement because of the two parties’ different stances on mining. This disagreement could no longer be resolved in neighbourly conversation but exacerbated into legal actions to fix the land limits. In addition to situation like these, the way the company has acquired land, the rise in land trafficking, and the revival of land disputes and confrontations between land owners, such as the one narrated, all point to old conflicts acquiring new meanings.

One day I was invite to attend the wedding of a young Shuar couple who were being wed by a mestizo priest in the Salesian Mission of Bomboiza, located about 10km north of El Pangui. Directly after the ceremony, as we walked out of the Church with its daunting wooden architecture, the priest and an anti-mining leader murmured about a forced eviction that occurred the night before. A Shuar home located adjacent to a Shuar neighbourhood known to be pro-mining had been burned down to the ground. They walked slowly, distancing themselves from the crowd and speaking in a low voice. I was intrigued by the story but followed the crowd and left in a caravan of trucks to the wedding dinner. We passed by the still smoky wooden rubble and I received no more explanation than that the evicted family had invaded the lands of the Mission and were relatives of an important pro-mining Shuar leader. A few days later I visited Shuar friends in Gualaquia where I would regularly eat their delicious ayampacos. I asked if they knew about the burned home and was explained that the lands had been ceded to the Shuar family by the priest previously in charge of the Mission, and so legitimized their presence and use of the lands. He explained that the new priest didn’t recognize this apparent “gift” because he considered the lands Mission property. What had appeared to be a land issue only between neighbours, more notably between a Shuar family and the Mission, was reinterpreted in terms of mining stances and where more people, unrelated to the dispute but active in the mining issue, felt

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104 The Salesian Mission of Bomboiza was and still is of particular importance for colonisation and settlement of the Ecuadorian Amazon. They were officially in charge of mediating land issues in the name of the indigenous people to the extent that the Ecuadorian government assigned them official faculty in the 1960’s to settle land disputes and land distribution in the area.
compelled to take part. Territorial conflicts and land disputes like these may not be new in El Pangui, but the ways in which they are interpreted, and the socio-political resonance of these different interpretations, most certainly are new and have been permanently inflected by the rise of mining in the region.

This brings me to my second point. In El Pangui, territorial conflict has, to a certain degree, become a routinized part of daily life. Daily activities, such as buying groceries at the neighbour’s food store, using the internet services from the man across the road, choosing which taxi to take, or which hotel to stay in, all depend on whether “they are with us or not.” Of course, allegiances change, and a taxi not taken one month may well be taken the next. What is more continuous, however, is that the calculations that underlie such choices are always informed by where people stand vis-à-vis the mining question. Reflecting this routinization, conflict has become embedded in cultural practices and government institutions. In particular, since the violent confrontation in the first few days of December 2006, social relationships, as well as local politics, are assessed in terms of one’s stance on mining.

The mining issue is present in town activities such as Carnival or the street march celebration of the “cantonization” of El Pangui. Every February, onlookers at the march tell their stories of the open confrontation between “us and them” that had happened in previous years, as they wait to see if anything will happen this year. At the elementary school, name calling, class debates, and small brawls have occurred between children of parents with different views on mining. One of my most prized informants and fieldwork assistant was an eight year old boy, son to a prominent anti-mining leader. I met him almost every day after school and we hung out in his family’s store, while I waited for the adults to free up time for an interview. One day he was upset and told me he had a fight at school. With his head down but gaining courage to talk, he said: “they called me an anti-miner and that my father was brainwashed by the NGOs! But I answered them! I told them off and
made them quiet! I said they were traitors, selling our patrimony (*vende-patria*) and wanted to live in contamination!"\textsuperscript{105}

Such exchanges of “insults” reminded me of the competing discourses of candidates in local elections. All the candidates for the local elections of 2009 necessarily had mining on their manifestos. Candidates’ positions on mining were heard for weeks from loudspeakers and bus radios. While the promotional song of the Pachakutik indigenous political party waxed lyrical about “. . . defending life and the environment . . . large-scale mining has no place here,” the opposing Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS, Movement to Socialism) party’s promotional song chanted “. . . More work! More construction! More mining!”\textsuperscript{106}

**Territorialisation and cosmographies**

I aimed to examine how mining projects might be affecting pre-existing territorial dynamics, in a context in which the new actor (the company) arrives to an area that already has a tense and complex history in relation to land, natural resources, and conflict. I found, this being my *third* point, that land ownership, distribution, and resource allocation have been changing drastically since the mining projects began, in ways and at scales not seen before. Almost the entire canton has been divided into mining lots held in concession mostly by Corriente Resources. The company has been buying progressively more land from individuals and families that are within or on the border of their concessions. This has impacted the geography of land ownership and territorial control, leading the company to become the sole owner of almost half the district of Tundayme.\textsuperscript{107} If we consider

\textsuperscript{105} Fieldwork notes of Edison Aucay

\textsuperscript{106} The MAS party candidate for mayor of El Pangui, Luis Portilla, won the elections in 2009. Members of the MAS party favour mining, arguing that it will be good for economic development as long as companies abide by Ecuadorian laws and local and national government carry out their role in controlling the activity.

\textsuperscript{107} This point was made by the NGO ArcoIris in a workshop given in 15 May 2009. Supporting this argument are the following data that I collected from the Municipality of El Pangui: there are twenty-one registered land purchases in the year 2004 totalling 177,950 hectares (this also includes two purchases in 2001 and one in 2002); in 2005, twelve purchases of 758 hectares are registered, and in 2006, twenty-six purchases of 1,250 hectares.
the historical processes of territorialisation in El Pangui as having been characterized by the struggles for (or the denial of) access to resources, these changes in land ownership also affect people’s understandings of rights, property, land, and resource use. Prior to the arrival of the company, *colonos* had established control, and later ownership, of lands that had previously belonged to the Shuar, pushing them farther in the jungle. They justified this change on the grounds that, as citizens, they had the right to access and purchase lands that they considered empty. Once the company arrived and started to acquire land, these same *colonos* have lost the same lands that they had fought to make theirs (either because they sold them to the company or they were expropriated). Resentful of this process, *colonos* claim that the foreign company should not have rights to lands or access to resources that are Ecuadorian. This is laden with an extra layer of resentment toward the national government that promotes the mining projects, since both *colono* and Shuar fought to protect these same lands from Peruvian invasion during the war and are now told to make way for a company, many consider “new invaders”. In a further ironic twist, having once rejected historical Shuar claims to land, a group of *colonos* have now sought out an alliance with the Shuar from Machinantza Alto, which is located within the area of the mine’s concession. As part of their effort to halt mining activities to prevent the company from further purchasing lands, these *colonos* have encouraged the Shuar to claim title to their ancestral lands on the basis of the very same indigenous rights arguments that the *colonos* had previously dismissed.

Earlier I described environmental struggles as resulting from the superimposition of contrasting “cosmographies,” expressed in El Pangui through the idiom of “development models.” Existing differences in cosmographies and the social tensions that derive from dissimilar ideas about how land *should* be used seem to have been played down or minimized since the mining conflict began. Instead, it appears to have become more significant to emphasize agricultural activities *in general*, regardless of whether there are differences over how to use land or which form of production is more “sustainable” or “ecological.” The concern is to build a more embracing anti-mining argument which says that people in El Pangui, both
Shuar and *colono*, choose agriculture above mining and that these two activities cannot co-exist. In this case, existing tensions between people are strategically minimized, even if they may continue to exist as latent tensions or prejudices. This suggests that since the mining conflict began, differences have been more strategically negotiated in pursuit of a convergence among the differing cosmographies that exist among the region’s social groups. This convergence is expressed through local political agendas which espouse an alternative development model that is ecological, sustainable, respects nature, is in line with *Sumak Kawsay*, includes indigenous peoples, and fosters long-term employment generation, and as such, is opposed to mining.

**Social movement, identity and networks**

Fourth, social movements around mining activities do not map neatly onto prior identity or interest-based movements such as the indigenous movement or organizations of artisanal miners. As we have seen, the mining projects affect a whole array of people and consequently any social mobilization (in rejection as well as in favour of mining) includes this array of “identities.” This is reflected in the fact that a variety of existing and new organizations have become involved in mobilizing around mining issues. These include, for instance, ASM associations, local government, environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous organizations, and the Catholic Church.

Lastly, the conflict has brought about the emergence of new networks and coalitions and the rupture of others. In earlier sections, I gave a glimpse of the relationships that have emerged and developed over time among different actors in El Pangui in relation to their shared or conflicting interests in land, settlement, and territorialisation. Since the arrival of the mining companies, new and quite distinct coalitions have been formed. In some cases, this has happened among such unlikely allies as small scale miners and environmentalists (who otherwise have contradicting land use interests), or between *colonos* and Shuar (who have had prior tensions in relation to land ownership). At the same time, other coalitions
have broken down, such as those between small and large-scale miners. Previously, these groups were on the same front in support of mining. Over time, however, they became increasingly divided as the national government began to give preference to large-scale projects. New divisions have also emerged within groups, organizations, communities and families. One father shared in an interview that he did not know what to do anymore with his son, because since he started working for the company they have fights and his family is divided. “I ask him: what are you doing? Is there a future there? They just use you. The youth don’t want to work the land, they want it easy, they don’t want to wake up early anymore to help with the cows or work the land. Who am I going to give my land to (heredar) when I die? He is just going to sell it! One day, when the company doesn’t need him anymore, he will understand and then he will have nothing. At least we have land, it is ours, we work it, we eat from it, and we are independent.

Another example is that prior alliances of environmentalist and indigenous organizations ruptured when indigenous leaders considered some environmentalists too “company-friendly.” Meanwhile, within the anti-mining movement, a relatively small and radical group broke ties with the remaining organizations on the grounds that their version of militancy was the only legitimate avenue for action. Furthermore, the arrival of the company has increased interest in acquiring land and may have (inadvertently) encouraged illicit land trafficking, an activity that itself has induced the emergence of new coalitions. While specific coalitions emerge or unravel, the more general point in El Pangui is

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108 One example of the preference for large-scale mining by the national government is the growing interest in eradicating small-scale and artisanal mining with the argument that it is an illegal and highly-contaminating activity, more so than large-scale mining. On 15 September 2010, the national government sent around 1,500 military to Paquisha, just south of El Pangui, to forcefully evict small-scale miners located within their large-scale mining concessions owned by Kinross Aurelian, directly south of the Corriente Resources project. No regard was paid for miners who held legal concessions or were land owners (see El Universo 2010).

109 In this quote, the word independent refers to being self sufficient, living off the land and not dependent on a job or hand out of money.

110 Field note recording, San Marcos, May 8, 2009

111 The Coordinadora Nacional por la Defensa de la Vida y la Soberanía (CNDVS) had originally grouped all organizations and activists of the anti-mining movement in January 2007, but then later broke ties with almost all of the founding organizations.
that, in an area where land and territory have long been objects of dispute and where layers of conflict have built up over time, the creation and demise of coalitions can be a volatile process.

These shifts in coalitions go hand in hand with shifts in identities and the emergence of new discourses on environment and development. The effects of identity construction in this sense are multiple, particularly when collective identity is coupled with local politics around mining. The prefect of the province Zamora Chinchipe, a person of Saraguro indigenous identity and a key figure in the anti-mining movement, incorporated a small-scale mining identity and discourse into his electoral platform in 2009, strategically symbolizing the new alliance between indigenous groups and small-scale miners. Meanwhile, many of the colonos, who had once been miners or continue to have ties with small-scale mining, have incorporated an environmentalist discourse in order to legitimize their “green politics” and so to establish coalitions with environmental organizations. Indeed, this was the electoral strategy of another prominent anti-mining leader in El Pangui, himself a former small-scale miner. In a sense, identity construction can facilitate the emergence of new coalitions, justify breaking old alliances, foster the adoption of new discourses and serve to legitimize new positions. Identity is thus shaped by interaction in various social locations such that individual identities and collective ones are mutually constitutive (Alavrez, Dagnino, and Escobar 1998). Furthermore, the political positions and potential alliances linked to identity claims are framed by the mining conflict in ways that are not uniform. The identity of being “Shuar,” for instance, is mobilized and given meaning in ways that legitimize quite different positions in the struggle over mining. In some instances, “being Shuar” is used as an argument for defending ancestral land rights and so rejecting mining; in other cases, “being Shuar” is tied to the principle of having the right to choose one’s own model of development and so having the right to support the option for mining.

Conclusion
As my fieldwork came to an end, I took a look back from the bus and saw the same scene that had met me on my first arrival in El Pangui: people outside the municipal building smoking their cigarettes, the vendor with his wheel barrow full of fresh fish, and ladies sitting in front of the town’s only beauty salon watching passers-by. In the distance, stood the green Cordillera topped with hovering clouds, and beyond it, Peru. At first glance, the scene revealed neither the conflict that is part of everyday life nor the mining project that is being developed amidst the Cordillera. However, significant changes and transformations are taking place in El Pangui.

Throughout this chapter, I have attempted to show how the arrival of mining projects is affecting territorial dynamics in El Pangui. Conflict over mining is affecting everyday life and it is given new meanings that set it aside from previous land disputes and territorial struggles. The social mobilization responding to mining has built upon these same dynamics, though it too is undergoing transformation as mining conflict influences coalitions, identity, and movement organizing. Because of these transformations, it is important to get inside social movements to better understand the whole range of motivations, interests, and meanings at play. In addition, people’s own logic regarding the relationship between environment and humans may give further insight as to the reasons why, and the ways in which, differently located people respond to mining conflicts as they do.

I have also aimed to demonstrate that mining conflicts are far from straightforward. They are not simply about two opposed groups fighting over whether mining activities should go ahead or not. Territories and the environment, like human relationships and social movements, have complex histories; indeed, these complexities are as present in the mining question as they are in any other aspect of social life in El Pangui. Understanding mining conflicts, just like digging for minerals, therefore requires sorting carefully through the many layers and levels in which different parts of the ore are dispersed. I have tried to suggest elements of a framework that might help in such a task.
The chapter has argued that conflict over the environment is, in fact, *constitutive of* territory. The ways in which people view nature, resources, and the physical environment influence settlement patterns and processes as much as do development visions and models. However, the environment also plays a role. The physical geography of the Cordillera del Cóndor, with its mineral deposits, its biodiversity, its areas of particular ecological sensitivity, and its environmental conditions apt for agriculture, all feed back into various forms of territorial dynamics and the axes of social conflict that constitute part of these dynamics.

If the past is any indication, the current conflict in El Pangui is likely to affect future dynamics and development options for the territory. If the large-scale mining projects go forward, the changes described here will most likely persist, intensify, and play a significant role in further territorial transformation. Daily routines, government policies, and forms of social protest and mobilization will also continue to unfold in ways affected by the subsoil and the different ways in which it passes into social life aboveground.
5 Negotiable Differences? Conflicts over Mining and Development in South East Ecuador

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"Why is the State's perception and vision of development at such great odds with the people it purports to develop? And why are their rights so dispensable?"

Bench Justices Aftab Alam and B.S. Chauhan, Supreme Court, India

The quotation above touches at the heart of debates concerning mining and development. Although the questions being asked by judges of the Supreme Court of India refer to indigenous peoples’ rights in a case regarding the acquisition of tribal lands by the mining company Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd in the Sundergarh district of Orissa province, they could equally be applied to mining conflict cases anywhere around the world. While in many cases, national governments implement economic development models based on an approach to mineral extraction that aims to benefit their citizens, affected communities claim that their needs, interests and rights are not used to inform the design of those models. This paradox is found in Ecuador, where President Rafael Correa’s “21st century socialism”, a national development model dependent on revenues from the extractive industries, is said to benefit all Ecuadorians. However, mining conflicts across the country are making it clear that this may not quite be the case (Bebbington, 2012).


113 In a general sense there is support for Correa’s 21st century socialism among Ecuadoreans but some segments of civil society have mixed feelings. On the one hand it has been seen as revolutionary political model since it breaks with past governments, corrupt leaders and the previous neoliberal reforms. It can be said that a good portion of civil society is content that Correa’s government gives more attention to social programs and feel that the political stability has been greatly beneficial. Other sectors of civil society, such as the environmental groups and indigenous peoples, at first had high expectations of Correa’s government in the sense that a progressive political agenda could be made possible, and to a certain extent it has been, such as with the Rights to Nature and sumac kawsay concept being incorporated into the Constitution. However, these groups have also been consistently disappointed since Correa taking office, because the extractive model still is being promoted to finance the social reforms. These groups have been openly critical of Correa’s socialism though they are also met with groups that publicly defend Correa. That said, there are other issues beyond debates concerning environmental and indigenous politics that civil society is concerned about like freedom of press, human rights situation along the Colombian border.
Indeed, community groups and civil society organizations have begun to mobilise against mining projects, demanding that their rights be taken into account in the decisions affecting their lives and the environment. The emerging social movement has been constructing arguments, discourses and alternative development proposals not only to reject and question the existing extractive model but also to offer novel alternatives. A closer look reveals that within the movement, there exists a range of positions, interests and needs of differently located groups across ethnic divides that overlap, contradict and coalesce. One of the main concerns has been around consolidating internal differences and constructing overarching proposals that speak to varying publics.

But are these differences negotiated, and if so, how? Is there a dialogue among sympathizers and critics of mining or across the differing perceptions of development that they hold? Is there a complementary meeting ground, or will these models always be destined to clash? Do the differences result in mutually exclusive, fixed and polarized positions or are they flexible and do they have the propensity to develop alternatives for social transformation? Can conflicts ultimately lead to a renewal of discourses on development and the environment that allow for alternative conceptions of land use that accommodate the differences among actors? Or, is the conflict another case of injustice, where power is concentrated in the State and used to undermine community rights while favouring corporate interests?

This chapter contributes to the main theme of the book by addressing the impacts of natural resource extraction on indigenous and rural livelihoods, and exploring some of the fundamental questions about the development challenges that face populations living in the vicinity of mining projects. It broadens understanding of the main causes of mining conflict and examines social movements as they contest extractive projects, claim inclusion in political economic decision-making and struggle for social and environmental justice. It will argue that conflicts around mining are a result of divergent perceptions, visions and models of development
that include differences in approaches to land use, territorial control and the environment. The tension arising from these differences can lead to, though not necessarily result in, violent confrontations and human rights abuses that have a direct effect on people’s livelihoods. As mining conflicts are also about territorial control and about whose rights matter most in political economic decision-making, this chapter also focuses on issues of land ownership, access and control over natural resources and political participation.

This chapter will build the argument just elaborated by discussing debates over mining and development at three levels. We open with a discussion of analytical debates around mineral extraction and development and the conditions under which it may be possible to undertake “responsible mining”. The discussion then focuses on a concept that has become increasingly important in framing development debates in Ecuador: sumak kawsay. Sumak kawsay, or ‘good living’, is a Quechua concept based on indigenous cosmology whose recent incorporation into Ecuador’s Constitution is the result of years of indigenous mobilizing. The concept points to an alternative pathway to development and indicates, as we shall see later on, an innovative perspective on economic development, land use and territory. It can also be a meeting ground for differences and serve as a concept through which anti-mining sentiments might potentially be transformed into constructive proposals for social, economic and ecological alternatives. Above all, the incorporation of sumak kawsay into Ecuador’s Constitution can be understood as the result of democratic negotiation leading to the inclusion of difference.

The discussion then considers how the relationship between mining, development and sumak kawsay has been framed by government and social movement discourses. In this context, we discuss both the growing role of the government in the promotion of mining, and the achievements of the ‘anti-mining’ social movement. Finally, we move to a more local scale and discuss conflicts around mining in El Pangui in the Cordillera del Condor, an area of great biological diversity that at the same time as being a zone of colonization, is home to the traditional territories of the Shuar, one of the largest indigenous ethnic group in Ecuador. In more recent times, the Cordillera has also become the site of one of
Ecuador’s biggest and most advanced large-scale gold and copper mining projects. The conflicts over this project, and the ways in which differences between and among colonists and Shuar people have been negotiated in these conflicts, constitutes the primary theme of our empirical discussion.

**Debating Development and Mining**

The longstanding debate about whether large-scale mining can contribute to development depends largely on how development is defined, the possible pathways towards achieving it and the actors who drive and benefit from it. Defining such models of development is a complex, contentious and open-ended endeavour. Indeed, communities and social movements in resistance to mining have argued that the question of resource-based development is not simply one of determining whether mining can contribute to ‘development’ or not. Rather, they often argue, the debate centres on questioning the model of development altogether, examining what is meant by development, who should be defining it and who should be responsible for ensuring that it is carried out according to the desired definition as well as making these processes truly democratic and inclusive.

Although there may be more agreement about what ‘mining’ is than about the more ambiguous term ‘development’, understanding mining processes and how the mining industry works is neither easy nor straightforward. In fact, every step of a mining project cycle involves a great deal of uncertainty and risk, transformation, specialized knowledge and environmental change.

The industry rests on free-market assumptions where an unlimited international demand for metals justifies opening new mines as the only option to supply that demand. It can be argued, at least in part, that the increase in production is not merely a market response to increased international demand, but a result of subsidies provided by government policies and international lending organizations.
(Whitmore, 2005); that mining markets are also considered an ‘economy of appearances’ and involve a great deal of speculation (Tsing, 2000); and that open pit mines may not be the only option for feeding mineral demand (Himley, 2010). Moreover, the industry is overly confident that scientific and technological advances can ensure cleaner and safer mining activities (Whitmore, 2005). However, even though there have been significant improvements in mining technologies, the industry might still be overestimating their capacity to make mining cleaner since accidents and unforeseen complications occur and when they do, they are often on a large-scale and have long-lasting effects.

Whilst Ecuador has a long and well documented history of oil exploration and extraction (see, for example, Sawyer, 2004), the mining industry is relatively new; some large-scale mining projects are in their final exploration phase and one project has now been approved by the Government. As a result, the general public remain unfamiliar with the nature of mining activities. Arguments in favour of or against mining are therefore largely hypothetical and experiences from other ‘mining countries’ (such as Chile, Peru or Canada) are often referred to as examples of what the mining industry could look like in Ecuador.

A recent World Bank report (Sinott et al., 2010) concluded that Latin America could reach ‘rich-world’ growth levels through natural resource extraction if the current commodity bonanza is managed properly and growth rates accelerate. As noted by the authors, these findings would contradict the long-held view embodied in the ‘resource curse’ thesis (Auty, 1993b): that resource abundant countries tend to experience less economic growth and worse development outcomes than countries with fewer natural resources.

Arguments supporting the ‘resource curse’ point out that mineral wealth bring about a series of economic and political distortions that weaken the mining industry’s contribution to development (Power, 1996). This contribution can be undermined by phenomena such as the ‘Dutch Disease’ (in which rapid growth in the extractive economy leads to overvaluation of exchange rates and a consequent decline in other sectors of the economy that depend on exports), the enclave
nature of the extractive economy, or the effects of that on local wage rates and consumption patterns (see: J.D. Sachs and A.M. Warner, 1999). According to the ex-Minister of Energy and Mines and former President of the Constituent Assembly, Alberto Acosta, Ecuador’s economy is characterized by boom and bust cycles of capitalism based solely on the extraction of natural resources. The economy has gone through stages of dependency on the extraction of banana, cacao, oil and now, possibly, copper and gold. Dependency on an extractive economy has generated some of the effects of the Dutch Disease and kept the Ecuadorian economy from becoming prosperous (Acosta, 2006).

Socio-political distortions are reflected in the relationship between mining and governance. Struggles over access to, and control of, the potential flow of mineral rents and royalties to the national government can lead to problems of transparency, clientelism and corruption. As the State expects to have a guaranteed source of income from mining taxes, it tends to prioritize engagement with corporations rather than commitment to its citizens. This situation also allows corporations to have more influence in policy making, as governments may provide special deals or tax exemptions, sometimes facilitated by the circulation of people that move from corporate to government positions then back again.

Critics of the resource curse thesis range from those who find little evidence to sustain it (Davis, 1995, Brunnschweiler and Bulte, 2008) to those who focus instead on means of escaping it (Humphreys et al., 2007a). Many authors make the point that the problem is not with the extraction of natural resources per se but rather with the lack of good governance and democracy embedded in the process. Collier and Goderis (2007) show how the resource curse has been avoided in countries with sufficiently good institutions, whilst Ali (2006) argues that turbulent economies, poor governance and armed conflict existed in some countries long before resource wealth was discovered, thus suggesting that minerals might bring the behaviour of governments under international scrutiny and force rogue regimes to improve their performance. The Publish What You Pay campaign—a coalition of institutions that aim to improve transparency and good governance in the extractive industries sector (PWYP, 2011)—suggests that remedying institutional failure is a
key to escaping the resource curse and requires changes in law and practice. In Ecuador, this same point was raised repeatedly during the local and national elections of 2009, during which candidates either overestimated the capabilities of State institutions to control and mitigate mining impacts or expressed a lack of confidence in institutions, calling to mind the same processes that occurred with the oil industry (Sawyer, 2004).

President Correa evidently believes that there is a way to escape the resource curse. In his many radio addresses to the nation, he has maintained that investments, job generation, and taxes from the mining sector can contribute to economic growth, suggesting that funds from the mining sector can be redistributed to other sectors of the economy with careful planning and State control. Correa attempts to set his government and economic model of development apart from years of neoliberalism by aligning his discourse with that of other State-centred models in Latin American that in one way or another have identified with so-called twenty-first century socialism (Bebbington and Humphreys-Bebbington, 2010, Gudynas, 2009, Bebbington, 2009).

Under the neoliberal model, the State apparatus was reduced in size so as to allow the market to function freely. In the mining sector, this reduction in size involved the creation of new laws that reduced the role of the State in production and regulation. More specifically, these laws facilitated the process of gaining concessions, increased tax exemptions, weakened environmental regulations and limited the need for consultation with communities. By contrast, a more State-centred perspective seeks to generate higher tax and royalty rates for government, charges more per hectare concession, and (in theory) is stricter in evaluating environmental impact studies and mitigation plans. Although this perspective is similar to the neoliberal model (as well as older state-centric models) in that it, too, views extractive industries as catalysts for economic development, it differs in that it presumes a far more active role for the State in the direct control of these industries.
Some of these principles have been codified in Ecuador’s 2009 Mining Law, and in Correa’s version of this state-centred model, the Ecuadorian Government will become more directly involved in the control of mining activity, and will capture significant shares of profits for subsequent investment in social programs. He argues that “responsible mining could become the future of our country and open the doors to come out of underdevelopment” (Correa, 2009, January 15), and more prosaically that, “We cannot sit like beggars on a mountain of gold”\(^{114}\), reflecting his perception that natural resources need to be exploited in the name of ‘development’. Indeed, he invokes the examples of Canada and Australia to argue that just as these countries have benefited economically from mining, whilst including their indigenous communities in the process, so, too, could Ecuador (El Comercio, 2009). Meanwhile, he has shown little tolerance for those who hold different views on the role of extractive industries as a funder of social programs and catalysts for development (Moore and Velásquez, 2012, Bebbington, 2009, Bebbington, 2012). His response to criticisms of mining has been, in Correa’s own words, that ‘anti-mining means anti-development’ and is even ‘anti-Ecuadorian’. The President invokes notions of patriotism and conspiracy when he argues that the hidden agenda of anti-mining activists is that ‘these individuals receive money from foreign NGOs that do not want to see Ecuadorians succeed’\(^{115}\).

However, invoking a mineral-rich country like Canada, where mining played an important role in industrialization, is a case of ‘reasoning by historical analogy’, which Power (2002) argues does not consider the unique set of conditions (for example, high levels of institutional capital, large international markets, scarce labour and protected national markets) that favoured the economic development of countries like Canada, Australia or the United States.

In Ecuador, up until 2009, almost all mining projects were Canadian-owned, which may help explain Correa’s reference to the Canadian mining industry being an example Ecuador could follow. Correa uses the example of Canadian mining to

\(^{114}\) Field note recording of Cadena Radial radio broadcast, October 11, 2008, and January 24, 2009
\(^{115}\) Field note recording of Cadena Radial radio broadcast in Gualaquiza, June 6, 2009.
argue in favour of an environmentally-friendly, clean, modern mining industry and to delegitimize environmental activists’ claims regarding the harmful impacts of mining. He argues that: 1) Canadian companies use modern technologies that minimize environmental impacts; 2) and that all human activity impacts the environment and, in fact, raising livestock in the Amazon ‘contaminates more than mining’.

**Sumak Kawsay and Mining in Ecuador**

Correa’s assertions notwithstanding, critics of large-scale mining have legitimate concerns. Against the background of a contaminating oil industry and of successive regimes lacking the political will and capacity to mitigate environmental damage and hold companies accountable, these concerns pivot around the following central themes: territorial control, long-term social and environmental impacts, family and community divisions, the transfer of mineral rents out of the country, and questions of sovereignty.

Communities affected by mining have responded to debates on mining and development—and, in particular, to issues relating to the environmental impacts of mining operations—with an increasing focus on creating ‘alternative’ development models that prioritise the protection, respect and conservation of nature and the pursuit of human welfare. Furthermore, these models are linked to two paramount inclusions in Ecuador’s new Constitution: the concept of *sumak kawsay*, as previously mentioned, and the extension of constitutional rights to nature. These two inclusions reflect a developmental vision that is far removed from the views of ‘development’ reflected both in debates over the resource curse and in invocations of the possibility of “responsible mining”.

*Sumak kawsay* is described by Davalos (2008) as a novel concept and a possible paradigm shift in conceptions of development. It expresses a “different relationship between human beings and their social and natural surroundings”.

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116 Fieldnote recording- Cadena Radial in Gualaquiza, June 6 2009
incorporates a human, ethical and holistic dimension to humans' relationships with their own history and their natural surroundings” (Davalos, 2008, p.5). For Acosta (2008), the basic principle underlying sumak kawsay is an economic model based on solidarity. There is no conceptualization of development as a linear process of change from one state to another, of a before and after, and of ‘underdevelopment’ and ‘development’. Instead, communities work towards creating the material and spiritual conditions to construct and maintain ‘good living’. Nor is poverty understood as the lack of material goods. Sumak kawsay comprehends social improvement as a process continually under construction. There is no traditional conceptualization of poverty, but rather an emphasis on sense of community in which nature plays a part. Furthermore, as indigenous leader Luis Macas argues (2010), there can be no sumak kawsay without first constructing community as a unit of economic production oriented towards self-sufficiency and the satisfaction of basic needs. In this community-based framework, an indigenous economy does not aim to accumulate material goods but only to produce what is needed. Similar to the ideas of Carlos Viteri117 (Zider, 2003), this conceptualization reflects the aspiration of indigenous peoples to have rights to their territory and natural resources as a pre-condition for strengthening an economy based on values.

Whereas economic theory externalizes nature from human history, sumak kawsay incorporates it, not as a factor of production but as an inherent part of social being. Moreover, in comparison with development theories that leave little or no room for otherness, sumak kawsay recognizes the ontological existence of other beings which also have the right to exist and survive in otherness. This recognition is also extended to nature. For example, indigenous leader and prefect of Zamora Chinchipe province, Salvador Quishpe, writes: “[…] we are thinking first and foremost of a life with dignity and harmony among our peoples with Mother Earth.” Later, he adds, with reference to large-scale mining, that, “[…] we are in disagreement about the very big mining projects in the Cordillera del Condor,

117 Carlos Viteri is an indigenous intellectual, belonging to the Kichwa ethnicity of Sarayaku. He is an anthropologist and currently works in the government as Executive Secretary in the Ecodesarrollo Regional Amazónico ECORAE.
because those projects certainly will destroy our natural and cultural patrimony.” He then offers an alternative development route: “[…] consequently, we have initiated a process of territorial planning with the participation of all of our fellow citizens within the framework of the Plurinational Assembly of the Peoples of Zamora Chinchipe” (Quishpe, 2009).

In April 2009, the provincial governments of El Oro, Azuay, Morona Santiago, Cañar and Zamora Chinchipe established the so-called Mancomunidad, a formal agreement to integrate their territories and foster joint actions for local development within the framework of sumak kawsay. Some of the proposals, in line with electoral promises made a year before, aimed to carry out territorial planning to determine where different productive activities should take place, and prepare an integral development plan to ensure the appropriate use of natural resources. Mancomunidad objectives go on to explain that it will propose a “new model of social and economic development, based on the principles of solidarity, plurinationality and sumak kawsay” (Quishpe, 2009).

A closer look at the 72 articles of the sumak kawsay regulations in the National Plan for Good Living 2009-2013 (SENPLADES, 2009), a document that lays out the development plans and objectives for the country and drafted by the National Secretariat for Planning and Development (SENPLADES), reveals, however, that the Western modernist framework of integral sustainable and human development still prevails (Walsh, 2010). The focus continues to be on the individual being responsible for his/her own development, albeit in conjunction with the State. Meanwhile, the emphasis on redistribution of income, tax revenue and land looks very similar to the ‘equity-centred’ approaches to sustainable development promoted by many orthodox development agencies.

In terms of practical applications, sumak kawsay may be heralded as novel and on the verge of proposing an alternative development model, but there are severe contradictions within the Constitution that complicate its application. The violent

118 In particular See Chapter 3 ‘Change of Paradigm: From Development to Good Living’ of the English version.
conflicts preceding the passing of the new Mining Law in 2009, and the lawsuits brought by the Confederation of Ecuadorean Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE) and other civil society organizations to have the law declared unconstitutional illustrates that *sumak kawsay* is only selectively applied by the State (Moore, 2009). The President retains the power to declare whether or not mining projects are in the interest of ‘the nation’, a power which outranks both the rights of nature as recognized in the new constitution as well as the community’s right to consent. Moreover, the unexpected intense violence that emerged in response to the controversial Water Law in 2010 also appeared to reflect deep indignation and symbolized the scant political will to fully apply *sumak kawsay* (Valencia, 2010).

The contradictions and problems in applying the concept raise the question of whether the incorporation of *sumak kawsay* into the Constitution was actually a strategy for silencing critics. This line of thought builds on Kirsch’s analysis of strategies used by mining corporations to respond to critique by co-opting their critics’ discourse by simulating rather than enacting reform (Kirsch, 2009). The incorporation of *sumak kawsay* into the Constitution, which was drafted through a uniquely participatory process, indeed symbolizes a victory for indigenous peoples who have been mobilizing around these issues for years. But the passing of laws such as the Mining and Water Laws that contradict its fundamental principles whilst giving the President the faculty to override *sumak kawsay* articles in the Constitution, may well be a case of what Kirsch refers to as a “simulated reform”.

**The Development of the Large-Scale Mining Industry in Ecuador**

The Cordillera del Condor is part of the Tropical Andes Hotspot that runs from western Venezuela to northern Chile and Argentina, one of Earth’s richest and most diverse landscapes. The area along the border of Ecuador and Peru is known as the Conservation Corridor of Abiseo-Condor-Kutuku, which covers some 13 million hectares. The Cordillera is also rich in minerals. Ecuador’s south eastern ‘copper belt’ extends over a 20 x 80 kilometre area and is considered by the mining
industry to be one of the few undeveloped copper districts available in the world today.

Ecuador’s central and southern Andes hold the country’s largest gold and copper deposits discovered in the South-eastern province of Zamora-Chinchipe along the Cordillera del Condor (MMSD, 2002). The country’s artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector has historically been more important than large-scale metal mining. However, most ASM was informal, and the State lacked the capacity to control or regulate activity. With the increase in mineral prices in the 1990s, Ecuador, under the guidance of the World Bank, started to consider the mining industry as a way to diversify its economy.\(^{119}\)

This move to mining grew out of several decades in which Ecuador had developed its oil resources as a means to finance development. While Ecuador’s oil boom supported the growth of State apparatus and expanded public investment (and fuelled corruption), it did not foster economic diversification. In something of a classic resource curse experience, the Ecuadorian economy became steadily less competitive and began to stagnate (Acosta, 2006). This stagnation culminated in the implementation of structural adjustment policies (and related loans from the World Bank). The Structural Adjustment Loan approved in 1994\(^{120}\) serviced an entire program of neoliberal structural reforms aimed at changing the oil-dependent, state-led development strategy of the last 30 years (WorldBank, 1994, Babelon and Dahan, 2003).

The World Bank first became involved in Ecuador’s mining sector in 1989 through analytical work carried out in preparation for the Mining Development and Environmental Control Technical Assistance Project (MMSD, 2002, Babelon et al., 2003), known as PRODEMINCA, its Spanish acronym. The assistance eventually

\(^{119}\) Between the 1990s and 2000s the World Bank had provided similar advice, technical assistance and loans to other countries in Latin America. In this sense the advice provided to Ecuador was not exceptional.

\(^{120}\) The Loan was approved in 1994 for the amount of US$200 million, which included about $60 million deriving from the Japanese investment bank Jeximbank. This loan coincides with another World Bank funded loan (and partly Sweden and UK) to specifically promote the mining industry – PRODEMINCA
led to the design of the 1991 Mining Law 126 (also known as Trole 1), which underwent important reform in the year 2000 and was renamed Trole 2 or Law for the Promotion of Investments and Citizen Participation. The law aimed to restructure the mining industry with a view to diversifying (albeit still in the extractive sector) revenue streams for the otherwise highly oil dependent economy.

Trole 2 changed numerous aspects of the Mining Law in ways that favoured investors and privatization. All responsibilities of the Ministry of the Environment were eliminated and authority passed to the sub-secretary of the Ministry for Energy. More rights were given to the concession holder to perform any necessary activities within their concessions, such as waste accumulation, road construction, water use and expropriation of lands. Not only was the role of the State significantly reduced but previous financial obligations were also minimized. The price of concessions per hectare went down to US$1.00 for the first three years.

Many of these neoliberal reforms made under President Jamil Mahuad were kept in place even after he was ousted by the indigenous uprising of 2000, and continued to regulate the mining industry for a few more years, albeit under turbulent political circumstances. The election of President Rafael Correa at the end of 2006 changed the socio-political scenario drastically. Following electoral commitments, a Constituent Assembly was formed a few months after Correa’s investiture. The Assembly then drafted a new Constitution which was approved in September 2008. The drafting process was unique in that it aimed to be inclusive and participatory. Over this period, various public ‘mining dialogues’ were organized across the country to debate a new Mining Law (see: Cisneros, 2011). The new Constitution included specific statements that would have a direct and indirect bearing on mining activities, including recognition of the country as a plurinational State and indigenous people’s rights to consultation, as well as other articles regarding nature, water, land reform, mining royalties and labour rights

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121 Ley Trole 2 – Registro Oficial No. 144 Implemented August 18 2000. Trole 2 makes reference to the first main structural adjustments under Ley Trole 1.
122 Ley Trolebus 2- Ley Para La Promocion De La Inversion Y Participacion Ciudadana. Ley No. 000. Ro/ Sup 144 de 18 de Agosto del 2000.
(whether these statements are recognized in practice or not is a different issue). In a more general sense, in mid-2008 there was an active public debate around how Ecuador should pursue an extractive economic model and how large- and small-scale mining should fit within that model. In this debate, the views of environmental and indigenous movements were visible and important.

President Rafael Correa made specific mention of indigenous rights to mining consultation during his election campaign, promising that communities would be consulted and that it was conceivable that Ecuador might be declared a country “free of open pit mining” (Moore and Velásquez, 2012). This discourse was strategic, since it appealed to communities which were in fierce opposition to mining activities as well as to environmental groups campaigning for areas free of large-scale mining. However, a year into his mandate, his discourse changed and he started to distance himself from these same communities and social organizations that were critical of extractive industries. Community leader and water board president Carlos Perez recalled, on a visit to the province of Azuay during Correa’s presidential campaign in 2007, that Correa stated “my hand will not tremble when I cancel mining concessions located in headwaters” (Castillo, 2010). Indeed, in April 2008, a year into his mandate, the Constituent Assembly revoked more than 500 mining concessions and approved a Mining Mandate that halted mining activities temporarily, and returned all concessions to the State. The Mandate also required a review of all existing mining contracts (Soto, 2008). That said, the Mandate itself was something of a compromise. At the time it was passed, a significant number of civil society actors as well as groups within the Assembly were calling for legislation that would declare Ecuador a country free of large-scale mining. In this sense, the Mandate constituted a middle ground between these demands and the legislation that preceded it: thus, while some in civil society saw it as a victory, it may also have served to offset political pressure and to buy time (Moore and Velásquez, 2012)

123 Many of these commitments exist as constitutional principles but not yet as laws. Hence the final forms that they will take are not yet clear.
124 Original quote reads: “no me temblará la mano si tengo que extinguir concesiones mineras en fuentes de agua”.

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At the same time as the Mandate was being passed—and to the dismay of the many people who had mobilized around mining issues as well as of various social movements that had voted Correa into his presidency—the Central Government was steadily distancing itself from civil society organizations (Bebbington and Humphreys-Bebbington, 2011, Moore and Velásquez, 2012). The central government and Correa slowly became the primary promoter of large-scale mining. A strong lobby from the mining industry slowly developed toward the end of 2007, and by the beginning of 2008 Correa did a U-turn and expressed that “responsible mining is possible”.

A year after the Mining Mandate, the new Mining Law was eventually passed in January 2009 and its regulations approved in September 2009. Although the new Mining Law differs in many ways and is an improvement from the previous laws Trole 1 and 2, it also contains its own set of contradictions. These could be read as evidence of weak institutional processes of law-making, power struggles within the government regarding the regulation of the mining industry, or the success of industry lobby and persuasion. Whatever the case may be, the passing of the Mining Law was accompanied by long months of protests, public debates, heated discussions between Correa and social movement leaders, hunger strikes and violent confrontations between police and protestors (Amazon Watch, 2009, Denvir, 2009, Hoy, 2009, BBC, 2009). In this sense, the government sponsored ‘mining dialogues’ which had sought the participation of a range of public actors (including indigenous organizations) to discuss the drafting of the new Mining Law. However, it did not have the outcome that the government had sought. In March 2009, CONAIE presented a lawsuit to the Constitutional Court arguing that the Mining Law violated the rights of indigenous people as recognized by national and international laws. More generally, the mining conflict that had previously been limited to a few locations and was mainly a ‘rural issue’ not only increased in violence but became more visible in urban centres and more widespread across the country. In the section below, we analyse some of these new discourses and their potential for social transformation.
“We are no longer miners, we are ecologists”: Conflict and Mobilization in El Pangui

A mining conflict such as that seen in Ecuador cannot be understood without considering the larger history of socio-territorial disputes. The conflict has shown (Warnaars, 2010) to have the capacity to refresh social movement discourses, community relationships and local politics. Moreover, it brought to the fore newly-articulated development proposals and renewed arguments with the potential to transform social territorial dynamics. However difficult the endeavour to articulate differences into a consolidated development model might be, it has been even more challenging to negotiate these renewed local models and proposals with the national development plans.

In El Pangui, land has long been disputed and is highly politicized. The town and the various communities in the canton, prior to the arrival of the Canadian mining company Corriente Resources, had already witnessed many struggles and conflicts over land ownership, rights, demarcation and natural resource use. These struggles are a product of the long history of the Shuar indigenous populations, the comings and goings of different actors (settlers, farmers, cattle-raisers, small-scale miners, the army, the church) and also of the boom and bust cycles of global capitalism and its insatiable demand for natural resources. Throughout the years, Shuar communities have been in dispute with each new wave of settlers that in one way or another caused some Shuar to give up lands or forced them further into the jungle.

Territorial disputes have the potential to (re)shape social relationships, alliances and identities. These disputes over land and resources not only affect how social actors relate to each other and the environment, but also seep into the mundaneness of daily life. As they are naturalized, territorial disputes shape daily choices, such as not to be seen talking with your pro-mining neighbour, receiving milk from cattle that pasture on land owned by the mining company, or going to Sunday mass given by an anti-mining priest.
Highland farmers have settled in El Pangui since the 1970s, clearing large areas of pristine jungle primarily for livestock breeding and related activities. Indeed, as they build environmental discourses against large-scale mining, they are to some degree confronted with the environmentally-devastating effects of raising their livestock (effects such as the deforestation of large areas) and happily express that they are becoming more ecological (strategically incorporating a new identity). Ironically, thanks to the entrance of mining projects, cattle-raisers have revalorized their land practices and begun to reflect on the impacts they have had on the environment over the last thirty years. Nevertheless their ideal vision for the future is shot through with nation-building discourses of conquering the jungle, of development and progress that imagine ever-expanding agriculture and industrialization.

Shuar traditional land practices have been at odds with highland farmers that settled in El Pangui. Despite the fact that many Shuar ended up taking up cattle raising activities and deforesting land like their *colono* neighbours (*colono* refers to *mestizo* immigrants from the highlands), former farmers-turned-miners during the Nambija gold fever, they have a more sustainable and integral land practice grounded in their relations with nature/the land. The Shuar also tend to reforest their lands, cultivate former garden crops like coffee and cacao as cash crops, thus maintaining more biologically-diverse landscapes than do their *mestizo* neighbours (Rudel et al., 2002).

Many of the settlers in El Pangui are former small-scale mine workers who arrived in the late 1980s, in part as a result of a devastating accident in which more than 200 miners and their relatives lost their lives under a landslide in Nambija, a mining district located south of El Pangui (Hoy, 1993). The *colonos* gained quick capital in the pits and used this cash to buy land in El Pangui so that they could return to farming. Today, this group of people with historical ties to mining are one of the strongest actors resisting large-scale companies in the province, either because of their knowledge of the harmful effects of mining, their bad memories of mining or

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125 *A mestizo* is a person of mixed racial ancestry, especially European and Native American.
their desire to protect their own ASM interests. Still, others grab hold of the ecological discourse promoted by environmental groups as a means for alternative development. As one informant said when asked why he rejected mining: “we are no longer miners, we are ecologists”.

Corriente Resources and its Ecuadorian subsidiary, Ecuacorriente S.A. (ECSA), started exploring in April 2000 and identified four copper and copper-gold deposits: the Mirador and Mirador Norte Project in the parish of El Pangui, and the Panantza and San Carlos Project in the adjacent province of Morona Santiago. According to the company’s technical reports, the mineral resources at Mirador are estimated at 11 billion pounds of copper plus 2.6 million ounces of gold (Drobe et al., 2008b). The Panantza San Carlos project contains inferred resources of 14.4 billion pounds of copper (Drobe et al., 2007). The projects were put up for sale at the end of 2008 (Reuters, 2008) and eventually sold to the Chinese conglomerate, CRCC-Tongguan Investment Co. Ltd, in May 2010 (Corriente Resources, 2010a). On 5 March 2012, the Ecuadorian National Government signed the country’s first contract for a large-scale mining project, the Ecuacorriente’s Mirador project.

It is worth mentioning that another Canadian company, Kinross Gold Corporation, also has mining projects along the Cordillera del Condor and, like ECSA, in both provinces. Its Condor project, which circles the Mirador project, totals 38 concessions covering an area of approximately 95,000 hectares [See Figure 4.1 in this thesis]. Kinross bought the Canadian junior company Aurelian Resources in September 2008.

Numerous concerns have motivated wider social mobilization in rejection of mining. First, there is a sense of resentment towards the central government for not consulting the communities prior to the granting of concessions. Second, there are concerns about the impacts of mining on the environment. These concerns are experienced and understood in different ways by each actor. Former small-scale miners are familiar with the environmental impacts of mining and fear large-scale mining will bring large-scale damage. The Shuar people recall the same promises

126 Fieldnote recording, Group interview in El Pangui, March 20, 2009
of prosperity that the oil industry made to fellow indigenous communities, and fear the contamination that oil-affected communities currently endure. Concerns run high regarding the promises of employment and advertised economic benefits. As the catchy phrase that is heard repeatedly in forums and meetings goes: ‘we cannot eat gold’ or ‘we cannot eat a bowl of money soup’.

Deeper grievances surface over the growing sense of uncertainty in relation to land ownership. The possibility of relocation or loss of land forces many families to live in a constant state of uncertainty. Some families lost their land because they sold it or were coerced into selling to the company. One family in the community of Santa Cruz was violently attacked when company sympathizers tried to evict them off of their land. Other pre-existing territorial disputes have become increasingly violent as they are reinterpreted in terms of mining stances. Such was the case in June 2009 with the burning of two Shuar houses in Bomboiza in the neighbouring canton, Gualaquiza.

The families in San Marcos, located within the concessions and which had initially supported Corriente Resources, became increasingly concerned about their future once they learned about the company’s intentions to build a tailings reservoir where the town is located. In San Marcos, those who have not yet sold their land will eventually be forced to relocate if the copper mine goes ahead. Large-scale mining projects are backed by powerful actors and generate a disproportional rise in land values, stimulate land trafficking and intensify existing territorial disputes.

Nevertheless, there are groups who agree with large-scale mining projects as they see mining as a source of employment and taxes, and a positive contribution to the overall development of the canton. These arguments were quite visible in pro-mining protests with phrases on banners such as: ‘Mining yes! Unemployment no!’, ‘Mining is the alternative to improve our lifestyles’, and ‘With responsible mining we have work, community development and family unity’. The latter refers to the government slogans that mining could help offset the out-migration of people from

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Ecuador (primarily to Spain and the United States) by creating employment and new incentives for people to stay.

The Zamora Chinchipe Shuar Federation is probably the best known organization that favours mining. The Federation’s President, Ruben Naichap, has appeared side-by-side with Correa in public events, hailing the benefits of responsible mining, and has become a legitimizing face in support of mining companies. Naichap has said that he wants his people to enjoy economic development like any other Ecuadorian citizens. In his view, fighting poverty can be done with the help of mining projects either through job generation, the financing of development projects, and/or infrastructural investments. However, his views are not widely shared by other indigenous organizations. The perspectives of the former president of CONFENAIE- Confederación de las Nacionalidades Indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, Domingo Ankuash, epitomize their position. As Mr. Ankuash explained in an interview: “Shuar people are not poor, we are rich! Because we own land, and in the end that is what everybody wants, our land, for its riches. But without our land we are nothing … and our culture disappears.”

Some existing differences and social tensions that derive from conflicting ideas about how land should be used have been downplayed or minimized since the mining conflict began. It has become more strategic to accentuate the importance of agricultural activities in general, regardless of whether there are differences over how to use the land or which form of production is more ‘sustainable’ or ‘ecological’. Instead, the concern is to build a more widely-embracing anti-mining argument, which says that people in El Pangui, both Shuar and colono, choose agriculture above mining and that these two activities cannot coexist.

The mining conflict has the capacity to refresh discourses on development and the environment and consolidate the differences of varied actors and their land use practices into a comprehensive alternative development model. However, positions and opinions are flexible, have blurred zones and are a result of complex (sometimes strategic) relationships amongst people and between people and the

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128 Fieldnote recording – Interview, October 19, 2008
environment. The blurred zones have to do with the diversity of the groups that mobilize in rejection of mining and the inherent challenges of articulating the differences into one overarching proposal. This is probably the biggest challenge. However, this complicated endeavour cannot be understood apart from the historical socio-territorial dynamics and land disputes prior to the entrance of mining companies in El Pangui.

Up until the 2009 elections, El Pangui did not consider large-scale mining to be key to economic development but considered agriculture (improving or establishing various agricultural activities within an ecologically sustainable framework) and different forms of tourism (ecotourism, ethno-tourism) as the primary strategies for local development. However, during the electoral campaign in the first few months of 2009, on-going interviews with local government officials and candidates revealed that sentiments toward mining had shifted somewhat. The debate for or against mining seemed to have been lost since the approval of a new Mining Law meant that a decision from ‘above’ (the national government) had been taken in favour of mining and local governments needed to accept that large-scale mining would go ahead, regardless of their positions. Yielding to large-scale mining activities did not mean, however, that government officials were convinced that mining brings about economic development or that it can be done responsibly. Rather it meant that, when faced with the inevitability of mining, the best thing to do was strengthen local government capacities to make sure that mining companies abide by the law, and that local authorities receive benefits, monitor activities, ensure socially and environmentally responsible mining and, if necessary, mitigate conflict.

The extractive model that the central government proposed for the cantons along the Cordillera del Condor is at odds with the alternative model of development that many people of El Pangui wanted. The cantonal governments of Gualaquiza, El Pangui and Yantzaza (where Corriente has its concessions) all prioritized agriculture and tourism in their development plans. They did not include large-scale mining nor did they openly reject it. Yet, the National Plan for Good Living 2009-
2013 of SENPLADES – mentioned earlier – insists that large-scale mining will be developed, particularly the projects in Southeast Ecuador.

**Conclusion: Negotiating Differences?**

Conflicts around mining reflect divergent models of development, land use and territorial control, and of whose rights and voices should carry the most weight in political and economic decision-making. But are these differences negotiable?

In some spaces of political debate, differences have been negotiated in constructive ways. At the national level, the anti-mining movement has initiated a number of important social and political processes. Firstly, it motivated the elaboration of more inclusive processes of policy making and demanded greater participation. Importantly, demands for amendments to the extractive model are not being made but there are rather questions being asked of the extractive model altogether while seeking to build consensus through the proposal of an alternative development model based on *sumak kawsay*. The model may have become a symbolic meeting ground for the negotiation of differences regarding understandings of good living, prosperity, or land use and territorial control. The future will tell whether the application of *sumak kawsay* can resolve differences without conflict.

At a local level, the conflict of interests and different visions of development between the national and local governments regarding mining continue to be at odds and have not been negotiated in productive ways. The sense of defeat that some local government officials expressed when the Mining Law was passed illustrates the lack of political power local governments have to define and pursue the development many of their citizens have chosen. This relative powerlessness of local authorities has a long history in Ecuador, was never seriously offset by decentralization initiatives during the neoliberal period, and has been reproduced by the tendency of the Correa administration to further concentrate authority in the central state.
In El Pangui, another space for the negotiation of differences exists, which, to a certain degree, has transformed previous territorial disputes and conflicts over land. The different actors who have mobilized together to reject mining, although with their own set of challenges and difficulties, have managed to articulate their different understandings of the environment and land practices into a consolidated alternative development model. They have found, in this new alternative and indigenous development model of *sumak kawsay*, a way to legitimize their anti-mining sentiments as proactive and constructive proposals.

This suggests that since the mining conflict began, differences have been negotiated strategically, convergences have been sought and expressed through local political agendas and development plans have begun to prioritize alternatives to mining. Articulations are at times merely strategic and may be short-lived; however, they do open spaces for social change. They are also a step forward in dealing with differences that have historically led to territorial disputes and conflict. The mining conflict in El Pangui has had the constructive result of creating the foundations for an alternative model that encompasses the different concerns laid out above. This has occurred through the construction of new discourses, identities, and relationships. Whether these new discourses will effectively produce territorial changes, or if mining conflicts will continue to polarize and become increasingly violent, will be the critical issue facing citizens of El Pangui in the future.
6 Why be poor when we can be rich? Constructing Responsible Mining in El Pangui, Ecuador

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Abstract

Mining companies operating in Latin America are giving Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) more attention than before, in part because of the rise in mining-related conflicts and criticism about the industry’s social and environmental impacts. Companies propose that CSR could play an important role in mitigating conflict or lessening its risk. This article argues that the opposite may also be the case. As the mining conflict in El Pangui, Southeast Ecuador transforms social territorial dynamics, CSR also has a function in those transformations by contributing to the polarisation of conflict. The paper provides a brief ethnographic account of the ongoing conflict in El Pangui, and critically examines the moves made by the company, Corriente Resources Inc., to illustrate how CSR discourses and programmes may play an adverse role in social conflict.

Keywords: Ecuador, corporate social responsibility, mining conflict, Shuar, social movement

It is February 12, 2009, the end of a weeklong celebration of the founding of the canton\textsuperscript{129} of El Pangui, located in the province of Zamora Chinchipe in Southeast Ecuador. The Canton has now been an independent political entity for 18 years, and its mountain range, the Cordillera del Cóndor, is the location of a large-scale mining project owned by the Canadian company Corriente Resources Inc.\textsuperscript{130} For the entire day, there were people passing

\textsuperscript{129} Canton is a geopolitical division similar to a district.

\textsuperscript{130} After I finished my fieldwork in 2008–2009, Corriente Resources was sold to CRCC-Tongguan Investment Co. Ltd., a jointly owned subsidiary of Tongling Nonferrous Metals Group Holdings and China Railway Construction Corporation, in March 2010 (see www.corriente.com). However, in this article I refer to the company as Corriente Resources and its subsidiary, Ecuacorriente (ECSA), because these two entities were in operation during the fieldwork.
by my window, there were many new stands in the streets selling all types of products, and there were various activities throughout the town. Coloured plastic tape blocked off the roads, and people were setting up their chairs on the sidewalk with food and drinks. They wanted a front-row view of the in-town race car derby.

There were only six cars in the race. Apparently, one of the drivers was a “miner”, meaning that he is in favour of the much disputed large-scale mining project that has been the cause of social conflict among Panguenses since 2006. As with much of what goes on in town, one’s position regarding mining, either in favour or against it, characterises how people relate to one another. The cars raced by in the town, led by a police truck, making incredible noise and screeching at the turns. The small streets are not all asphalt, and the jungle roads were muddy.

When I expressed my amazement that the derby was passing right through town to my host family, Elvira and Pepe\textsuperscript{131} talked only of the ridiculousness of the derby prize, and they were anxious about what would happen when the race finished. Although I reiterated my safety concerns, they were apprehensive about the fact that the derby prize was “donated” by Corriente Resources. Elvira was extremely concerned about the outcome of the derby once people found out the source of the prize money.

Elvira explained: “People clearly are upset about that fact; they do not want anything to do with the mining company.” People are starting to wake up and realise that the company only deceives—engaña.\textsuperscript{132} “But, isn’t that just with the people who have lost their jobs with the company?” I asked.

\textsuperscript{131}These are pseudonyms for my host family.
\textsuperscript{132}Spanish for “cheats”.
provocatively. “No,” Elvira responded, “people in general, everyone, is realising that the company lies and cheats.”

Eventually, people found out that the prize money came from Corriente Resources. The participants rejected the prize and made a public speech on stage, in which, through loudspeakers, they denounced the prize donation and even the involvement of the town mayor in such dealings. The audience started to raise their voices and scream at the people on the podium. “We don’t want the company! Out with those transnationals! Out!” Others defended the derby and wanted desperately to hand the prize over to the winners. A small brawl broke out, and people scattered.

Introduction

Company involvement in the celebration described above is an example of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It can be understood as an attempt by the company to be a “good neighbour”, thus projecting ethical and moral values onto all of its activities. From this perspective, CSR can be seen as stemming from the notion that companies relate to society in particular ways and are expected to share benefits from their economic activities by responding to society’s needs (Yakovleva and Jenkins, 2006, Bebbington, 2010)

However, the celebration is also symbolic of the dispute between the performance of the new neighbour on the one hand, and citizens who are wary of those good intentions on the other hand. As a company enters the public sphere, a conflicting dynamic can develop, its presence immediately challenged, questioned or even openly rejected. From this perspective, as I will argue later, CSR programmes have social impacts and unforeseen consequences that present challenges to the construction of a social and environmentally responsible mining climate.

The complex relationships between mining companies and local communities may not be novel. But the way that companies are approaching these conflicts and
using CSR to help mitigate them needs to be considered. The situation raises questions about whether CSR is an appropriate avenue to address, avoid or mitigate conflict, especially in the context of a post-armed confrontation and in a geographical area with a history of conflict, such as El Pangui. It also motivates enquiry into the effects and impacts of CSR in places where state institutions are, historically, weak or absent, as is the case in borderlands in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Jenkins states that for the mining industry, “CSR is about balancing the diverse demands of communities and the imperative to protect the environment with the ever present need to make a profit” (Jenkins, 2004, p.24). However, the role that CSR appears to play in social conflict raises issues regarding this balancing act and the suitable relationship between big business and society.

Preliminary conclusions of my ethnography in El Pangui were that mining companies’ CSR discourses and programmes play an unfavourable role in an existing social conflict. CSR is a constitutive part of the ongoing transformations in territorial dynamics and appears to influence and intensify the conflict that results from those tensions. These points will be argued by discussing the territorial dynamics and the current mining conflict in the Canton of El Pangui and by analysing the company’s objectives and logic, as well as its CSR strategies. This paper aims to contribute to a greater understanding of resource conflicts in the Amazon and the role of CSR in those conflicts.

I situate my work within the literature on political ecology that studies resource-related conflicts with a specific geographical focus on Ecuador. Studies on struggles over natural resource have drawn attention to the causes of resource conflicts and the socio-environmental impacts of extractive industry (Ballard and Banks, 2003, p.19, Geddicks, 1993, Bury, 2004). Some academics analyse and emphasise environmental justice (Bebbington, 2007b, Perreault, 2006, Tsing, 2000) and the relationships among extractive industry, the environment, livelihoods and institutional change (Bebbington and Bury, 2009), whereas others bring attention to the role of indigeneity and identity politics in struggles over natural resources (Sawyer, 2004, Kirsch, 2006, Ali, 2003).

A few authors have carried out work on this topic with a geographical focus on Latin America. Bebbington (2010), for example, argues, based on studies in the Andes that corporate programmes can serve to disarticulate, anticipate and dissipate social conflict. A similar point is made by Himley (2010), who concludes that CSR programmes may be used to deflect criticism as a way of diverting responsibility and not addressing claims made by affected communities. This type of practice can lead to CSR programmes to be understood as attempts to defuse local opposition and become a breeding ground for friction, as Li (2010) suggests, based on her research in Peru. In a study of CSR in the mining industry in Argentina, Yakovleva et al. (2010, 2011) criticise the CSR framework as inappropriate for understanding local company-community relationships. Their studies reveal that local perceptions of the CSR of mining companies might contribute to social conflict. The argument presented in this paper follows a similar analytical thread and adds that CSR programmes, discourses and activities should be understood as a constitutive part of social and territorial transformations.

This paper is based on a year-long field study that was conducted in 2008 and 2009 in southeast Ecuador in which I studied the territorial dynamics in the Canton of El Pangui and its transformations after the arrival of the mining company, Corriente Resources. I lived in El Pangui and used ethnographic methods, including first-hand observation and daily participation, interviews and focus groups, and also conducted interviews with officials from government and civil society throughout southeast Ecuador (in the provinces of Zamora Chinchipe, Loja and Morona Santiago) and in the city of Quito. I spoke regularly with local
government representatives in El Pangui and in the neighbouring Cantons of Yantzaza, Gualaquiza and Limon Indanza (the latter is located in Corriente’s concessions).

I reviewed and analysed a range of company documents from SEDAR,\(^{133}\) shareholder online chat rooms,\(^ {134}\) company reports, press releases, websites and (when available) CSR programme agreements. I had some conversations with police, military and representatives of the church of El Pangui, but because of the sensitivity of the conflict, I never interviewed a local company official. During the time of my study, little mining activity was occurring in the area as the new mining and water laws were being drafted. Corriente’s concessions were suspended by the government, and the company was in the midst of selling itself to a Chinese conglomerate. However, the company’s CSR programmes did not cease, and discourses through public relations and media campaigns were ongoing.

In the next section, I will briefly review the CSR literature and offer a brief ethnographic description of El Pangui and the social conflict. Next, an analysis of the company follows, including its objectives and logic, and I close with a discussion of how the company’s CSR programmes contributed to the conflicts over social and territorial transformation in El Pangui.

**Mining and Corporate Social Responsibility**

CSR is not a new concept but rather a successor to the corporate philanthropy and charity of the 1950s (Utting, 2000). However, the concept may be considered new to the extractive industry in general and the mining industry specifically because it has been adopted and developed by mining corporations in the last 10-20 years (De Echave, 2011a). In addition, CSR may be considered as surpassing the philanthropic good-heartedness of the owner of a single company to include other

\(^{133}\)SEDAR is an abbreviation for the System for Electronic Document Analysis and Retrieval, which is a filing system developed for the Canadian Securities Administrators (CSA). The official site (www.sedar.com) provides access to most public securities documents and information filed by public companies and investment funds with the CSA in the SEDAR filing system.

\(^{134}\)www.stockhouse.com.
elements, such as environmental protection programmes or sustainable development projects that go beyond the requirements of the law. It has also become somewhat of a global movement that incorporates social and environmental standards as established in global arenas of debate.

In general terms, one may consider the rise in CSR as related to the rise in neoliberalism and globalisation processes whose orthodoxy assumes that markets can keep corporations in check when they are functioning freely. The neoliberal model implies a reduction of state regulation that ceded ground to corporate self-regulation and voluntary initiatives (Utting, 2005). Furthermore, corporate self-regulation has evolved into the promotion of initiatives that go beyond legal obligations in countries where the companies operate and where they are self-motivated to improve social, environmental and human rights standards.

Accompanying these trends and examining the mining industry in particular, CSR can understood as a response to criticism from communities affected by mining, civil society organisations, governments and transnational networks regarding the social and environmental impacts of mining (Hamman and Kapelus, 2004). The establishment of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), an initiative founded in 2001 to advance the mining industry’s commitment to sustainable development, reflects an interest in developing CSR guidelines as a result of global mining firms recognising the significant problems faced by their sector that are related to reputation, sustaining profits, access to new assets and maintaining investor and employee confidence.135

One of the principal debates in the literature is how to define CSR, which is often accompanied by commentary regarding what it should or should not be (Vintro and Comanjuncosa, 2010, Hamman and Kapelus, 2004, Frynas, 2005, Scherer and Palazzo, 2007, Thomas and Nowak, 2006). The concept is evolving and is better understood as an umbrella term that comprises a number of key features. This paper uses the definition of CSR in the mining industry provided by Vintro and Comanjuncosa – namely, “a method of managing the company, which is integrated

into the strategy and that harmonises profitability (the traditional vision of business) with social and environmental actions (the sustainable vision of development)” (Vintro and Comajuncosa, 2010, p. 32). In this sense, CSR is foremost a comprehensive business model and management tool that incorporates issues related to sustainable development and the environment and is implemented as a response to the demands of any shareholders or stakeholders. This CSR model is considered to have a triple bottom line that includes economic, social and environmental results.

In the mining sector, CSR has been redesigned to establish a new business culture with an ethical management strategy based on values, such as respect, honesty, and solidarity. It is also a model that, in principle, assumes greater responsibility for social and environmental damages related to or directly caused by mining activities. In effect, CSR is multifaceted and incorporates four large areas in terms of corporate responsibilities: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic (Carroll, 1991). A business case is made for CSR that argues that it can be beneficial and can even help companies adhere to the goal of maximising shareholder value.

The expansion of mining activity that has unfolded in Latin America over the past 20-30 years has sparked debate and in many cases, conflict, over environmental and community-level impacts. These issues constitute a rapidly expanding aspect of risk that companies previously did not address in their project assessments (Moody, 2005). One primary component of risk is social acceptability, which many companies try to manage through their CSR programmes and, more importantly, by gaining a social license to operate. It is alleged that securing a licence to operate can minimise social risk, improve issues related to legitimacy and credibility, and provide the company with a competitive advantage (Joyce and Thomson, 2000, Parker et al., 2008). CSR is considered to be key in establishing and building relationships with communities and instrumental in gaining the social licence to operate (Joyce and Thomson, 2000). Understood in this way, the efforts

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136 Observatorio Conflictos Mineros America Latina (OCMAL).
made by mining companies to build relationships with communities should be conducted at every stage of a project.\textsuperscript{137}

It is imperative, however, not to consider CSR policies and programmes independent of company’s investment and external relations strategies. Doing so evades recognising those linkages, and local populations often experience the package as a whole. Media campaigns and other external relations are often part of CSR policies and programmes and are in many cases handled by the same office and staff to communicate, publicly, a project’s benefits.

Unlike other Latin American countries, in Ecuador, the large-scale mining sector is in an embryonic stage of development. At present, there are no operational large-scale mines in the country. But in anticipation of operating, the industry has spent many years constructing a discourse of social and environmental responsibility, primarily through media and public relations.

Prior to 2006, Corriente Resources had a relatively limited CSR programme. Its corporate creed in 2004 stated that the company’s aim was to,

“[t]hrough mining, help to provide a sustainable future in communities where we work. Contribute to the care and preservation of the Environment. Set high ethical standards as daily business practice. Respect and be considerate of all others” (Corriente Resources, 2004, p.1)

In this same document, there are only a few lines which outline the company’s commitment to sustainable development, including the following passage from the Brundtland Commission’s Report, \textit{Our Common Future}:\textsuperscript{138} “Sustainable Development means development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (Corriente Resources, 2004, p.7). This discussion is followed by five very broad points regarding the responsibilities of corporations. These are: to respect the culture, traditions and values of individuals and groups affected by Corriente’s

\textsuperscript{137} Author’s recording – presentation by Barrick Gold at the 2009 Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada.

\textsuperscript{138} Brundtland Report from the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published in 1987
operations; to minimise risks to the environment in which Corriente operates; to recognize communities as stakeholders and commit to consultation and communication; to participate in sustainable development of the communities in which they operate and to integrate their objectives with local, regional and national objectives.

Corriente issued a newsletter in 2006 entitled "The Voice of the Frontier: from Tundayme to El Pangui",\textsuperscript{139} in which mention was made of social development projects ranging from support to education, training, health care and microcredit. The CSR programme in first years of their operations, appeared to be limited primarily to infrastructure, evident in the agreement between the company and the Canton of Tundayme, that included, for example, building a road, sewage system and a health care centre. It was widely known that the company also offered gifts and donations to the Shuar Federation in Zamora Chinchipe (FSHZCH).\textsuperscript{140}

It was not until 2007 that the company’s Ecuadorian subsidiary developed its logo, image and a “corporate philosophy”. Its “Fair Deal” describes the company’s values and vision. Some examples of CSR initiatives it has undertaken include the financing of a culture centre for Shuar\textsuperscript{141} youth (Diario Centinela, 2011b), to coordination of vaccination campaigns, and the sponsoring of a sports event called the “ECSA Cup of Lojanidad” (Diario Centinela, 2011a). Subsequently, these events were overly publicised in media campaigns for radio, television and newspapers.

Ecuador lends itself to the study of the construction of socially responsible mining because, for the first time in its history, the country is on the verge of developing a large-scale global mining industry. The national government is opening the door to


\textsuperscript{140} The Shuar federation is an indigenous organisation that represents Shuar communities located in the province of Zamora Chinchipe and contributes to the development of their communities through their various programmes. It is important to note that this federation is not affiliated or associated with the national indigenous organisation Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador-CONAIE.

\textsuperscript{141} Shuar indigenous peoples or self-denominated Shuar nation, are spread out between Peru and Ecuador. For more information see www.conaie.org.
developers and promoting large-scale mining as a means of diversifying and stimulating the economy under a new mining law that distances itself somewhat from the previous neoliberal model. The industry considers the political scenario to be favourable for the establishment of a mining industry because, as ECSA manager Ian Harris noted, “the new scenario has really helped promote the policy of using responsible mining to develop the country [...] the president has shown a lot of support for mining” (BNAmericas, 2009).

Ecuador, however, is by no means new to the extractive industries. The development of the mining industry follows decades of operations of a complex and controversial large-scale oil industry. The discovery of oil in the Ecuadorian Amazon in the 1970s seemed, at the time, to be a harbinger of good news and was heralded as the country’s salvation, in much of the same way as the discovery of gold and copper deposits is being presented today. But the oil industry has caused widespread environmental, social and health-related impacts, the subject of a number of cases that continue to be fought over in U.S. and Ecuadorian courts.\textsuperscript{142} The business community in Ecuador contests that companies have learned from these mistakes, and that the new generation of entrepreneurs\textsuperscript{143} will not follow the oil industry – that it is motivated to develop a CSR agenda based on the notion of corporate citizenship (Salazar-Cordova, 2010).

Since the election of President Rafael Correa at the end of 2006, Ecuador’s socio-political climate has experience drastic change. Characterised as “21\textsuperscript{st} century socialism”, the “citizen’s revolution” promoted a National Constituent Assembly that convened to draft a new constitution. Ecuadorians voted for and approved the constitution in September 2008. The drafting process was unique in terms of public participation. On the issue of mining, the state organised various “national mining dialogues” across the country to develop a new legal framework to oversee the development of large- and small-scale operations. In a more general sense, there

\textsuperscript{142} See www.texacotoxico.com and www.cheverontoxico.com.
\textsuperscript{143} For example, the creation of organisations assisting businesses with their CSR programmes, such as the Responsible Mining Council (founded by ECSA, Kinross, IAMGOLD and IMC), the Ecuadorian Consortium for CSR–Red Ceres and the Institute for CSR in Ecuador.
was an active public debate around how Ecuador should pursue an extractive industries economic model and, more specifically, how large- and small-scale mining fits in that model. In these debates, the views of environmental and indigenous movements in opposition to mining were visible and relevant, as well as groups in support of both small- and large-scale mining.

**El Pangui, Ecuador**

El Pangui, in the Canton of the same name, is a town in the foothills of the Cordillera del Cóndor (one of the most biodiverse areas in the world). The area forms part of the sub-Andean mountain range in the provinces of Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe, along the border with Peru. The landscape surrounding the town is dominated by large deforested areas for animal husbandry, square ponds for fisheries and still “wild” forests in that continue to the border. Wherever one goes in the area, the view of the Cordillera is ever-present, holding many meanings and memories of territory, conflict and identity.

Immigrant farmers from the highlands and retired small-scale miners (known as colonos) have established themselves in the Canton, seeking a better life with the dream of having their own plots of land in what was once Shuar territory. There are still ongoing tensions and legal battles regarding land ownership between these groups. Although the indigenous people have a long history of warding off outsiders, including the Incans, today they have somewhat resigned themselves to sharing this space and living alongside their mestizo neighbours.

In addition to the confrontations and struggles that occur among social groups and over the physical and cultural boundaries that define them, the region has experienced violent national border disputes with its southern neighbours, with wars fought in 1941, 1981 and 1995 (Donoso Moreno, 2009). The local population in El Pangui is quite aware that their settlement, serving as a “live frontier”, was part of a military strategy to protect national interests against the constant threat of Peruvian invasion. Furthermore, many Shuar participated vigorously in the 1995
war, in part to demonstrate their commitment to Ecuador and thus to counteract national discourses that considered indigenous people’s claims to land a “threat to national sovereignty”.

Memories of the war are still alive among the local population, and women in particular remember feeding and supporting the troops. During interviews, this memory was repeatedly called upon as the women expressed their frustrations with the current mining conflict because the same troops they fed during the war are today security guards for the mining company and who, according to many, now point their guns in the “wrong direction”.

Social (and armed) political conflict has become a part of everyday life along the Cordillera. Large-scale mining projects first surfaced in southeast Ecuador less than ten years ago. Corriente Resources in particular has triggered a strong resistance from the local population. Although many residents would describe life in El Pangui as *tranquilo*, people also said that the arrival of the transnational mining companies has disturbed this sense of peace. They argued that social relationships have become noticeably tense, divisions and confrontations are common even within families, and that those living in the mining concessions experience constant uncertainty.

The general sentiment among Panguenses can be summed up as follows: “before we used to live fine, we were all *tranquillos*”. Efforts to resist these extractive projects (as well as to support them) have led to the establishment of new social organisations, political mobilisations and discourses, street protests and armed confrontation. The local government has had the difficult task of attending to

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144 Spanish for calm and undisturbed.
145 A common phrase used by interviewees to refer to life before the entrance of the company was as follows: “Antes vivíamos bien, estabamos tranquilos” (Before we lived fine, we were all calm).
these contradictory interests by drifting back and forth between supporting the company and the national government, or openly siding with those who resist. We will see an example of this in my field note in the next section, which reports the response of the ex-mayor of El Pangui, Segundo Encarnacion, to requests of both the company and “anti-mining” citizens during a public event that eventually led to an open confrontation.

The conflict has become immersed in cultural practices and government institutions. In particular, since the violent confrontation during the first few days of December 2006, social relationships have been assessed in terms of one’s stance on mining. Daily activities, such as buying groceries at the neighbour’s store, using the Internet shop of the man across the road, choosing which taxi to take or in which hotel to stay, all depend on whether they are with us or not in the struggle. Thus, conflict over mining in El Pangui affects everyday life and is giving new meaning to previous land disputes. However, of course, in El Pangui, stances are often flexible, and a change of sides is not uncommon.

Corriente Resources’ Ecuadorian subsidiary, ECSA, started exploration work in 2000, but it was not until the last few months of 2005 that it formally engaged with local communities and social organisations through informative workshops aimed at explaining the company’s activities. The company reached an agreement for a five-year contract with Warintz, a Shuar community in the concession area, allowing them to work in their territory in exchange for funds for small development projects. Beginning in 2003, some Shuar leaders began to work directly for the company in community relations. In Zamora, both colonos and Shuar also started to do some work for the company. Soon after that, the company’s employees met landowners who were located in their concession to persuade them to sell their property. The municipality of El Pangui registered 21 land purchases in 2004 that totalled 1779, 50 hectares, and 12 purchases of 758 hectares in 2005 and 26 purchases of 1,250 hectares in 2006. These purchases immediately led to tensions and disagreements within families.

*las personas y pueblos afectados por las actividades mineras y petroleras en el Ecuador,* presented to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, March 2, 2007 (www.cidh.org).
Between October 23 and 30, 2006, a seven-day march covering 260 kilometres took place from El Pangui north to Jimbotono, where protesters demanded the suspension of all mining activities and hydroelectric dams (De la Cruz, Calle, Mejia et al. 2007). On November 1, the community of Warintz decided to march to Corriente’s mining camp and evict the workers. The next day, a group of Shuar from Warintz and other neighbouring communities continued to San Carlos and presented an ultimatum to company workers to vacate the camp within three days and proceeded to take over the mining camp. Workers were also evicted on November 6 from San Juan Bosco camp and on November 7 from Rosa de Oro. A Shuar leader described these events as “cleansing our territories of mining”. On November 9, approximately 300 people (including some local authorities) marched from El Pangui to the main company camp from Chuchumbletza. Company workers, police, military and the pro-mining Shuar Federation were waiting for the protesters on a curve in the road, near Santiago Paty. A violent exchange of rocks, sticks and dynamite resulted in injuries to 15 people.

During the first few days of December 2006, a bi-provincial assembly with approximately 1,000 participants was held in El Pangui’s Coliseo. The assembly decided to march again to the Mirador mining camp, but the marchers were met with real bullets and smoke grenades. The standoff lasted three days. After that, the government suspended Corriente’s activities in both provinces.

The events of December 2006 marked a turning point for many people in El Pangui regarding their views and attitudes towards large-scale mining in general and their relationships with the company. It widened the divide and polarised positions concerning the community’s social relationships in various aspects, from family ties to working relations and even children’s friendships at school. Existing or latent tensions that might have had other sources or explanations became redefined and understood in terms of mining.

The events were a decisive moment for all parties because it made visible a growing problem that the company lacked the capacity to address. After the height of violence, the company faced an enormous challenge in rebuilding its
relationships with local communities through its CSR programmes. In some cases, these programmes exacerbated the conflict further by becoming a dynamic part of it. Social risk, in this case, was never fully reduced, and latent tensions unexpectedly led to an increased level of conflict, making it even more challenging for the company to gain or maintain credibility.

**A “Fair Deal” in El Pangui**

On the last day of the carnival, on the anniversary of El Pangui foundation, there was a street march by the children of the secondary school. The kids were dressed in their finest clothing, marching down the main road under the hot jungle sun. The youngest son of my host family was also in the march, in his khaki shirt and tie. I had gone earlier to his house, which is on the main road and was sitting with Mother, just hanging out, chatting, and eating ice cream (sold to me by the “miner” across the street). When I saw Pablo, he called out to me and waved enthusiastically. I immediately got up and took pictures of him, as his class buddies made fun of him. In my mind, I recalled Pablo’s story that one time at his elementary school, he had an argument with other kids, and he had to defend himself from the bullies whose parents are in favour of mining. The kids had received T-shirts from the company, which Pablo openly rejected. Being a “miner” became a terrible insult, similar to being an ecologista.  

As I sat with Elvira, the military, who were also in the march, stood still for a long time right in front of us. They were all dressed up, high leather boots, green clothing, machine guns over their shoulders, both women and men. Elvira seemed tense. When I asked where her husband and her other son were, she said that they went to confirm a rumour that the mining company was planning to “infiltrate” the march. They were going to come with their printed banners, saying how

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147 Field notes, February 14.  
148 This is related to the phrase President Correa uses to deflect environmentalist criticisms by calling them infantile ecologists. See his Saturday radio programs.
responsible they are and how they care for the environment and the community. She told me a story:

Three years ago, in 2007, the company intruded and infiltrated the march. When our friends and I saw them, we all went in a large group to the street to meet them. We blocked their passage and prevented them from marching. We threw stones at them for them to leave, and the police had to come. The police threw tear gas to disperse the people. Imagine that, instead of telling the company to leave, they threw gas at us. The company had come with their flags and banners, with their empty promises, how they would give us work, how Ecuador needs them, how they care for us and our environment—what they now call El trato justo.

Prior to the march, we heard that the miners were going to march. Therefore, we went to see the mayor and told him that if he authorises the company to march that he had to authorise us to march as well. That is only fair. Why should only they get to march with their flags? The mayor realised how complicated things were getting, so he denied all of us and the company permission to march. However, then, there they were! Imagine that! Obviously, when we saw the company in the street, we got everyone together very quickly, and we went out to meet them and stop them from marching. In the end, we stopped them. After that, they never came out to march again.

It is the same with the military. They are in the march today, but the year before last, they did not appear because everyone was upset with them. After the events in 2006, people were upset with them because they had been acting as security for the company and not doing their duty to protect us citizens. Can you imagine? During the war with Peru, we fed them, took care of them and those same faces turned their guns on us during the conflict with the mining company! Thus, they were scared to enter the march, maybe afraid of the resistance they might find or simply to avoid
trouble. These last two years, things have been more tranquilo, so they are in the march.

Pepe came back. It was only a rumour. This year the company was not going to be in the march.

Corriente Resources was incorporated in Canada in 1983 and operates in Ecuador through the subsidiaries Ecuacorriente S.A., Explorcobres S.A., Puertocobre S. A., Proyecto Hidroeléctrico Santa Cruz S.A. and Hidrocruz (Corriente Resources, 2010b). Corriente has four known copper and copper-gold deposits: two in the Mirador Project and the other two in Panantza and the San Carlos Project in the neighbouring northern province of Morona Santiago (Drobe et al., 2008a).

The company has been pursuing the development of its mining concessions in Ecuador since 2000, when Mirador was bought from BHP Billiton Plc (at that time known as Billiton Plc). Prior to BHP Billiton, Gencor had also performed some exploration work at the site, specifically, between 1994 and 1996. The total concessioned areas in both provinces amount to approximately 15,000 hectares. The Mirador project has a measured and indicated resource of 11 billion pounds of copper, whereas the Panantza San Carlos has an inferred 14.4 billion pounds of copper (Terrambiente Consultores, 2009). Included in the package is the construction of an open pit mine, basic infrastructure (such as the improvement of existing roads), the Puerto Bolivar port in Machala and the provision of energy (hydroelectric projects of varying sizes and types are being planned). Water supply does not appear to be an issue; on the contrary, an extreme abundance of water, especially in the rainy season, poses many engineering challenges to large-scale mining operations in the Cordillera del Cóndor.

A study of ECSA operations conducted by consultants working on a corporate engagement project (CEP), a collaborative effort involving multinational

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149 Observatorio Conflictos Mineros America Latina (OCMAL).
corporations, found “several indications that company policies and practices have played as large a role as external factors in the existence of strained company-community relations” (CDA, 2009, p.2). The CEP team noted the perception of ECSA employees that external as well as several internal operational policies and practices exacerbate conflict. Furthermore, in their analysis, the consultants found that there was no shared vision or understanding of a community relations strategy among the sustainable development team, nor was it widely shared with other employees. This lack of strategy has resulted in community engagement often being left to individual initiative and not being part of a clearly defined and communicated policy and strategy. The CEP team noted that although these issues are mainly managerial and are indirectly related to company-community issues, they do have a direct impact on how the company operates and is perceived.

Companies have increasingly become aware of the conflicts that arise in relation to their operations and therefore, are investing more in CSR. Mining projects may run the risk of experiencing costly delays, or a project may even be lost altogether\(^{151}\) as a result of sustained social opposition (Coumans, 2011). CSR is seen as having the ability to help mitigate these risks and assist in gaining or restoring confidence and support from the local communities, and local and national governments, as well as helping to create a positive public opinion of a company’s operations.

Corriente had entered at a time when risk was evident and at which their CSR efforts became much more visible. The national government also recognised this risk, as President Correa warned in March 2007 that a “civil war” could take place between communities and mining companies (EFE, 2007).

Corriente saw the need to become responsive to the emergent anti-mining sentiment. The company had become aware of the level of violence possible during protests and, as a result, had decided that their efforts needed to concentrate on improvements in the area of communication and information.

\(^{151}\)See Intag case in northern Ecuador at www.miningwatch.ca.
Corriente Resources CEO, Ken Shannon, stated the following in a press release issued on December 8, 2006, just days after the confrontations:

Protests against mining activities are not unique to Ecuador and are usually based on misinformation and ulterior motives. Many of these protesters appear to be from outside communities that have been brought into the region in an effort to disrupt resource development activities. Our company has and will always be committed to full environmental responsibility and to our local communities, who are counting on us for jobs and other benefits such as significantly improved housing, medical services and education. ¹⁵²

The company’s reading of the conflict was supported by the government when the Vice President of Ecuador’s Chamber of Mines (CME), César Espinosa, claimed that the communities in the mine’s area of influence were not responsible for instigating the protests. He stated that: “Those communities are pro-mining and I would calculate that the majority of the population is in favour of mining”. In addition, and in the view of Mr. Espinosa, the problem arose due to a lack of information about mining, explaining that “CME is going ahead with an aggressive campaign to inform the communities of what the modern, responsible mining that we are promoting really is”. ¹⁵³

These statements capture the perspective of the company and the national government regarding 1) the reasons for the conflict (a lack of information and outside instigators); 2) what needed to be done (inform about modern responsible mining); 3) who the media campaign targeted (the general public, including those outside of the mine site); and 4) the need to continue supporting communities in the vicinity of the project. Corriente Resources redesigned its outreach strategies to develop a new company image in a CSR programme and media campaign that

¹⁵³ Idem.
focused on transmitting the company's commitment to socially and environmentally responsible mining under the motto, *El Trato Justo* (the Fair Deal).

According to Ecuacorriente:

“Fair deal” is more than just a phrase; it is a commitment of every employee to transform this idea into a philosophy for daily action to ensure a harmonious relationship of trust and respect among those involved with mining in Ecuador. Fair deal means to be transparent, open and consistent. Fair deal means that all parties are satisfied. That the state is respected, that nature is cared for responsibly and human beings treated with dignity and fairness.

ECSA, while it develops its mining activities, has the firm conviction of establishing a fair deal with communities and workers to ensure fair treatment to the environment and agree on a fair deal with the state. We share this vision; we work in harmony to contribute to a sovereign country that will provide a better future for all Ecuadorians. That is why we invest in land and develop responsible mining as a real opportunity for wealth and as a tool to fight poverty. This is “fair”.

The Fair Deal campaign focused on demonstrating what type of company ECSA was and highlighting its corporate values. The company used key words such as “trust and respect” and “dignity and fairness” to try to re-establish and build relationships with communities in El Pangui. The company tried to bridge the gap between discourse and action by stating that they wished to transform “this idea into a philosophy for daily action”. It also aimed to respond to accusations made by those in opposition to the mine who saw the company as “stealing riches that belong to Ecuadorians” by claiming that they wanted to “contribute to a sovereign country that will provide a better future for all”.
The television promotions of “el trato justo” appear to have the objective of presenting or explaining what the company understands this phrase to mean. In one advertisement, we see a Shuar family preparing ayampacos\textsuperscript{154} and then sitting down to eat. In another, we see a young man helping a Shuar mother and daughter cross a river. Yet another shows a schoolgirl taking her canoe in the morning and being assisted by a driver, and in a fourth, a Shuar woman washing clothes by the river. All of these “spots” were crafted to highlight the local scenery and daily activities. The image is of an ideal place, a lush green jungle and pleasant people. The Shuar, borrowing from Alcida Rita Ramos, are hyper-real Indians represented in a daily activity in traditional dress, although in El Pangui, this type of clothing is usually used for public performances (Ramos, 1992). What we do not see in these advertisements is the company, and there is very little mention of mining.

The company designed and implemented several community relations strategies after identifying local and regional communities’ needs as well as the related impacts of the company’s future mining activities on these communities. However, not all of these strategies were welcomed or understood by communities. Following the aim of ECSA to show that it provides a fair treatment of the environment, the company created a “tree nursery” to help reforest areas that could be affected by the project. It also built a botanical garden as a way to “contribute to the ecological knowledge …. and support the mitigation of certain environmental and social impacts on the forests during the development of the Mirador project” (EcuaCorriente, 2009).

Infrastructure projects were carried out in the town of San Marcos (a town within the concession area) as part of ECSA’s CSR programme. However, these projects raised doubts among local inhabitants about the company’s intentions—which later grew into grievances\textsuperscript{155}—since the location of the town was identified in the company’s Feasibility Study of 2008 and Environmental Impact Study of 2009 as

\textsuperscript{154} This is a Shuar meal consisting of chicken and palm hearts cooked in banana leaf.

\textsuperscript{155} Interviews with inhabitants of San Marcos, May 2009.
the area for the tailings management facility and requiring the relocation of the town of San Marcos.

The road sign directing the way to the botanical garden adjacent to the mining camp was posted in front of an older sign that warned of danger (commonly known to be attributable to the land mines left by the military during the war with Peru). The botanical garden was not taken seriously by many Panguenses, who considered it a joke or did not understand why the company built it. Farmers and indigenous people had the same plants and flowers on their lands and in their homes. They did not believe that the “garden” or the “tree nursery” could mitigate the impacts of large-scale mining in the jungle. We could say that in the same way that a botanical garden should not be superimposed on an area of land mines, the CSR discourse should consider the context in which it is released and acknowledge El Pangui’s history and territorial dynamics.

Corporate Rationale

To better understand the CSR of ECSA, it is important to analyse the discourses, the corporate logic and the company’s actions. In other words, we need to ask the following: What is the objective of this company? What is their vision for this project? How did they propose to carry out these objectives? The answers to these questions illustrate that there is a dissonance between the company discourse and its practices and the corporate objective. The dissonance, however, is subjective and interpreted in terms of people’s attitudes towards mining projects. The distance is great for those in opposition to mining and small for those who favour mining.

Initially, Corriente and its subsidiaries were absorbed by a consortium of Chinese companies: CRCC-Tongguan Investment Co. Ltd. and China Railway Construction Corporation, and its board of directors was replaced. Its common shares ceased to

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156 Tailings or mines waste is the material that is left over after the ore has been separated from the rock. It is basically the waste materials and will contain the chemicals used to separate the ore. Tailings are also a significant environmental liability of a mining project.

be listed for trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange on August 4, 2010 and were delisted on the NYSE Amex as of June 21, 2010. The business plans that ECSA had may vary substantially after the sale, and the new directors took over, in particular, by adopting their own corporate standards and traditions. The promises, plans and agreements that ECSA had established while they were working in El Pangui will not necessarily be upheld by the new owners.

Corriente’s website stated that the company is “… principally an exploration company with a goal to acquire properties, to locate and confirm the existence of bodies of commercial ore on them, and to sell the properties to other entities for subsequent development.” This means that the business of the company was to confirm the existence of ore deposits and sell them to others. The company had no previous experience in following a project through to exploitation and reclamation. Its principal advisors were not engineers or miners but came from the financial sector, including organisations such as Citigroup Global Markets and Canaccord Financial, which also managed the sale of the company.

It was unusual to hear of these aspects of the company in the public sphere, particularly through media campaigns in which company discourses were presented. However, the television and radio advertisements, press releases and speeches by company representatives informed the public about aspects of the project that the company never intended to conduct, for example, the extraction, processing, transport or export of the minerals. The company gave the impression that it planned to do more than it actually meant to perform. It elaborated plans for exploitation and the construction of processing plants and costly infrastructure that it would never execute. Although the disjuncture between the company’s self-presentation and its actual plans could be read as contradictory, it represents an example of the highly speculative nature of the mining industry.

These deceptions resulted in the project having a hypothetical character, with plans and projections and estimates expressed in future assumptions of the
possible development it would bring or of the number of jobs it would create. However, for the most part, the mining project existed only in plans and reports. The construction of the project may be compared to what Anna Tsing called an “economy of appearances”, in which giving an appearance of a fabulous mining project is important when it is paired with the fact that mining markets involve a great deal of speculation (Tsing, 2000). Even in media campaigns such as television advertisements, the ECSA presented itself as a development agency using discourse related to development and making little mention of mining, its operations, cycles or even what mineral the company aimed to extract.\textsuperscript{160} The company’s publicity campaigns focused on its commitment to social responsibility, providing jobs, care for the environment, support for indigenous communities and for local sustainable development. Mining was presented merely as a means to an end.

The company discourse loses connection with company practice, is often repetitive and lacks spontaneity. It does not have the “freshness” that results from concrete actions, such as responding to unexpected occurrences, setbacks, progress and corrections. The discourse appears to exist in a vacuum and incapable of nourishing itself from the unexpected occurrences of daily life. For example, ECSA’s publicity campaigns tried to respond to the claims that mining causes environmental damage by stating that the company cares about the environment and that other activities, such as farming and cattle raising, have more detrimental to the environment than mining.\textsuperscript{161} Because the majority of people living in project are at the time of research were farmers, this discourse caused more irritation.

The company did not have the financial capacity nor the technical logistics to develop, effectively, the mining activity it was promoting. As stated on their website: “With estimated capital costs of US$1.3 billion for the Panantza–San Carlos Project, management determined that this project is better suited for advancement by a large company having the financial and technical resources

\textsuperscript{160} Accessible through YouTube: \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIfLUEolLrM}

\textsuperscript{161} Interview with ECSA employees on Radio Limon, November 8, 2008
required to fast-track its development to production." Consequently, Corriente announced, in January 2008, that it had started the process of contacting potentially-interested parties to become majority strategic partners in their projects with assistance from Citigroup and Canaccord (Financial Post, 2008).  

The question then arises as to what the company has, in fact, accomplished on the CSR front. The company announced that, despite the suspensions of its work, from December 2006 through to March 2009, it was able “to continue offsite development work on enhancements to various engineering, environmental and permitting aspects of the Projects, as well as local community relations activities”. If the activities were suspended for more than two years and its work was offsite, however, what did the company, in fact, do in El Pangui? 

During the exploration phase, the company needed to assert that the mineral it aimed to extract was in abundance, of a high grade and economically feasible to mine, and that it would create value for its shareholders. The exploration phase is also a period in which various stakeholders, investors, shareholders, the government as well as communities need to be convinced that the project is beneficial. This phase was particularly sensitive in Ecuador, where large-scale mining projects were being promoted against the backdrop of years of mobilisation associated with oil projects. The exploration phase, especially for companies limited to exploration, such as Corriente, is a delicate period in which the company needs to put all of the pieces in place to make the project attractive enough to sell. Government requirements need to be approved, such as the environmental impact study, water permits and concession rights. The company needs to have a social 

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163 In December 28, 2009, the company announced the signing of a definitive agreement with CRCC-Tongguan Investment Co., Ltd., Tongling Nonferrous Metals Group Holdings Co. and China Railway Construction Corporation Limited (CRCC), and they agreed to make an offer to acquire all of the company’s outstanding shares for $8.60 per share in cash. The Chinese consortium valued Corriente at approximately $679 million on a fully diluted basis.
164 All of Corriente’s mining operations were suspended in November 2006 by the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum after confrontations in Morona Santiago. Later, in April 2008, operations were suspended through the Constituent Assembly’s approval of the Mining Mandate, which had the purpose of reviewing the mining industry’s projects and contracts.
licence from communities, which becomes even more attractive and seen as legitimate should the licence be given by indigenous communities.

Company discourse was also geared towards national audiences in its media campaigns, which aimed to communicate that the company was engaged in “responsible mining” and had the complete backing of the national government. Responsible mining, although highly debated, is presented as a modern, less contaminating mining activity that brings about sustainable development. The national government started a fierce campaign to support large-scale mining along with a campaign to discredit and even criminalise those individuals who opposed mining (CEDUH et al., 2010). President Correa stated in various public speeches throughout 2007 that he would not let the future of Ecuador, which needs mining for economic development, to be undermined by a handful of dissidents. This apparent company-government alliance regarding a “responsible mining” campaign had the consequence of deepening anti-mining sentiments in El Pangui because such sentiment went hand in hand with people’s criticism of the national government’s programmes and attitude.

Indigenous leaders in favour of the mine and other community members supporting mining activities also spoke out in defence of the project. These sentiments were apparent in pro-mining protests with slogans on banners that read, “We support responsible mining” or “Yes to mining that gives us jobs.” Another catchy slogan was, “Why be poor when we can be rich?” These protests were in response to anti-mining mobilisations. One demonstration took place in Gualaquiza, Morona Santiago, in January 2007, when an international observation committee invited by “anti-mining” organisations arrived to determine the level of militarisation of the Mirador project, and another in the city of Cuenca just after a series of anti-mining mobilisations had gained momentum and frequency in response to the new mining law that was passed at the end of 2008.

It would seem, then, that the company was more involved in public relations, supported by the government and pro-mining factions, than in facilitating responsible mining activities per se. The company was much more involved in
managing the image of its project and its community relations, in developing CSR and in producing media campaigns that would secure the social and political support that were crucial for the project to be sold to a larger company.

**Conclusion: CSR, Mining Conflict and Territorial Dynamics**

CSR can be understood as offering the possibility to minimise the risk of conflict and to assist with restoring and gaining confidence and support from a wide audience, as well as creating a favourable public opinion of a company’s operations. It can provide a positive impression through Carroll’s four categories of CSR by contributing to sustainable development (economic), performing responsibly (ethical), caring for the community and the environment (philanthropic), and abiding by the law (legal).

However, in this case study, the company interventions in the local public sphere developed under CSR programmes have resulted in unexpected adverse effects and thus have exacerbated to mining conflicts rather than helping reduce the risk of them. The prize money in the derby in the first ethnographic account, the T-shirts given to schoolchildren, the company’s attempt to be a part of local cultural celebrations and, finally, the Fair Deal discourse in many ways have intensified the conflict in El Pangui. Social and territorial dynamics that characterise current daily life have incorporated mining conflict and, as a consequence, brought about changes in those dynamics.

Some scholars suggest (Bebbington, 2010, Li, 2010, Himley, 2010) that CSR is used by companies to defuse responsibility, deflect criticism, disarticulate social conflict, and anticipate and dissipate conflict. The role of CSR regarding conflict in El Pangui can be included along in this line of analysis. The Fair Deal and the new CSR programme of ECSA did not adequately address the causes of social conflict; on the contrary, they only served to worsen the already tense relationships. This does not mean that CSR plays this role in conflict in all cases or that CSR is mere “green-washing”. In this particular case study in which CSR programmes were
designed post-confrontation and after the company had lost a great deal of legitimacy, the CSR programme fell short in responding to the criticisms and claims of the public and instead became yet another source of frustration.

The CRS discourse does not appear to be articulated with social narratives that are relevant to the region and that speak of El Pangui’s history, relationships and territory. As a result, the company has an uncomfortable coexistence with the community because it lacks social legitimacy. The dissonance between CSR’s discourse and practice is interpreted according to one’s stance on mining, which also intensifies the conflict by contributing to community divisions related to mining.

It is important to consider that CSR is not necessarily understood by the general public in Latin America in the same way as it is in Canada, the company’s home country (Yakovleva et al., 2010). This is particularly true in an intercultural and plurinational context with varied ethical and moral ontologies. The often absent and weak state institutions in countries such as Ecuador and in border areas like El Pangui, with a political constitution that is less than 20 years old, may mean greater pressure and higher expectations on the part of local populations on mining companies than might be found in the Global North. In such contexts, conflicts may arise when CSR programmes replace government roles and responsibilities, although unlike the state, companies differentiate among the recipients of benefits (by prioritising communities that are located closer to their operations), which can result in community divisions.

Struggles over resource are not new and, as in many other regions of Latin America, they accompany a complex history of conflict over land and natural resources. The case study described in this article is situated in a particular historical context with prior conflicts and territorial disputes that can be seen as a layering of disputes and conflicts related to territory, natural resource use and practices in local society. In addition to the arguments in opposition to the mining project, such as environmental concerns and unequal distribution of benefits, CSR has become yet another source of frustration and confrontation. In other words, in the case of El Pangui, with its historical context and a mining conflict that turned
violent very early on, CSR capitalised on existing territorial dynamics, becoming a part of them and thus contributing to the polarisation of the conflict.
7 Summary and Conclusion

August 2013

As I finish writing this dissertation, the global mining industry is showing evidence that the bonanza supercycle may be over. Multinationals are selling assets, suspending projects and dropping some of their largest projects. Many of the most resisted mining projects are being cancelled or delayed on a global scale. This does not necessarily mean that the industry as a whole is on the decline but rather that, at least for now, a peak has been reached and a bubble burst. What is more probably on the decline is the speculative nature of the mining boom, in particular with regard to precious metals. In other words, no more mushrooming of junior mining exploration companies funded by investors with little or no knowledge of the industry, high risk and expensive projects in unchartered territories or exaggerated claims for the need for more metals and minerals.

In Ecuador, IAMGOLD sold its Quimsacocha gold project located in the central Andes to INV Metals in November 2012, although they maintain a certain interest in the new company. In June 2013 Kinross Gold abandoned its Fruta del Norte project, the biggest and most promising gold project in Ecuador, now dubbed by an editorial note in The Northern Miner as “Fruitless del Norte”\(^\text{165}\). That same week, the Legislative Assembly passed legal reforms meant to relax elements of the mining taxation regime while also negating consultation with indigenous organizations and loosening environmental and social controls that had been included in the 2009 mining law. A new scenario seems to be developing for Ecuador’s still-to-be-realized large scale mining industry. All that said, however, the one mining company that has not yet changed its course is the Chinese owner of the Mirador project.

The social movement in Ecuador and its efforts to question the mining industry’s modus operandi and the national government’s extractive development scheme also seems to be developing in a new frame. Advocacy strategies that aim to force companies to respond to communities’ demands and desires are also in need of revision. The “name and shame” strategies targeting large multinationals, or campaign efforts in a company’s home countries carried out by international activist networks might not work in the same way or not at all for Chinese companies. People in Tundayme have already sensed this possibility when community members in 2012 “retained” ECSA’s Chinese workers in an effort to force management into dialogue over community claims that the company was acting abusively towards locally hired staff. The company responded by saying, “keep them, we will bring more from China”166167.

Another important issue affecting social movements, in Ecuador and beyond, is the increasing criminalisation of movement leaders and the repression of protestors by police and military as a means of silencing critique and dissidence. The anti-mining leader of my host family in El Pangui had almost 30 court cases against him and he had even spent some time in jail for one of the sham accusations (CEDUH et al., 2010). Bosco Wisum, a Shuar professor died, allegedly killed by the police, during a protest march against the Water Law in September 2009168. Since then, 7 Shuar leaders have had criminal charges lodged against them. Assembly member to the Pachakutik Party, Pepe Acacho, was found guilty of terrorism and sabotage in July 2013 in relation to the violence during the Water march169.

\[166\] Communication with Cesar Padilla, director of OCMAL.
\[167\] The Chinese menace has racist connotations in the sense that Chinese companies, particularly state owned companies, do not have much consideration for human rights or labour rights. In El Pangui, the now Chinese company is treating its Ecuadorian workers and especially Shuar workers in degenerate manner with insults and beatings (based on interviews and conversations post-fieldwork).
Meanwhile, a growing number of indigenous leaders are being persuaded to join Correa’s party and take up government positions, weakening and further dividing their organizations. Decreased funding destined to NGO’s and federations to support social movement organising and campaigning, as a result of the global economic slowdown and the declining donor interest in Latin America, is also having a severe impact on social movements. The Ecuadorean government has also been targeting NGO’s that criticize extractive projects. In June 2013 the government passed a decree to control their activities and scope of influence. President Correa issued bylaws to regulate Non-Governmental Organizations working in Ecuador to the extent that the President can veto their internal bylaws. Over the last few years, social movement actors, non-government organisations and indigenous federations have been facing these challenges and struggling to find ways to adjust their strategies.

However, social movement participants are still active and continue with their struggle in spite of these challenges. A new collective –Colectivo por la Defensa de la Cordillera del Cóndor (Collective for the Defence of the Cordillera del Condor) - has been formed to support the diverse groups affected by mining in the region, offering technical assistance, communication and legal defence. The Collective appears to have been formed to respond to the feelings of impotence and dismay that were beginning to beset some social movement actors as a result of the repressive actions of the State against them. In some sense, the Collective could be interpreted as an expression of much needed unity and strength.

Struggles are also played out at a local level, in the public arena, through direct actions in the streets and communities. Dissidence is found within families and among neighbours, reflected in small actions like boycotting the “mining” internet store next door. At another extreme, some social movement leaders and indigenous people are taking up roles in government and pushing for change and alternatives from within the State apparatus. Some anti-mining leaders have taken

up roles in indigenous federations and with support from national and international networks have taken legal actions and promoted litigation against the State, companies and even the Toronto Stock Exchange.

For instance, in January 2013 the legal team of the Collective mentioned above took legal action and brought the Government to court. The action claimed that the Mirador project violated the Rights of Nature. On the 20th of June, the Provincial Court of Pichincha announced its dismissal of the Action for Protection of the Rights of Nature. In response to the sentence, the Collective has announced they will take the case to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Arguably another important and relevant change in Ecuador has been the recent announcement by Rafael Correa that the government will terminate the Yasuni-ITT initiative. In addition, Correa stated that the national oil company, PetroAmazonas would move forward with plans to exploit the Ishpingo, Tambococha, and Tiputini oil fields located within the Yasuni National Park. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, the Yasuni-ITT proposal was the result of years of advocacy and mobilization by NGO, conservation and indigenous groups to protect the Park. The proposal finally reached approval in 2007 and formal recognition in 2008 through Ecuador’s new Constitution that extended rights to Nature. The initiative consisted of protecting the Yasuni National Park in exchange for financial contributions from the international community to offset a portion of Ecuador’s foregone revenue. Correa’s recent decision to end the initiative raises the question as to how far the government has been genuinely interested in making the proposal work? Oil activity on the border and inside the park are already operating

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170 Acción de Protección por los Derechos de la Naturaleza. mayo 15, 2013 [http://cordilleradelcondor.org/2013/05/15/accion-de-proteccion-por-los-derechos-de-la-naturaleza/] (retrieved September 2013).

in Blocks, 14, 16, 17 and 31, by companies Andes Petroleum, Repsol, and Petroamazonas. Indeed Petroamazonas and other oil companies have been quietly preparing for the abandonment of the proposal and to bid in concession rounds X and XI. Perhaps what Correa had called Plan B (i.e. exploit the oil in Yasuni) had always been equal to Plan A (not to drill for oil)?

However, Ecuador’s “green” constitution, includes the right to nature (article 71), protection of protected areas (art.407) and the right to consultation regarding decisions by the state that could affect the environment (art. 308). The Constitution also recognizes the territories of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation as untouchable, says that extractive activities are prohibited in such areas (art. 57) and that violation of these provisions is tantamount to ethnocide. The announcement that the Yasuni-ITT experiment is now over raises important and uncomfortable questions in regard to the future of the Rights to Nature, the \textit{sumac kawsay} development model, and Ecuador’s extractive economy.

Since I left the field in 2009, other territorial transformations have been underway, all a result of the mining project moving forward. The one town that had left a strong impression on me is now a ghost town. Every family in San Marcos has sold their homes and land and left. The health post that the company built as part of its social responsibility program stands tall and strong and empty. The brand new sewage system and paved road remain unused. ECSA bought all the land of San Marcos so they may soon build the tailings pond where thousands of tons of toxic waste will be contained indefinitely. No one wants to live in a tailings pond.

I still recall being in San Marcos, sitting on the porch of the house of one of the families that opposed the mine. It was a rainy day, with momentary heavy non-stop rainfall. I sat next to the lady of the house with my camera and note pad and recorded her interview. However the rain beat down so loud on the roof tops that I could hardly hear her words. Once in a while I would capture a phrase about her sadness, about her concerns over what would become of her, her land and the future of her children. She was very upset and crying while she talked, making it
harder to understand as she continued. Unable to hear her and embarrassed to ask her to repeat herself, I focused on acknowledging her, looking in her eyes, and nodding. I assured myself that I could listen to the recording later. I watched the rain and her tears and wondered if and how her story could be reconstructed, not as notes in my thesis but for herself in real life.

The profound changes that mining projects can stimulate, such as the ones above and others found throughout this dissertation, are part of the longer series of territorial transformations that I have been concerned with in my research. This dissertation deals with the interrelated processes of mining conflicts, social movements, environmental development and territoriality. In particular I have tried to unravel the ways in which these processes set territorial transformations in motion locally, in terms of changes in people’s lives and in the physical surroundings. But I have also tracked how these transformations have involved national and global changes. In attempting to elucidate the ways in which both territory and people have been transformed, I have examined everyday life in El Pangui, the anti-mining movement, government discourses and practices regarding natural resource development, as well as the mining industry and its corporate rationales. I have also illustrated the importance of past territorial conflicts and the human-environment relationships and memories and meanings that are associated with them. I have shown how past territorial conflicts reverberate in subsequent resource struggles.

In this last chapter, I will be leading the reader through a review of the dissertation. I summarize the principal arguments and findings and review the methodology and the engaged research perspective used in order to point out some of the lessons learned. I begin to navigate through my questions, postulates and arguments. I also feel it is necessary to review the alternative thesis format as a learning experience and as an exercise in academic writing. Lastly, I give a brief self-critical analysis of the dissertation as a whole and offer some future research topics.

Alternative Format: academic writing lessons learned
The alternative thesis format has certainly had its advantages as a learning experience in academic writing, but it has not been without a few challenges. The choice for an alternative format grew organically as the dissertation slowly took shape and looking back I believe it was a good decision. Early on, in the introduction I explained that I had been exploring different but interrelated topics which I have interwoven conceptually in the thesis with ideas and discussions about territoriality. The alternative format allowed me to explore these topics with their distinct literatures but still make them part of one same story. The literatures were mostly centred in the realm of Political Ecology, but also included work addressing territoriality, social movements, mining and development, as well as corporate social responsibility. These topics dealt with everyday experiences of resource struggles, human-nature relationships, social movements, the mining industry, development debates and of course, mining conflicts. Another ever-present subject related to debates regarding border making, memory and landscape, as well as ideas about the political ecology of minerals in the subsoil. Although I explored different subjects and theoretical tangents, the concept of territoriality allowed me to approach each of these while still maintaining a unity to my argument. As I have tried to show throughout the thesis, I consider territoriality as the central thread that can tie together all the different but related issues pursued in the dissertation.

The alternative format was not only adequate conceptually, it also offered a chance to work on my academic writing and reporting skills and get exposure to publishing. One of the principal abilities that I hope to acquire as an academic in training is to convey my ideas concisely, clearly and intelligently. As a student, one learns to develop an argument and present it in writing such that the reader may consider it, be convinced of the ideas or engage in debating them. The alternative format dissertation provides the learning experience to carefully arrange one’s ideas and structure text in such a way as to guide the reader in a particular fashion. Of course “regular” thesis writing also may offer these possibilities. However, the prospect of publishing articles or book chapters places certain conditions and pressure on the process of learning to write that regular thesis writing may not provide.
First there is a shorter deadline and limits to the length of the work. These conditions forced me to be more rigorous about writing concisely and making every word and paragraph count. Second, there is certain pressure on the writing style to meet publishing as well as academic standards for dissertations. Also published articles or book chapters make one’s work known to the academic community and allowed me to start engaging with other scholars in theoretical discussions or producing knowledge and new ideas. In this way scholars make contributions to the literature, inspire debate, and engage with other scholars. However, and in contrast to regular dissertations, a compilation of published works requires doing this in a shorter period of time and where the quality of the texts need to be at a comparable standard to that of other scholars with more years of experience than the student. In other words, writing with the aim of publication pushes the student, as it did in my case, to perform and produce academic work.

The downside to writing an alternative format is that it may be harder to pull all the articles together into one single project in a way that achieves uniformity. There is a difference among the chapters in terms of orientation, length and style because each published work was a learning experience in itself, which in turn lead to improvements in subsequent chapters. The differences may have been less evident had I chosen to write the thesis as a monograph, allowing me to return and edit chapters, achieve a more uniform writing style and reach a more obvious cohesiveness among the chapters. As it is, the reader can see evidence of my own progression as an academic writer. For example Chapters 4, 5, and 6 were written and published first, and only subsequently did I prepare Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Not only do the three Chapters 1, 2, and 3, have a slightly improved style and rhythm, they were also written more quickly than the first three as a result of me “getting the hang of it”. It took me about two calendar years to finish the published chapters, while writing Chapters 1-3 only one year (throughout I was only working half time). While writing the first three chapters of this dissertation I more clearly found my voice and became comfortable with a certain style and approach to writing.
Researching Territoriality: reflections on linking method and theory

I would like to turn attention to a few points of critique regarding the methodology used in the research and the practice of an engaged scholarship and activist research.

In chapter 2 I talked about the debates regarding engaged research and the argument that such engagement can contribute to Anthropology by addressing the politics of knowledge production in ways that can decolonize the investigation process. Among the principal concerns that I mentioned were whether and how anthropologists should align themselves politically with the people or groups we study and the extent of our responsibility outside of academia for the uses that are given to our research. Engaged anthropology is usually referred to as the collaboration between academics and individuals outside the academy for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. However, I explained that I conceived of my research stance as being more than one of reciprocity: indeed, I sought to align myself politically with the people of my research. In order to accomplish this, my political position in the field was crucial.

This position was that of an activist, aligned with a social movement developed to stop the mine. I did not engage with the company in the field, nor did I have a chance to interview them directly, although as I mentioned in earlier chapters I did engage with the industry in spaces such as Quito and Toronto. Although I believe I had good reasons to carry out research in this manner I wonder if it may have been enriching for my analysis and argument regarding territoriality, social movements and mining conflict if I had more fully incorporated the opinion or perspective of the company or of people in favour of mining. I wonder whether my understanding of territoriality, for example is also “one-sided” as was my choice of research group. In other words, would I have reached the same conclusion and developed the same argument about territoriality and mining conflicts if I had also approached El
Pangui’s territoriality knowing the concepts, definitions and views of the company or of those local residents who were in favour of mining?

I venture to assure myself that conceptually I may have reached the same or at least similar conclusions. To elaborate this point: if one of my conclusions is that territoriality has a great deal to do with determining or influencing the course of mining conflicts and social movements and vice versa, and that this conclusion is based on ethnographic and engaged research mostly with opposition groups, I suspect that data collected from pro-mining groups would not alter that conclusion significantly since those groups are just as much part of territorial processes in El Pangui as are the others. Although, pro-mining groups may have given more detail to this research in regard to the ways in which territoriality is unfolding today from their perspective, I do not think that their political position necessarily refutes the idea that territoriality shapes and is shaped by mining struggles, even if there may be differences in how that shaping and reshaping occur. In addition, if we consider, as I have argued in Chapter 2, that territoriality is an on-going social process that involves efforts to enclose physical spaces, to have included the stories of other actors would probably have given more complexity to the ideas as to how that process occurs in that particular place in Ecuador. However, this does not necessarily contradict the more general ideas that I have developed about territoriality, mining struggles or development.

I have also made claims about the anatomy of social movements, noting that these movements can be diverse, heterogeneous, volatile and vulnerable. In addition, I have argued that many of the coalitions and alliances made within social movements have to do with previous land or territorial struggles and that the mining conflict in El Pangui brings about unlikely alliances between mestizos and Shuar, or environmentalists and small scale gold miners- though can also break relationships such as those among friends, neighbours or family members. Here, I also think that the strategies used by anti-mining groups to contest mining projects, mobilise around these issues, and build or break alliances, are not that

dissimilar from those implemented by pro-mining groups. Although I did not include many pro-mining groups into my fieldwork I did engage with them enough to be able to say that both groups in many ways want the same kinds of things, but differ in how to achieve those goals. On many occasions, I found that discourses of pro-mining groups were similar to those of anti-mining groups in regard to development, protecting the environment or improving their livelihoods. They differ however, in that one group is convinced that mineral development can be a catalyst for achieving their goals while the other group believes that mining will be detrimental to these goals. In sum, though I do not necessarily believe that changing my research methodology would have lead me to tell a completely different story, it may have brought me to tell the same story differently.

Review of Dissertation and Future Research

This dissertation has been about understanding how, why and what kind of territorial transformations are brought about by mining conflicts and social movements in response to mining development. I asked what symbolic, social, political and physical processes intervene in the construction or enacting of territory in a mining conflict context, and how does an Amazonian territoriality, with multiple layers of resource conflict, in turn shape mining conflict and social mobilisation.

In order to answer these areas of inquiry, I proposed using the concept of territoriality. Earlier in Chapter 2, I defined “territoriality” as a process with a temporality that involves social and power relations, settlement patterns, and forms of enclosure and exclusion that are shaped in part by understandings of the human-nature relationship (Brighenti, 2010, Sack, 1986, Delaney, 2005, Peluso and Vandergeest, 1995, Little, 2002). I was interested in dynamic character of territoriality as well as its character as a process that is multi-scalar (from local to global) and multi-placed (from El Pangui to Toronto and China), on-going, cyclical and capable of being shaped as well as shaping social processes.
A territorial analysis was particularly productive for understanding what was happening in my field site. The reasons for this were, as I described in Chapter 3, that El Pangui is a place with a recent history of very impressive and significant territorial changes where one can appreciate subtle changes found in meanings and in the physical landscape. The landscape reveals a mosaic of significant processes that over a short period of time have contradicted, coalesced and overlapped with each other, such as colonisation, border war, massive deforestation, conservation parks, informal small scale gold mining, recently formed governmental institutions, among others. In El Pangui, as in many other regions in Amazon, struggles over resource are accompanied by intricate histories of conflict over land and natural resources.

A territorial analysis should not be considered as a model for understanding all resource related struggles everywhere, and so it is important to consider that my case study is situated in a particular historical context with prior conflicts and territorial disputes that can be seen as a layering of disputes and confrontations related to territory, natural resource use and practices in local society. However, I hold that a territorial perspective on resource struggles can still be enriching analytically. This approach can lead one to consider the many elements that go into the territorialisation process or into the enactment of territory, and by including those elements into the analysis the researcher can hopefully provide for new understandings or ways of viewing the causes of resource conflict, the ways in which conflict and mobilisations develop, as well as the ways in which an extractive project impacts people’s lives.

In addition to being an analytical contribution to the study of mining conflicts and social movements, my research suggests several lessons for the concept of territoriality. First I would reiterate that my work aligns with that of a group of scholars (such as Brighenti, Elden, Deleuze and Guattari, Sack, Little, Lefebvre) who move understandings and definitions of territory away from considering it as a material static space and from considering it as a material static space focusing on its physical conditions. This research supports those understandings of territoriality that shift attention towards the social contexts and power relations. This relational
sense brings social practices and processes more clearly into view and permits, I have argued, a more compelling interpretation of the process of territorial construction and transformation in a place such as El Pangui. This research also aligns with those views of territory that understand it as a temporary outcome in a continuous process of movement and meaning making.

My analysis of El Pangui has shown that territories are indeed more than their physical bounded conditions. The border area in south east Ecuador has a dynamic and complex history which remains alive in the territory as memories and is rooted in social relationships which are then reworked with the arrival of new actors and their territorialising projects. The history of territoriability of El Pangui has been accompanied by tension, conflict as well as neglect. In my review of the literature on territoriability, little is said however about the effects of the superimposition and layering of territorialities in people’s lives, or upon the memories that landscapes conjure and how these also shape daily activities. These subjective aspects of territoriability in a context of resource struggles appear to be understudied. By exploring these aspects of territoriability, this dissertation has shown how an analysis of these dimensions helps deepen understanding of resource conflicts as well as the nature of territory in general.

The effects of territoriability bring me to my second point, that is that more attention could also be given to the way that social relationships built during one territoriability persist, change and transform during subsequent processes of territorialisation such that social movements are in part shaped by territoriability processes. While this may not be the case for all types of social movement, this research has shown that it is clearly the case for ones that are embedded in a territory because of the particular nature of their struggle. My work demonstrates that considering the social relationships from previous territorialities can shed more light on how people organise themselves and negotiate the boundaries of a space as they deal with the territorialising projects of other more powerful actors. Understanding these social dimension can also shed light on the reasons behind the strategic choices that movements make in building alliances or coalitions as part of a (territorial) struggle.
These considerations contribute to our understandings of multi-ethnic political coalitions by taking into account the ways in which relationships across ethnicity are embedded in territory. This is also a main difference with transnational alliances like the ones Keck and Sikkink (1998) and Tsing (2005) write about, where alliances are not only built around a political issue but are mixed in with affective relationships among friends, neighbours and families. The multi-ethnic coalitions also differ from class or campesino politics since they are not based on production or labour issues, but fit more neatly into new social movements and indigenous politics where identity is fundamental (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992). Multi-ethnic coalition in the case of El Pangui is also significant considering the new legal categories that privilege indigenous peoples, because special rights designed to protect their way of life, culture and territory can give the claims in favour (and to an extent against) mining projects a new weight and legitimacy.

Returning to answering the main questions of this thesis, I based the analysis on three postulates.

The first was that territorial dynamics have a great deal to do with people’s perceptions, understandings and relationships with nature as much as with historical socio-economic power relationships, including the interplay between these perceptions and relationships. Following this is that the different actors attempt to enclose and control space and secure natural resources which can involve a process leading to social conflict as well as inspire alternative political and economic proposals.

In Chapter 4, I suggest that a fundamental part of territorial dynamics in the Cordillera del Condor assumes the form of a layering of multiple conflicts. I showed that territorial dynamics involve processes with particular understandings of the human-nature relationships which influence how they ultimately use and transform natural resources and establish systems of territorial control. These dynamics influence and give form to social movements, environmental struggle, and development models and policies. I suggested that at the heart of territorial
dynamics one finds differing understandings of, and meanings apportioned to, nature-society relationships and that over time these understandings have contributed to a layering of conflicts in the Cordillera del Cóndor.

I discussed in Chapter 4 that conflict over mining affects everyday life and it is given new meanings that set it aside from previous land disputes and territorial struggles. In particular, I have also argued that conflicts around mining reflect divergent models of development, land use and territorial control, and of whose rights and voices should carry the most weight in political and economic decision-making. In chapter 5, I questioned whether these differences are negotiable and found that, in part, they are. In El Pangui the conflicts over mining and meaning have had the constructive result of creating the foundations for an alternative model that encompasses the different concerns expressed in the concept of sumak kawsay. As mining conflicts are also about territorial control and about whose rights matter most in political economic decision-making, I touched upon issues of land ownership, access and control over natural resources and political participation.

I claimed that territorial disputes have the potential to (re)shape social relationships, alliances and identities. Disputes over land and resources not only affect how social actors relate to each other and the environment, they also become part of small, seemingly unimportant, daily life activities. As disputes over land and territory are naturalized, territorial disputes shape daily choices, although I wonder whether these new discourses will effectively produce territorial changes or if mining conflicts will continue to polarize and become increasingly violent. I conclude by suggesting that conflicts can ultimately lead to a renewal of discourses on development and the environment that allow for alternative conceptions of land use that accommodate the differences among actors.

If differences can in part be negotiated and resource struggles can open the debate about alternatives to natural resource extraction and present novel proposals then how do we interpret the efforts of the government and mining companies that promote environmentally and socially responsible mining? In
Chapter 6, I discussed how corporate social responsibility may be the industry response to the divergent models of development that exist side by side in mining areas, a response that attempts to incorporate and absorb some of the ideas of those critiquing large scale mining. However, in the case analysed here, the attempt by the mining company to seem interested in the sustainable development of El Pangui and develop a CSR program that is environmentally and socially responsible backfired and only heightened the social conflict.

Furthermore, in that chapter I argued that CSR has been gaining more attention in part because of the rise in mining-related conflicts and criticism about the industry’s social and environmental impacts. Companies propose that CSR could play an important role in mitigating conflict or lessening its risk. However, I point out that the opposite may also be the case since CSR in El Pangui played a role in territorial dynamics by contributing to the polarisation of conflict. I argued that CSR is a constitutive part of the on-going transformations in territorial dynamics and appears to influence and intensify the conflict that results from those tensions.

In terms of the literature on mining conflicts or even broader literature regarding environmental struggles in general, a territorial approach can give the opportunity to widen and deepen the analysis of the causes behind struggles, types of contestation, territorial transformations that unfold and give more attention to initiatives that emerge as alternatives to resource extraction.

A second postulate has been that social movements responding to environmental struggles have particular anatomies and dynamics, involve a multiplicity of actors, exist in a range of institutional settings, and can bring about (new) relationships, forms of negotiation, and social and political changes. These social movements are volatile, vulnerable and seldom straightforward. Identities related to territoriality play important roles in mobilisations.

I discussed how people in the social movement -with different backgrounds and with past experiences of conflict, land dispute and war- shape the ways in which mining investments are being contested. I also wanted to reveal the ways in which
struggles and social movements around mining are themselves artefacts of prior and on-going processes of territorialisation, and indeed shapers of territory today.

In other words, my contribution to the social movement literature in this second area of analysis, is that the notions of place and space, as much as the processes of territoriality, can affect internal social movement dynamics; the ways that different actors relate to each other and strategically (re)build or break coalitions and networks; and in turn the types of change/outcomes that these seek. My fieldwork has shown that social movements are also rooted in territories with particular histories of relationships related to land and that territorial dynamics can have a bi-directional impact on social movements.

My third postulate, more methodological in orientation, was that ethnography and engaged research can gear the scholar’s attention to territorial transformations and multi-scalar social changes, not in extraordinary events but in regular mundane activities, lived experiences and everyday life. This allows one to witness how memory and meaning of landscapes and human-nature relationships both reoccur in and constitute territorial transformations. Social movement literatures as well as Political Ecology approaches to mining conflicts give scant attention to everydayness and as such the interpretations they offer may be deficient.

This study on territorial dynamics, mining conflict and social movements advances scholarship in several arenas each related to the three postulates. First, it contributes to a body of literature on mining conflicts and the complex changes and impacts that mining projects bring about in various domains. Political ecologies of resource-related struggles show that these are often deeply multi-dimensional, involving social, political, economic, and environmental components. Scholars pay attention to the underlying reasons that drive resource conflict. Focus is often on the consequences and transformative character struggles can have, while another growing concern has been to establish formulas to mitigate or resolve conflicts. This dissertation makes a contribution in this arena by wanting to present the concept of territoriality as a useful analytical tool from which to weave together and
elucidate the interconnection of the different avenues to understanding mining conflicts. Territoriality allows one to consider or discover the intentions of different actors in producing territories by understanding the reasons for and the ways in which space is enclosed as part of a strategy of accessing and controlling natural resources. The concept can also be a vehicle for considering the social and power relationships involved in the endeavour of territory making. It can also make more evident the understandings and perceptions of society-nature that rest behind the motivations of the making of a particular territoriality.

Second, this dissertation also speaks to a growing body of interdisciplinary research on mining development, \textit{sumak kawsay} and CSR. The rise in power of leftist governments in Latin America has brought about increased interest in resource development debates (Escobar, 2012, Escobar, 2010). Social movements have been proposing alternatives avenues for economic growth (even de-growth and post-extractivism) on the basis of concepts such as \textit{sumak kawsay}. However, parallel to this trend are company and government discourses on environmentally and socially responsible mining that they claim can contribute to sustainable development and green resource extraction (Benson and Kirsch, 2010). This dissertation contributes by arguing that while the proposals by social movements, government and industry to address resource development debates may be platforms for discussion and negotiation, it is important to situate these in the territorial dynamics of the places where mines are planned since CSR as much as \textit{sumac kawsay} are part of territorial transformations. This is particularly relevant for places –like the Amazon- with histories of prior territorial, land and resource conflicts. The reason this is relevant and important is because, as we have seen in earlier chapters the production of territory is both mental and material, such that ideas about resource development influence territories as much as the material and physical conditions. In addition, if resource development plans move forward without being situated in territory a disconnection is established that may be causes for tension or social conflict.

Finally, one concern that I consider deserving of greater attention is research on daily life. The lived experiences of material practices and of the monotonous and
routine activities of the everyday are sometimes deemed insignificant for scholarly research on mining conflicts. This research prioritizes extraordinary events such as social mobilisations or violent confrontations, rather than the same routine activities of people affected by resource struggles. However, as Lefebvre points out, daily life can have a primary role in the production of space and territoriality, as much as allowing us to consider the complexities of social transformation and socio-political processes.

An assertion throughout the thesis has been that territorial transformations are cyclical and built upon previous territorialities which, when studied, can tell us a great deal about how these transformations may also unravel in the future. One subject worth considering for future research and that I consider will have serious impacts in the area is the role of China. It will be important to know more about the development of the geopolitical relationship with China in relation to extractive investments in the Amazon, and especially in the context of Ecuador’s young mining industry. Equally important will be the impact of the social relationship in El Pangui between the local population and the Chinese company now operating in El Mirador.

Lastly, the trans-border mining issues are an area of research well worth looking into. On the Peruvian side of the Cordillera del Cóndor mountain range there is a growing mining conflict in indigenous peoples lands, trans-border social movement activities, as well as Chinese company presence. This new Chinese actor could mean a new pattern of territoriality and struggle over natural resources where cross border and investment flows are each a part of a new transnational dimension of territory.
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