The global life of mines
Mining and post-mining between extractivism and heritage-making

21-22 November 2019, University of Cagliari
Cittadella dei Musei, Aula Coroneo

A two-day workshop funded by
PRIN 2015 – Ecofrizioni dell’Antropocene

Jointly organised by
Department of Political and Social Sciences
Department of Literature, Languages and Cultural Heritage

Under the patronage of the University of Cagliari

In cooperation with
SYNOPSIS

Over the last decades the acceleration of extractive processes intensified the transformation rhythm of mining regions worldwide, producing highly diversified and yet intimately interconnected socio-ecological geographies of labour and exploitation, ecological distress and dereliction, as well as moral economies, political ecologies and cultural imaginaries. Areas formerly interested by small and large-scale mining have been gradually abandoned – sometimes recovered for new economic ventures, sometimes left in ruin – while the constantly mobile frontiers of extraction have opened new green-fields across the world. From a global perspective, mining and post-mining can be thought as interrelated processes at different scales: bound up by the political economy of global capitalism; concomitant outcomes of transnational financial and corporate strategies; the uneven outcomes of the changing configurations of contemporary energy politics.

The aim of the workshop is bringing together anthropological perspectives and ethnographic studies on mining and post-mining across a broad range of geographical contexts. Focusing on the materiality of mining and post-mining sites, we invite contributions that help building a comparative outlook on the uneven trajectories and articulations of mining and post-mining in a global perspective.

We propose the “global life of mines” as an overall framework for exploring links, interconnections and scales of articulations between the current booming of extractive industries, projects, and operations worldwide – along with the new rhetoric of sustainability, “green” and “blue” economy etc. – and the diversified consequences of mine closures, ranging from abandonment and dereliction to new extractive processes (heritage-making, “green” economies etc).

Organising Committee
Filippo M. Zerilli (University of Cagliari), Antonio Maria Pusceddu (CRIA/ISTCE-IUL), Felice Tiragallo (University of Cagliari), Tatiana Cossu (University of Cagliari), Francesco Bachis (University of Cagliari), Domenico Branca (Institut Català d’Antropologia), Alessandro Deiana (University of Cagliari), Carlo Maxia (University of Cagliari), Claudia Ortu (University of Cagliari).

Student Team (Volunteers at the University of Cagliari)
Elisa Serra (coordinator), Valentina Cadeddu, Mersia Carboni, Antonio Cinus, Marzia Cocco, Valentina Krotnev, Mattia Siddi.
# PROGRAMME

**Thursday, 21 November 2019, Cittadella dei Musei, Aula Coroneo**

**Afternoon: Opening**

14:00 Coffee
14:15 Welcome and Introduction, Filippo M. Zerilli (University of Cagliari)

**14:30 Keynote address**

David Kideckel (Central Connecticut State University), *Dark as a dungeon: Defining the secret life of mines via power, time, and globality*

**15:30 Coffee Break**

**16:00-17:45 Session 1: Im/mobilities**

Chair: Filippo M. Zerilli (University of Cagliari)

Kristien Geenen (Université de Liège), *Dealing with urbanized mineral deposits in DR Congo: The city of Kolwezi and its domestic diggers*

Tomasz Rakowski (University of Warsaw), *Towards alternative social history: Ethnographies of the closed-down mining centre of Wałbrzych, Southwest Poland*

Cecilie Vindal Ødegaard (University of Bergen), *Frontiers of extraction in the Andes and the Arctic: Processes of (un)commoning and commercialization*

Alla Bolotova (University of Helsinki), *Living or leaving? Youth and place marginalization in mining towns in the Russian Arctic*

**17:45 Coffee Break**

**18:15-19:45 Roundtable: Anthropology of mining in Italy**

Chair: Antonio Maria Pusceddu (CRIA/ISCTE-IUL)

Participants: Paola Atzeni (University of Cagliari), Francesco Bachis (University of Cagliari), Felice Tiragallo (University of Cagliari), Pier Paolo Viazzo (University of Turin)

**20:00 Dinner/Buffet (Sala delle mostre temporanee, Cittadella dei Musei)**
### 9:15-11:00 Session 2: Temporalities

Chair: Francesco Bachis (University of Cagliari)

- Cristiano Lanzano (Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsal), *After the boom: The multiple (after)lives of artisanal gold mining sites in Burkina Faso*
- Doris Buu-Sao (French National Center for Scientific Research, Arènes), *From industrial heritage to 21st century mining: Performing ‘green’ extractivism in Andalusia (Rio Tinto copper mine)*
- Paul White (University of Nevada), *Mining life cycles and indigenous dispossession in North America: A view from the American West*
- Antonio Maria Pusceddu (CRIA/ISCTE-IUL), *Mining futures? Resource politics and contestation in the Portuguese lithium rush*

#### 11:00 Coffee Break

### 11:30-13:15 Session 3: Legacies

Chair: Antonio Maria Pusceddu (CRIA/ISCTE-IUL)

- Roberta Clara Zanini (University of Turin), *Mining memories in Macugnaga: Ethnography of a partial process of heritage-making in the Italian Alps*
- Andreza A. de Souza Santos (University of Oxford), *The relationship between mining and heritage in Ouro Preto, Brazil*
- Targol Mesbah (California Institute of Integral Studies), *Enduring legacies of uranium mining in New Mexico and the global entanglements of militarism, capitalism, and colonialism*
- Francesca Pugliese (Université de Liège/University of Leiden), *Safety policies and moral economy in the Katangese mining sector: Rethinking the legacy of industrial paternalism*

#### 13:15 Lunch/Buffet (Sala delle mostre temporanee, Cittadella dei Musei)

### 15:00-16:00 The global life of mines: Final discussion

Chair: Filippo M. Zerilli (University of Cagliari)

#### 16:00 Coffee break

#### 16:30-18:00 Film session

#### 20:30 Social dinner
Visit to the Coal Mining Museum and The Great Coal Mine of Serbariu

8:30 Meeting point: in front of the Foresteria-Guest house, Via San Giorgio 12, Cagliari
8:45 Departure time from Cagliari to Serbariu (Carbonia)

10:00-12:00 Visit to the Museum

12:15 Departure time from Serbariu (Carbonia) to Cagliari
13:15 Estimated time of arrival in Elmas Airport
13:30 Estimated time of arrival in Cagliari, Via San Giorgio 12

The Italian Centre for Coal Mining Culture, which is located in the Great Coal Mine of Serbariu in Carbonia, was opened on 3rd November 2006. The mining site was closed in 1964 and has been restored and modified to become a museum and educational center. With the development of this project to recover and improve the site, it is now possible to visit the surface area and the buildings that constitute the Coal Mining Museum. The visit includes three steps:

1. The Lamp Room houses the permanent exhibition on the history of coal, the Serbariu mine and the town of Carbonia. The exhibition includes a precious collection of mining lamps, work tools, everyday objects, photos, documents, short film clips from the period and interviews with the miners.

2. The Underground Gallery shows how mining methods have changed over the decades from the 1930s until closing down in 1964. It has accurately reconstructed spaces enriched with work tools and machinery which were used in the past or that are still in use in coal mining.

3. The Winch Room - the winding engine was used to move the cages up and down the shaft in order to transport the miners and the wagons. Visitors can see the gallery and the winding engine house on guided tours.

NB Visitors are advised to dress appropriately for an outdoor industrial site with uneven surface. Comfortable clothing and footwear are essential.
PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Workshop venue
Cittadella dei Musei, Aula Coroneo
University of Cagliari
Piazza Arsenale 1, 09123, Cagliari

Accommodation
The workshop participants will be hosted at the Foresteria-Guest house in via San Giorgio 12, at the third floor. For further information, visit https://www.unica.it/unica/en/ateneo_s04_ss06.page.

How to get to Cagliari City Centre, Foresteria-Guest house, and Workshop venue
From Cagliari-Elmas Airport to Cagliari City Centre (Cagliari Railway Station)
The railway station at the airport lies approximately 10 minutes’ walk (800 metres) from the arrivals terminal. The train takes about 8 minutes to get to Cagliari Railway station. A one way ticket costs €1,30 and it can be bought at the ticket vending machine located in the Arrivals area. For further information about routes and timetables, visit http://www.sogaer.it/en and http://www.trenitalia.com.

From Cagliari Railway Station (Piazza Matteotti/Via Roma) to the Foresteria-Guest house
Getting to the Foresteria-Guest house by bus takes only 10 minutes. Take the Line 8 (Direzione Policlinico Universitario) in front of the Railway Station (Piazza Matteotti) and get off at the Santa Margherita (parcheggi) bus stop. The ticket costs €1,30 and can be bought on the bus. For further information about routes and timetables, visit https://bit.ly/35cV6Xp.
Another way to reach the Foresteria-Guest house is by a 15 minutes’ walk (1,1 km).

From Cagliari-Elmas Airport to the Foresteria-Guest house
You can reach the Foresteria-Guest house by taxi as well. It takes about 15 minutes and it costs €20.

From the Foresteria-Guest house to the Cittadella dei Musei (Aula Coroneo, Piazza Arsenale 1)
You can reach the Cittadella dei Musei by taking the bus Line 8 (Direzione Policlinico Universitario), from the Santa Margherita (parcheggi) to the Buoncammino (Polizia) bus stop. After a 3 minutes’ walk you will arrive at the Cittadella dei Musei. For further information, visit https://bit.ly/35cV6Xp.
If you don’t want to take the bus you can also reach the Cittadella dei Musei (Aula Coroneo, Piazza Arsenale 1) by walk and it will take about 10 minutes (600 metres).

Useful links
Cagliari-Elmas Airport: http://www.sogaer.it/en
Railway: http://www.trenitalia.com
Foresteria-Guest house: https://www.unica.it/unica/it/ateneo_s04_ss06.page

Contact and practical information
Filippo M. Zerilli
E-mail: zerilli@unica.it Mobile Phone: +39 340 485 3775
Antonio Maria Pusceddu
E-mail: ampusceddu@gmail.com Mobile Phone: +39 347 534 4684
Elisa Serra
E-mail: elisaserranaturalista@gmail.com Mobile Phone: +39 348 926 2552
Main entrance of the Cittadella dei Musei, Piazza Arsenale 1, Cagliari

Directions from the Foresteria-Guest house to the Cittadella dei Musei
Directions from Cagliari Railway Station to the Foresteria-Guest house (by walk)

Directions from the Foresteria-Guest house to the Cittadella dei Musei
**ABSTRACTS**

Day 1 – 21 November 2019

**14:30 Keynote address**

David Kideckel, Central Connecticut State University

*Dark as a dungeon: Defining the secret life of mines via power, time, and globality*

In this address I explain extraction and post-extraction as influenced by a common set of interrelated forces. Differential forms of power produce different time conceptions and practices expressed as narrative and meaning, operationalized in a field of global relations. To explore this interrelationship, I first consider the development and decline of coal mining in Romania and the US Appalachia. These contrasting cases challenge some assumptions about the current global extraction boom and bust and also serve as context to consider different analytical models of extraction. We consider the extent to which these models effectively expose the workings of power, time, and globality, as well as account for the importance of narrative and discourse in extraction systems. Finally, I ask how these forces play out in post-extraction, especially in the environmental crisis and in the development of heritage initiatives. In considering US Appalachia and Romania’s Jiu Valley, I show how these systems originate and develop due to global and imperial competition. However, differences in structural power (private ownership in the former and state control in the latter) transform the nature of time, labor, community, and meaning, contributing to the different nature of tensions that define these extractive systems. The cases ethnographically challenge four myths of contemporary extraction: 1) that there is a universal “curse of extraction” simultaneously supporting job creation, infrastructure development, and growing GDP on one hand and community displacement, labor exploitation, and environmental despoliation, on the other; 2) that growth and abandonment of extraction today is qualitatively different than previous; 3) that technological change is the main driver of expansion and abandonment of extraction systems; and 4) that the climate crisis furthers sustainability and conservation in extractive practices. Beyond these myths, I then examine the ability of three analytical models to address the main shapers of extraction (power, globality, time) and adequately account for the influence of discourse and meaning in extractive systems. Stakeholder (Ballard and Banks 2003), minescape (D’Angelo and Pijpers 2018) and assemblage (Roy Chowdhury and Lahiri-Dutt 2019) models each emphasize different aspects of extraction systems: institutional power (Stakeholder), fluid interrelationships in mining systems (Minescape), or the historical and global formation of extraction systems (Assemblages). I argue against commitment to a single model and suggest that effective analysis combines aspects of each model. Finally, I consider post-extraction developments as subject to those same forces of power, globe, and time. Common post extraction responses of heritage, conservation, and sustainability seek to address contemporary challenges of extraction, including identity loss and climate crisis. Though heritage initiatives are a common response to such concerns, the actual nature of heritage initiatives vary by virtue of the position of extraction in a local political economy. Thus, we contrast community-based heritage responses from both Corporate Heritage Discourse (Baird 2018) and Authorized Heritage Discourses (AHD) (Smith 2006). The latter two emphasize Western biases of growth, economic rationality, and modernity while privileging expert knowledge for defining heritage projects. By virtue of the political economy of extraction they tend to subsume and overwhelm community practices.
16:00-17:45 Session 1: Im/mobilities

Chair: Filippo M. Zerilli (University of Cagliari)

Kristien Geenen, Université de Liège

_Dealing with urbanized mineral deposits in DR Congo: The city of Kolwezi and its domestic diggers_

This presentation is about a city destined to disappear. Indeed, the mining city Kolwezi (Democratic Republic of Congo) was developed with speed during colonial times to quench a mining company’s thirst for ores. No thorough soil investigation was carried out; conjectures led the way. But then the hurriedly set up constructions – initially labor camps – that were supposed to be temporary, turned permanent. Due to this incautious planning in the past, today’s citizens are stuck with a city that is literally located above mineral deposits. Indeed, instead of building close to the deposits, it turned out that buildings had been erected right on top of them. This might seem a wonderful gift, but in fact, it seriously affects their quality of life. Every once in a while, the inhabitants are pushed to move to make room for the exploitation of the untapped deposits their homes cover. Nevertheless, the Kolwéziens turned their town’s unfortunate location into their advantage by secretly digging up precious ore in their backyards, and selling it to the local trading houses. In doing so, they insert themselves into the margins of the extractive economy. But at the very same time, they undermine the foundations of their own homes.

Tomasz Rakowski, University of Warsaw

_Towards alternative social history: Ethnographies of the closed-down mining centre of Wałbrzych, Southwest Poland_

In my presentation I will focus on alternative social history considered as a specific study on post-socialist transformation. Drawing on the collected materials I will discuss my attempt to understand the interrelated structures of self-organization, and affective state-production that appeared over the last decades in the closed-down mining centre of Wałbrzych, southwest Poland. As it turned out during my research conducted among the former miners of Wałbrzych they used their deepest social images to comprehend and understand the present reality. At the same time they still tried to elaborate a new and non-standard way of living, working and imagining their close aims and possible futures.

Cecilie Vindal Ødegaard, University of Bergen

_Frontiers of extraction in the Andes and the Arctic: Processes of (un)commoning and commercialization_

With the acceleration of extractive processes since the 2000s, the world has witnessed an intensified rhythm of mining operations and transformations, and more recently, the rhetorics of sustainability are resulting in diversified histories and imaginaries of (post)mining at different regions and scales. Considering how these processes give rise to new questions of moral economies, the commons, and global (dis)connections, this paper will explore questions of commoning and enclosure in two different contexts that both represent frontiers of extraction; the Andes (Peru) and the Arctic (Svalbard). In the border areas of Peru, marginalized Quechua and Aymara merchants contest official energy politics through socially embedded practices of smuggling that evade border control and redirect commodity flows away from official infrastructures; hence subsuming fossil wealth to other modes of sociality. On Svalbard, the mining town Longyearbyen is moving towards a post-mining future; mines are closing down and some being turned into cultural heritage sites, and raising questions of the management of infrastructural remains and cultural heritage as part of “the public good” through a complex coexistence of protective and commercializing measures. By bringing these cases together, the paper seeks to develop a comparative framework of uncommoning in order to account for the contradictory mechanisms of mobile frontiers of extraction in (post)colonial contexts.
Alla Bolotova, University of Helsinki

**Living of leaving? Youth and place marginalization in mining towns in the Russian Arctic**

Many young people finishing schools in mining towns in the Russian Arctic express their dreams to escape from their hometowns. Among main complaints are a lack of recreational opportunities, boredom, and soviet appearance of urban space in their localities. In this paper, I analyse lived experiences of young adults dwelling in the soviet-style urban space of Arctic mining towns and dealing with place marginalization. The new towns were built by the soviet state next to mineral deposits and were populated by incomers, stimulated to resettle up north by material benefits. Arctic mining towns became prosperous communities where town-forming enterprises were responsible for place maintenance. During the post-soviet period, international mining companies became owners of town-forming enterprises. Despite of successful internationalisation of mining enterprises, towns are still rooted in the soviet past, which continues to shape lives of contemporary youth. The territory around mining towns often looks devastated, due to industrial ruins, abandoned mines, destroyed buildings. Infrastructure of single-industry towns does not fulfil needs of modern young people that contributes to large-scale outmigration of youth. Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Murmansk region, I analyse experiences and strategies of young adults coping with place marginalization and numerous problems in northern declining towns.

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Day 2 – 22 November 2019

**9:15-11:00 Session 2: Temporalities**

**Chair: Francesco Bachis (University of Cagliari)**

Cristiano Lanzano, Nordic Africa Institute – Uppsala

**After the boom: The multiple (after)lives of artisanal gold mining sites in Burkina Faso**

Studies on artisanal mining have rightly pointed at the dramatic expansion of the sector during the last decades, in the context of a ‘commodities boom’ associated with high demand and rising prices. Observed at closer distance, though, what appears as general macroeconomic trend can be disassembled in a multitude of ‘boom and bust’ phases, unstable demographic dynamics, and processes of socio-technical change. In Western and South-Western Burkina Faso, artisanal gold mining has started developing in the 1990s, brought by internal seasonal migrants, thus creating specific sets of relations – both cooperative and conflictual – between local residents and outsiders. In recent years, high degrees of human mobility, technological innovations and dramatic transformations in the political-economic landscape have affected local modes of production, accelerating or disrupting the ‘normal’ life cycle of a mining site. In several cases, this instability has triggered controversies around the questions of who regulates gold extraction – and controls the profits – once the ‘boom’ ends, or once previous owners and rentiers leave the place. While not explicitly imagining a ‘post-mining’ future, these conflicts have articulated collective reflections around the temporality and the legitimacy of mining. In my paper, I will present examples of how a bust in production, or a conflict about ownership of the resource, can open possibilities for new political and economic actors to enter the arena of artisanal gold mining, and can make new (after)lives of a mining site thinkable.
Doris Buu-Sao, French National Center for Scientific Research – Arènes

**From industrial heritage to 21st century mining: Performing ‘green’ extractivism in Andalusia (Río Tinto copper mine)**

Discourses of ‘sustainable mining’ are surprisingly spreading in Europe. Coming from the Global South, where corporations appropriate sustainable development language as a legitimizing strategy (Kirsch 2010), they are reaching historical mining territories in United States and in Europe. In deindustrialized areas, mining renewal appears as a paradoxical remedy to the economic but also ecological crisis.

Energy transition depends on ‘strategic resources’ (lithium, tungsten, rare-earth metals, etc.) necessary to build solar panels, wind turbines or electric cars. Construction of a low carbon future then relies on a ‘green energy bargain’ that associates decarbonization and mining renewal (Phadke 2018). The communication will address the paradoxes of such a ‘green’ extractivism in the case of Río Tinto, Southern Spain. This historical copper mine was at the forefront of the industrialization of Andalusia (Chastagnaret 2000). It has resumed production in 2015, after 14 years of inactivity. While its museum is a famous example of mining past heritage-making (Hernández Ramírez & Ruiz Ballesteros 2007), corporations and authorities now aim to make Río Tinto an example of the 21st century mining. How do industrial heritage-making and discourses on the mine of the future combine to perform new regimes of extractivism? Río Tinto, with its mining heritage, its industrial wastes and the promises of mining renewal it aggregates, is a particularly relevant case to investigate mining temporalities and their influence on extractive materiality (D’Angelo & Pijpers 2018).

The analysis will be based on discourses and practices related to past, present and future mining activity around Río Tinto project. Ethnographic data will have been produced during two fieldworks conducted in November 2018 and October 2019, in Sevilla and in villages of the mining area, during which I (will) have observed an international encounter of mining industry, visited the mining area (from the museum to mining installations) and interviewed members of regional and local administration, companies and their representative organizations, scientists, inhabitants and unionists. I will show that employment is at the heart of the articulation between industrial heritage and the discourse of sustainable mining but that, according to the social situation, promises of employment can legitimize green capitalism, but can also uncover its contradictions.

Paul White, University of Nevada

**Mining life cycles and indigenous dispossession in North America: A view from the American West**

Conflicts of value have long attended the experience of mining, irrespective of scale or place on the globe. In the United States, a growing body of historical research has drawn attention to how the mineral rushes of the mid- to late-nineteenth century spurred violence, disease, and ecological transformations that decimated Native American populations and, in many cases, forcefully removed indigenous peoples from their lands. This paper draws attention to the longer-term recurrence of such processes from two vantage points: the national picture in which legal frameworks of land tenure and citizenship have continued to divest vast mineral regions from the Native American estate, and an on-the-ground perspective, in which indigenous families experienced repeated cycles of land loss. Here, documentary and material evidence reveal how the effects of past mining, even when it occurred at a small-scale, could be immensely far reaching, and with resonances extending beyond the physical space of the mine and the life cycle of operations. Of import, too, is how federal mining law’s expedient provisions opened room for the exploitation of strategic nonmineral resources and set the tone for present-day interactions between mining and indigenous communities, including those recognized as sovereign nations.
**Antonio Maria Pusceddu, CRIA/ISCTE-IUL**

**Mining futures? Resource politics and contestation in the Portuguese lithium rush**

Based on ongoing research on lithium mining projects in Portugal, the paper will discuss the temporalities of resource politics and socio-ecological contestation. In the last few years, lithium prospecting applications in Portugal skyrocketed. In 2017 the government launched the national strategy for assessing the potentials of lithium exploration and the feasibility of industrial development projects, based on the prospective increase of lithium-ion batteries market demand – especially in the automotive industry. With the aim of attracting foreign investors, the government anticipated international bids for prospecting and exploration. The sudden interest of big mining corporations unleashed the opposition of populations in the areas targeted by lithium exploration, mostly rural and mountainous regions. Assurances of ‘green’ mining and new development prospects have not prevented the mushrooming of local platforms against lithium exploration, critically mindful of the socio-environmental legacy of past mining boom-bust cycles. As a result, the lithium rush has rapidly become a controversial subject in national debates about energy politics, ecological transition and sustainable development. Drawing on a preliminary mapping of the Portuguese lithium rush, the paper will address the construction of this ‘strategic resource’ as such, the spatial and temporal scales entangled in this process and the emergence of a new frontier of extraction, valuation and contestation.

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**9.15-11:00 Session 3: Legacies**

**Chair: Antonio Maria Pusceddu (CRIA/ISCTE-IUL)**

**Roberta Clara Zanini, University of Turin**

**Mining memories in Macugnaga: Ethnography of a partial process of heritage-making in the Italian Alps**

The aim of this contribution is to present the outcomes of an ethnographic research conducted in Macugnaga, a former mining community in Piedmont. Gold mining played a major role in the economy of the village since its inception in the mid-eighteenth century until the closure of the mine in 1961. This event is still remembered as a major turning-point which imposed a sudden conversion to a tourism economy that was initially built on the alpine environmental resources and subsequently, when the dominant model of winter tourism began to decline, on the cultural resources. The ethnographic data bring to light interesting politics and practices of heritage-making. Macugnaga is both a (post)mining and a linguistic minority community, being one of the Walser villages which occupy the high valleys at the foot of the Monte Rosa: the coexistence of two available cultural assets has ignited competing instances of recognition, that intersect the even more complex issues linked to the uses of the alpine landscape as a resource for tourism. As far as the mining memory is concerned, this dynamic is leading to a process of heritage-making that looks partial in both acceptations of the term.

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**Andreza A. de Sousa Santos, University of Oxford**

**The relationship between mining and heritage in Ouro Preto, Brazil**

The relationship between mining and heritage in Ouro Preto (and Minas Gerais in general) is, most of the time, one of reciprocity: previous mining funded the construction of expensive buildings that are now preserved. The maintenance of such structures is expensive, and currently, mining companies operating next to rural districts often negotiate industrial permits by offering the upkeep of urban heritage as compensation. This paper will offer an example of a negotiation involving environmental license for mining activities and the preservation of cultural heritage as compensation. The cruelty in this process is that, when history, education, and culture are the compensation for environmental damage, the damage is often disproportionally in the present-time and the gain future-oriented.
Additionally, benefits can occur far away from damaged places and not target those whose lives are affected. Complaining about such compensations can however be stigmatising, because of the general appeal of education, history, and art as positive. The negotiations I tackle took place in 2013, when the company, residents, and heritage technicians held several meetings to discuss a future mining expansion and I followed those ethnographically.

Targol Mesbah, California Institute of Integral Studies

*Enduring legacies of uranium mining in New Mexico and the global entanglements of militarism, capitalism, and colonialism*

The Southwest region of the United States has been a concentrated site of uranium mining since the 1940s, primarily within Native American territories. There are currently upward of 500 abandoned open pit uranium mines in Navajo (Diné) territory alone and exact figures remain elusive. My presentation focuses on New Mexico (NM) specifically to consider how, in addition to struggles over addressing existing radioactive contamination from abandoned mines, community and scientist activists are engaged on multiple fronts to prevent new uranium mining and radioactive waste management projects. Specific cases include the legacy of the abandoned Jackpile mine in Paguate (NM) the controversies over the new technology of In Situ Leach mining of uranium, the ongoing challenge of finding a “consolidated interim storage facility” to store spent fuel rods from U.S. power plants, and depleted uranium weapons testing in Socorro (NM). Through these examples, I hope to show how environmental and public health consequences of radioactive contamination as sites of struggle between corporations, the State, and activists needs to be understood within a global scale of the nuclear chain of production and the entanglements of militarism, colonialism and capitalism.

Francesca Pugliese, Université de Liège/University of Leiden

*Safety policies and moral economy in the Katangese mining sector: Rethinking the legacy of industrial paternalism*

Safety policies are a key element of the codes of conduct of many of the new mining companies worldwide, which see safety training as a way to avoid (inter)national scandals. Safety is established by either enforcing disciplinary sanctions in the workplace or through training programs. Drawing on ethnographic research in a Sino-Australian company working in the Haut Katanga province of DR Congo, this paper examines contemporary safety practices by applying a Foucauldian perspective. More specifically, the analysis will try to answer central questions: to what extent has the post-privatization mining context led to a change in the workers’ consideration of corporate values? In an area strongly marked by the legacy of the industrial paternalism, which strategies are in place to make the new policies acceptable to the workers? Rules and regulations are perceived by many as a way to experience a modern and well-organized reality, an emerging culture of responsibility and overregulation that is reminiscent for workers of the companies’ caring attitude of the past. By analyzing safety and management practices, this paper contributes to an understanding of mining companies as providing a form of government that promotes shared principles and values.
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS


Alla Bolotova works as a post-doctoral researcher on the “Live, Work or Leave? Youth – wellbeing and the viability of (post)extractive Arctic industrial cities in Finland and Russia” project at the Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki. She also works as a research associate at Center for Arctic Social Studies, European University St. Petersburg. Her research focuses on human-environmental interaction in the Arctic, youth well-being in the Arctic and on sense of place in northern industrial communities.

Doris Buu-Sao holds a PhD in political science from Sciences Po Paris. Her work consists in a political sociology of extractive and energy industries, following an ethnographic approach. In 2017, she defended a doctoral dissertation on socio-political transformations among indigenous people facing oil extraction in the Peruvian Amazon, based on a 15 months fieldwork. As a post-doctoral fellow, she is now part of the project “DEMOSTER – Democratize Energy Transition?” which studies citizen initiatives related to renewable energies, efficiency and fuel poverty in UK, France and Spain. Since 2018, she has also been working on mining renewal in Europe, studying institutional discourses and opening a new fieldwork in Andalusia. Recently, she has published Devenir ouvriers en Amazonie: Entre travail industriel et vie de village in Terrains & Travaux (2019), Prendre le parti de l’enquête: Positionnements ethnographique sen terrain conflictuel en Genèses (2019) and Enfrentarse a la industria petrolera: Dependencia cotidiana y protestaen la selva peruana en América Latina Hoy (2018).

Kristen Geenen holds a PhD degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology (University of Leuven, promotor Filip De Boeck). She has long-standing fieldwork experience in urban DR Congo, more particularly in the cities of Kinshasa, Butembo, and Kolwezi. She is currently affiliated to Université de Liège, as a postdoctoral researcher, examining trade unions in the mining industry in the Congolese Copperbelt, as well as the entanglement of urban planning and mining. She equally has a keen interest in historical research.

David A. Kideckel is Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at Central Connecticut State University, New Britain CT, where he was founding Anthropology Department Chair and International and Area Studies program originator and occasional director. He is past President of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe and founding editor of the Anthropology of East Europe Review. His last book Getting by in post-socialist Romania (Indiana University Press, 2008) and a companion video, Days of the miners, concerned changing labor and physicality after socialism. His latest project concerns “Regional responses to coal’s decline and transformation of energy practice” comparing Jiu Valley, Romania and southern West Virginia.
Cristiano Lanzano is a social anthropologist and currently works as Senior Researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden. He has conducted research on youth and urban cultures, conservation and development, and natural resources management in West Africa. Since 2012, he has conducted ethnographic fieldwork on small-scale gold mining in Burkina Faso and Guinea Conakry, focusing on the informal/hybrid governance of mining sites, on the organization of the workforce, and on socio-technical change. He has published parts of his work on, among others, *Politique Africaine, The Extractive Industries and Society*, and *Autrepart*.

Targol Mesbah is Assistant Professor in Anthropology & Social Change at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. Her current research on the ecological magnitude of radioactive contamination, from uranium mining to the deployment of depleted uranium weaponry, suggests a spatially linked chain of nuclear development that poses challenges for activist research within the context of corporate science and state censorship. She is interested in Zapatista political theory and how the concept of history as a network of “calendars and geographies from below” can help us imagine research whose temporality and ethical orientation leans into life-sustaining praxis.

Cecilie Vindal Ødegaard is Associate Professor at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen. She is co-editor of *Indigenous life projects and extractivism: Ethnographies from South America* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, with Juan Javier Rivera Andía), and author of the monograph *Mobility, markets and indigenous socialities: Contemporary migration in the Peruvian Andes* (Ashgate, 2010). Her research interests include informal economies, labour, gender, extractivism, cosmologies, and conceptualizations of nature in the Peruvian Andes; issues on which she has published widely. More recently, she has initiated research also in the Arctic, Svalbard, where she focuses on the transition to a post-mining society.

Francesca Pugliese, after obtaining her Bachelor and Master degree in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at Sapienza, University of Rome, she decided to focus her interest in contemporary social issues in the African continent by attending a Master in African Studies at the University of Leiden. At the moment, she works as a PhD student on a collective ERC research project dealing with the micropolitics of work in the mining sector of the Congolese and Zambian Copperbelt. Her subproject focuses on the multiple dimensions of the work experience and its implications with gender and generational relationships in DR Congo.

Antonio Maria Pusceddu, PhD, is researcher at the Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia (CRIA), ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa. His latest fieldwork in southern Italy dealt with labour, crisis and social reproduction. He’s currently developing a new research on resource politics and popular ecologies in Portugal, with a specific focus on lithium mining projects. Recent publications include: *Unevenness and deservingness: Regional differentiation in contemporary Italy*, Dialectical Anthropology, 2019; *Work, wage and subsidy: Making a living between regulation and informalization*, in S. Narotzky (ed), *Grassroots economies: Living with austerity in southern Europe* (Pluto, forthcoming 2020).

Tomasz Rakowski is Associate Professor at the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw, and Lecturer at the Institute of Polish Culture. His research interests include social art, phenomenological anthropology, post socialist transformation, anthropology of poverty, and bottom-up development. He is also a medical doctor, a specialist in Accident & Emergency medicine. Recently he published *Hunters, gatherers, and practitioners of powerlessness: An ethnography of the degraded in post socialist Poland* (Berghahn Books, 2016). He is also the editor, with Helena Patzer, of *Pretextual ethnographies: Challenging the phenomenological level of anthropological knowledge-making* (Sean Kingston Publishing, 2018).
Andreza Aruska de Souza Santos is the director of the Brazilian Studies Programme and Lecturer at the Latin America Centre, University of Oxford. She is the author of The politics of memory: Urban cultural heritage in Brazil (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019). Her work focuses on urban and political ethnography and she has written on social memory, mining towns and participatory planning in Brazil.

Felice Tiragallo is Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Cagliari. His main research areas are related to social change (depopulation in rural areas of South Europe, Restare paese, Cuec, 2008, the politics of memory in a modern ex-mining district in Sardinia, “The subjective voice and the ethnographic presence”, Medea, 2015), material culture (embodied knowledge, authentication processes and local values in modern societies), and visual ethnography methods (audiovisual archives and websites of mining material culture, progetto SISMA 2013, www.archiviminerari.it).

Pier Paolo Viazzo is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Turin. His main research interests are the relationship between the environment, population and social structure in the mountain areas (Upland Communities, Cambridge University Press, 1989), historical anthropology (Introduzione all’antropologia storica, Laterza, 2000), and European patterns of marriage and family (The History of Families and Households, edited with Silvia Sovič and Pat Thane, Brill, 2016). He has recently edited, with Glauco Sanga, a special issue of the journal La Ricerca Folklorica (71, 2016) devoted to the cultures of miners and mining in the Alpine region.

Paul White is an Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Nevada, Reno, with two decades of experience in the archaeological documentation of mining sites in North America. His research interests center upon the social, technological, and environmental transformations associated with mining, including how historical relationships perpetuate colonial relations in the present. He has worked also as a consultant for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and conducted safety hazard assessments on abandoned mining lands. His recent book, The Archaeology of American mining (University Press of Florida, 2017), which synthesizes 50 years of archaeological scholarship, received the 2019 Mining History Association’s Clark Spence Award.

Roberta Clara Zanini earned a PhD in Anthropological Sciences from the University of Turin. She has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Italian Western Alps and has published extensively on mining communities and on the social and cultural effects of the demographic changes taking place in linguistic minority communities. She is the author of Salutami il sasso: Dinamiche della popolazione e della memoria in una comunità alpina di confine (Franco Angeli, 2015) and co-editor, with Valentina Porcellana and Alessandro Gretter, of Alpi in mutamento: Continuità e discontinuità nella trasmissione delle risorse in area alpina (Edizioni dell’Orso, 2015).