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## Review of Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology

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***Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology*. Edited by Montevecchio, Caesar A. and Powers, Gerald F. London, UK: Routledge, 2022, hardback, 300 pp., ISBN 9780367545086.**

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While historians have long covered the development of mining throughout the colonial era, and political ecologists and geographers give growing attention to the injustices of mining around the world today, *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology* offers a unique focus on the Catholic Church's acts of solidarity with affected communities. Each chapter reveals insider accounts of what the communities surrounding extraction sites have experienced on the ground over the last thirty years, a lived experience often unknown to the rest of the world. The authors also detail the behind-the-scenes conflict mediation, negotiation, and advocacy that occurs between companies, states, and international organizations, another invaluable, yet difficult to access perspective essential to understanding the big picture of this powerful and pervasive industry. *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining* offers a timely and important broad study of the increasing conflict over minerals that will reshape global geopolitics in the decades to come.

*Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining* presents an exceptionally well-integrated collective dialogue among the authors of its sixteen chapters and concluding reflection. It is divided into two main sections: one covering Catholic engagement related to mining in conflict zones, and another on mining and peace in Catholic theology and ethics. The authors detail diverse case studies of countries in which mining has long been foundational to the political economy, as in Jose Pacoricona's chapter on Peru, as well as case studies of countries that are resisting new mining contracts. In one such chapter, Andrés McKinley highlights the role of the Catholic Church in pushing back against the threat to national aquifers in El Salvador within an international legal landscape. Readers will also learn a great deal from case studies of countries that have experienced dramatic shifts in how they manage concession agreements, as in Karl Gaspar's chapter on the Philippines and Rigobert Minani's chapter on the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Among this volume's valuable contributions to the reader's understanding of extractivism is its rich historical coverage. The 30,000-foot view of these cases introduces the global development of mining conflicts and the international instruments available for peacebuilding with illuminating details gleaned from the national and community level. The comparative lens of the text also clarifies the major agreements and events that have shaped this history. As Katherine Marshall notes in her chapter on the relationship between religious institutions and the mining industry, while there has long been international concern and legal instruments for addressing human rights, labor, and environmental issues, mining has only recently begun to receive attention in this international legal-political field. *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining* traces a chronology of interventions beginning in the 1990s with the World Bank's early publications on mining, which presented a strategic focus on opening public lands for foreign investment in Africa. The chronology continues through multiple serious conflicts related to mining rights into the present day, in which we are seeing an unprecedented spike in violence against anti-mining activists. This

increase in violence is shown to be accompanied by bold, creative, and far-reaching statements on the part of the Catholic Church and other international allies to condemn the exploitative practices of the natural resource extraction industries. The authors also note the development of lawsuits used by industries to gain access to land and legal protections for indigenous peoples.

As a scholar of global solidarity networks, I appreciated learning more about the ways third parties can assist people hidden on the other end of global commodity chains. The authors describe many small but powerful acts of solidarity the Catholic Church has performed for communities throughout the world and how important that solidarity is not only for individuals but also for creating new opportunities to challenge injustice on a global scale. The Catholic Church is uniquely positioned to advocate on behalf of vulnerable communities because of its global ties to influential nongovernmental organizations and political leaders. Andrés McKinley's chapter on El Salvador nicely sums up six special contributions the Catholic Church continues to make toward this movement: consciousness raising, education and movement building, lobbying, building multilevel alliances, facilitating dialogue and consensus, and influencing and inspiring political will to protect the environment.

Finally, peace and justice scholars as well as those focused on peacebuilding in faith communities will be moved by the depth of *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining's* theological reflection. The book ends with a call for all Catholics and the global community at large to rethink our collective responsibility in a complex commodity chain through what Vincent Miller refers to in his chapter as "commodity distancing," the increasing distances between those sourcing and those consuming commodities. This second section of the volume engages with some of the most difficult paradoxes that pervade both the industry and the infrastructure of modern life. In his chapter on "Development as Depth," Clemens Sedmak clarifies the distinctly Catholic conception of a common good that focuses on uplifting and protecting the most disadvantaged, in contrast to the secular utilitarian goal of the greatest good for the greatest number of people. This and many of the other chapters draw heavily on the insights of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* encyclical on environmental ethics. Sedmak explains how the encyclical boldly calls into question detrimental impacts of human development, including the rapidification of modern life, the technocratic paradigm, excessive anthropocentrism, rampant individualism, maximizing profits, and self-interested pragmatism. In his chapter, "Mining and the Call for Solidarity," Miller recalls Pope Francis's admonition to take on both "throwaway culture" and the "globalization of indifference" in the fight against injustice. In their chapter on Columbia, Sandra Polanía-Reyes and Héctor Fabio Henao explain that, following an official peace process in 2016 that failed to include mining, *Laudato Si'* offers an essential perspective on peacebuilding for those continuing to offer pastoral care on the frontlines of conflict. They explain how, in many places, the Catholic Church is the only organization standing up to the injustices of mining. For communities to engage in a truly transformative dialogue, the authors continue, the value of care for creation must be strengthened so that human rights work is connected to an understanding of humanity's intrinsic dependency upon the land.

Readers will gain a new wealth of understanding from the book's historical perspective and its Catholic institutional approach to one of the world's most pressing arenas of conflict in the industrial age. *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology* is suitable for peace studies, religious studies, and environmental studies courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and will most certainly interest practitioners and policymakers alike.