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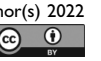

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Emotional subjectivities and the trajectory of a Peruvian mining conflict

Ursula Balderson
Department of Geography, Politics and Sociology, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Abstract
The trajectory of socio-environmental conflicts remains difficult to predict. In the case study explored in this article, attention to the emergence of emotional subjectivities helps us better understand the timing of the conflict and the style of contestation at the site. The data are drawn from interviews and observations of the 'dialogue table' meetings that took place between representatives from the BarrickGold run Pierina mine in Ancash, a highland area in Peru, and the nearby village of Mataquita to try and resolve a conflict over access to water. The paper identifies three ways that the emotional climate at the site influenced the conflict trajectory. Firstly, it was heightened fear for future water availability and increased feelings of hope that the mining company could be held to account for the hydrosphere disruption that triggered the conflict. Secondly, the Mataquitans tried to elicit feelings of compassion in mining company representatives whilst the company acted to repress them, fearing that they could endanger profit-making at the site. Finally, the inconsistent behaviour of the mining company and their ad hoc Corporate Social Responsibility allocations produced a moral-emotional critique of mine behaviour and a climate of distrust within and between villages. The emotions produced by interactions between actors reduced the likelihood of a more coordinated response to the problems at the site, conveniently serving the agenda of the mine.

Keywords
Mining conflict, political ecology, water, emotion, Peru

Introduction

Why some conflicts remain low-level whilst others bring regions to a standstill is incompletely understood despite academic interest in the topic (Arellano-Yanguas, 2011; Conde, 2017; Conde & Le Billon, 2017; de Echave, et al., 2009; Gustafsson, 2015). In this case study of a low-level Peruvian mining conflict, I show that foregrounding the emotional political ecology at the site

Corresponding author:
Ursula Balderson, Department of Geography, Politics and Sociology, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.
Emails: s.l.u.balderson@leeds.ac.uk; ursula.balderson@gmail.com

helps further illuminate 'the political' in environmental conflicts by drawing out the role that emotions play in the development and suppression of political subjectivities (Ey, et al., 2017; González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2017; Sultana, 2015, p. 164). I consider the 'emotional climate' produced by interactions between a gold mining company and one of the villages in their vicinity and how these interactions impacted not only individual lives but processes of capital accumulation and the trajectory of the conflict itself. I use the term 'emotional climate' as climates are unsettled and difficult to predict.

Emotions play an underacknowledged role in mining conflicts, given that the extractive sector is, in the words of Ey et al., 'teeming, writhing even, with emotions and affects' (Ey, et al., 2017, p. 154). Attention to emotions is important because, as this research illustrates, emotions have potentiating qualities: 'they open and close new political horizons' (Goldin, 2015; González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2019; Gould, 2009, p. 3). Acknowledging the potency of emotions in environmental movements enriches our understanding of the material claims and conditions, which often drive socio-environmental conflicts by rejecting the dualism which separates facts from values and emotions from reason (González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2019; Jagger, 1989; Sayer, 2011; Sultana, 2015).

Low-level conflicts can rumble on for years and even decades, yet remain invisible beyond the immediate vicinity of where they are taking place. Yet understanding of the dynamics driving them is limited. Why communities contest extractive developments with differing 'objectives, narratives and intensity' are topics addressed extensively by Conde and Billion (Conde, 2017; Conde & Le Billon, 2017). This work has highlighted how in addition to socio-environmental impacts, insufficient participation in decision-making around extractive projects, a lack of trust in the mining companies, and deficient compensation schemes for the damages that have occurred, are all also important factors in predicting conflict emergence. On the other hand, dependency on extractive companies and political marginalisation hinder the emergence of resistance (Conde, 2017; Conde & Le Billon, 2017). Here I highlight how the ambiguous relationship between a mining company and a nearby community created a complex constellation of emotions and conflict between the two produced subjectivities which shaped the trajectory of events at the site. Attention to the emotional climate in Mataquita, the village where the conflict took place, allows us to better understand why the conflict took the form that it did: bilateral negotiations with the mining company, rather than the formation of broader coalitions of affected actors, and why it emerged at the time when it did: 17 years after the damage to the Uliyacu stream had occurred.

In the discussion that follows, my first section outlines how previous scholarship on emotion in political ecology has enriched our understanding of both the everyday experience of resource struggles and how subjectivities can affect resource access and governance. The second section presents the political-economic framework for mining operations in Peru and discusses how the analysis of mining conflicts has been approached through the resolution mechanisms institutionalised by the Peruvian state. In the third section, I outline the background to the conflict in Mataquita before illustrating the importance of attention to the emotions via discussion of three different aspects of the emotional climate at the site. First, I focus on the recent emergence of hope and fear at the site. The Mataquitans were fearful for the future due to declining water availability. However, they were simultaneously hopeful that they would be able to hold the company to account by forcing them to rectify damages or offer compensation. I then discuss how the community tried to elicit feelings of compassion in the mining company representatives via emotional labour in dialogue table meetings, performed primarily by men. Whilst compassion was a potential resource for the community, it was viewed as a threat to profits by the mine. Finally, I show how the strong feelings of frustration and disappointment that were circulating were part of a moral-emotional critique that centred on inadequate processes of commensuration and the unwillingness of the mine to recognise the need for local flourishing. I also suggest that some of the feelings of resentment which circulated

at the site were co-opted by the mine to intentionally stoke inter-community rivalries and prevent the emergence of local allegiances and coalitions that could more effectively hold the mine to account. In the conclusion, I draw together these insights to underline the role that these emergent emotional subjectivities played in defining the contours of the conflict and the trajectory of contestation at the site.

Throughout, I build on work that understands moral and material motivations as closely intertwined in resource conflicts (Turner, 2004, p. 86) and on work in social movement theory that views resistance as powered by the moral-emotional batteries of hope and fear (Jasper, 2011, 2012). I draw on work which analyses the 'micropolitical ecologies' of conflict (Horowitz, 2010, 2011) and how mining company Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) interventions shape subjectivities, 'steering grievances away from the inherent harms caused by large-scale resource extraction and confining them to material distributional issues' which effectively divide populations affected by mining developments (Aráoz, 2014; Gamu & Dauvergne, 2018, p. 970; González-Hidalgo, 2020).

Political ecology, subjectivity and emotions

In this paper, emotions are conceptualised relationally as 'flows, fluxes or currents, in-between people and places, rather than "things" or "objects" to be studied or measured' (Smith, et al., 2006, p. 3). Following Sayer (2011), I wish to cast emotions as a form of moral reasoning. My understanding of emotion is also influenced by work done in social movement theory which has since the 1990s been highly attentive to the role that emotion plays in acts of contestation, viewing them as the raw material from which mobilisation is built (Goodwin & Jasper, 2006). I use Jack Barbalet's term 'emotional climate' to describe specific 'sets of emotions which are not only shared by groups or individuals implicated in common social structures and processes, but which are significant in the formation and maintenance of political and social identities and collective behaviour' (Barbalet, 2001, p. 159).

Political ecological accounts of conflicts have historically given little attention to the emotional dimension of the concerns expressed by affected populations, (Ey, et al., 2017; González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2019; Sultana, 2015), perhaps because of the spectre of irrationality that threatens to taint and undermine the seriousness of the complaint(s) being made. Exceptions to this trend come from the work of feminist political ecologists. Feminist political ecology draws attention to the way micropolitics and subjectivities structure access to resources, often causing multidimensional and diverse emotional suffering as gender, class and ethnic characteristics intersect to influence the power relations of everyday life (Cole, 2017; Sultana, 2011; Truelove, 2011). Equally, political shifts have implications for how (gendered) subjectivities are constructed and understood (Behzadi, 2019; Harris, 2006). Subjectivity has been defined as 'one's understanding of self and of what it means and feels like to exist within a specific place, time, or set of relationships' (Morales and Harris, 2014; p. 706). Subjectivities are often multiple and fluid, people experience themselves differently in different contexts and at different moments of their lives.

Emotions influence the construction of political subjectivities that enable or constrict resistance to dispossession or exploitation (González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2017). For example, emotional bonds between community members can enhance informal networks of cooperation, thus improving farming outcomes (Leder, et al., 2019). Alternatively, they can make progressive goals such as sustainability targets more difficult to achieve. For example, Nightingale shows how the emotional relationship Scottish fishermen have with the sea creates subjectivities that are at odds with tropes of fisherman as over-exploiters, creating dissonance and discord in meetings with policymakers about fish quotas where these tropes circulate (Nightingale, 2013).

The deep emotional connections that people feel to places that are sources of cultural identity lead to profound disruptions to well-being when access to such places is lost via dispossession (Dallman, et al., 2013; Zenko & Menga, 2019). Askland's work on how emotional attachments lead to distinct 'future imaginings' presents 'how mining has dug not only dirt and minerals out of place' but also has 'left a void – physical, social and temporal – where affective imaginings of future place are colonised by a rationalist mining discourse' (Askland, 2020, p. 2). The idea that in extractive conflicts emotions can become tools used by hegemonic forces to impose upon the internal lives of affected populations is present in other work too. Aráoz has used similar imagery to describe how mining localities are transformed: they are 'literally mined from the inside' (own translation) he writes, explaining how acquiescence to mining logic is the ultimate form of control (Aráoz, 2014, p. 65).

Research by Norgaard and Reed on the influences of social action indicates that 'emotional distress serves as a signal function confirming structures of power in relation to identity, social interactions, and ongoing colonialism' (2017, p. 464). The memory of a social group and their experience of past oppression can change their emotional engagement with the world, creating emotional dispositions and subjectivities that make distrust or suspicion more or less likely (Bericat, 2016; Sayer, 2011, p. 149). González-Hidalgo and Zografos (2019) propose that emotion functions as 'a porous skin', whereby learnt perspectives from experiences of material and relative dispossession, engagements with non-human natures, relationships with inhabited places, and power inequalities (along lines of class, ethnicity and gender) influence how resistance gets enacted, and networks get built (p. 12). They differentiate between politically pessimistic and optimistic approaches to potential emotions, noting that some work views emotions as constructive in that they drive processes of subjectification that build transformative collective action (Goodwin et al., 2001; Goodwin & Jasper, 2006) whilst others attend to the more negative aspects of our emotional engagements with the world (Dallman, et al., 2013; Sultana, 2011). They suggest exploring the full diversity of emotions elicited by extractive projects will help us better understand their fundamental ambivalence (Bebbington, et al., 2008), as well as the processes through which political subjectification happens and why some subjectivities reproduce hegemonic interests. I attend to many of these issues in the discussion below.

Previous work in both political ecology and social movement theory has been focussed on singular emotions, rather than on how the complex interplay between different and shifting emotional states influences the trajectories of mobilisations and conflicts. In the discussion below, I highlight how the multifaceted emotional climate in the villages around the mine mediates between processes of exploitation and their resistance.

Mining and mining conflicts in Peru

In the early and mid-2000s, many Latin American countries adopted more left-wing policies; however, Peru remained committed to a deregulated policy environment that has been in place since the 1990s, when President Alberto Fujimori initiated reforms aiming to make the country attractive to large-scale private investment. Reforms included the privatisation of around 90% of state-owned mining companies and weakening of environmental regulation, supposedly shifting the state into a more regulatory role despite the lack of governance infrastructure such as a dedicated Ministry for the Environment (Bebbington & Bury, 2009; Christian Aid, 2005; Damonte, 2014; Durand, 2015).

Mining has a long history in Peru. It is constructed as central to national history and identity, viewed as vital to the country's socio-economic development and part of a geographical imaginary that sees national space as 'brimming full' of valuable natural resources (Himley, 2014). Throughout the colonial period (in particular 1570–1790), mining played a critical role in the

function of the Spanish empire sucking in huge quantities of goods and labour from across the territories and leading to the decimation of indigenous communities who were forced into mining labour via the *mita*[1] (Assadourian, et al., 1980; Dore, 2000; Moore, 2003, 2010).

Mining in the post-Fujimori period has been accompanied by a discourse of *nueva mineria* (new mining) which attempts to distance itself from the problems associated with earlier mining practices such as water-based environmental contamination and serious health problems for local populations (Bridge, 2004; Himley, 2014). However, although there have been improvements, the rupture from previous mining practices is perhaps not as great as the mining PR teams would like the public to believe. Damage to water resources still occurs, with reductions in availability particularly common around large operations. Regulation of the mining industry remains limited. For example, no record is kept of the volumes mining companies extract from the aquifers around their operations (Preciado, 2011). Further, as this case study illustrates getting mining companies to accept formal responsibility for damages continues to be a problem.

Nueva mineria is also associated with a shift from tunnel mining to opencast operations, in which whole hillsides are removed to extract higher volumes of lower-grade ore. This type of huge, mechanised operation is known as *megamineria* (mega-mining). Although sold as modern and socially beneficial, mega-mines provide limited direct or indirect employment and have contributed to an exaggerated reliance on the income from mineral extraction to the detriment of more inclusive, sustainable forms of development (Bebbington, et al., 2008). Further, the sheer scale of the operations means that stakes are far higher than in older forms of mining, both in terms of environmental and social risk and potential wealth generation (Li, 2015).

Stemming from the highly disruptive nature of modern mining operations, since the early 2000s mining conflicts have become a ubiquitous phenomenon in Peru. In April 2014, not long before I began fieldwork, the Peruvian ombudsman listed a total of 136 socio-environmental conflicts of which almost 75% (101 cases) were related to mining (Defensoria del Pueblo, 2014). Between 2001 and 2012, socio-environmental conflicts caused 50 mining projects to be suspended (Durand, 2015, p. 7) and between 2006 and 2017 271 people were killed and another 4462 were injured in socio-environmental conflicts around the country (Defensoria del Pueblo, 2017, p. 10). These figures reflect the frequency and intensity of the protests and the potential violence of police response. Unlike in earlier phases of conflict which focussed on improving working conditions, in this wave of conflict, concerns have been articulated around a broader set of issues such as territory, livelihoods, environmental damage, identity, human rights and nationalism (Arellano-Yanguas, 2011; Bebbington, et al., 2008; Bury, 2005; Li, 2015; Muradian, et al., 2003). Conflicts are polarising, highly politicised and regularly lead to declarations of 'states of emergency' in the regions where they are taking place. Certain conflicts, including those at the Tia Maria, Las Bambas and Conga mining sites, when active, are rarely out of the newspapers. However, beyond these headline cases, there are many more smaller mining conflicts about which much less is known.

In the face of such high levels of social conflict, the key policy instrument employed by the Peruvian government since the formation of the *Oficina Nacional de Dialogo y Sostenibilidad* (ONDS: National Office for Dialogue and Sustainability) in 2012 has been Dialogue Tables (*Mesas de Dialogo*). Dialogue tables are institutional spaces where stakeholders in a conflict can meet, in the presence of the state, to discuss their disagreements and hopefully reach an agreement about how to move forward. The importance of engaging in dialogue has been heavily emphasised for mining-affected communities. Unfortunately, despite this institutionalisation, no 'unique clear or standardised normative and legal framework' exists, meaning dialogue often has a performative rather than transformative quality (Choque, et al., 2014; ONDS, 2013, p. 13; Scurrah, 2013, p. 3).

The discussion below focuses on the BarrickGold run Pierina mine in the district of Jangas, in the region of Ancash in the north-central highlands of Peru. Ancash has a long history of mining

and small-scale mines continue to offer significant local employment opportunities (Assadourian, et al., 1980; Deustua, 1994, p. 35). Chronic underinvestment in agriculture means that productivity in Jangas, like in much of Peru, is low (Gonzales de Olarte, 1996; Yashar, 2005) and so poverty levels remain high. The BarrickGold run Pierina mine used in the case study is typical of both *megamineria* and *nueva mineria.* Unlike the small-scale mines, it only provides temporary (2 to 3 month) contracts to a couple of people from the nearby village of Mataquita at a time. It also has a licence to extract 120 l a second of water from the water table below the mine, as such, although it is unprovable, it seems likely that the mine has significantly disrupted the local hydrosphere. Nevertheless, it highly values its reputation as a modern mining company and discussions with community members claim to work 'responsibly'.

In Peru, and in Ancash in particular, there has been very limited mobilisation and politicisation of indigenous identities. Instead, highland communities have struggled for their rights via affirming their status as Peruvian citizens rather than as 'cultural others' (de la Cadena, 2000; Oliart, 2008; Scarritt, 2011; Yashar, 2005). Indigenous populations, remain marginalised across Peru and often struggle to access the full rights of citizenship, such as access to sufficient water resources and other key social and material benefits (Balderson, 2022; Dagnino, 2003; Hale, 2004).

The Mataquitan case study

Methodology

Between 2014 and 2018, I spent 20 months in Peru, with most of the data collected between 2015 and 2016. The project was an in-depth case study of a low-level mining conflict taking place in a small village about an hour away from the regional capital Huaraz. 'Low level' extractive conflicts are characterised by some local organising but do not consolidate into wider social movements (Ozkaynak, et al., 2012). Although the project evolved significantly during fieldwork, it was initially conceptualised as an exploration of why certain conflicts do not 'jump scales' (Urkidi, 2010).

During fieldwork, I conducted interviews with community members, including key actors associated with JASS – *Junta Administradora de Servicios de Saneamiento* (the Water and Sanitation Committee and the main organisational body in the village with respect to negotiations with the mine). I conducted a further 17 interviews with community members[2] diversely affected by the conflict and associated water scarcities. Some were solely engaged in farming activities – both subsistence and for market – whilst others earned their money primarily from waged work. This included work on construction projects and work in smaller, often informal, mines located in remote areas of the province. One interviewee had managed to secure well-paid work as an operator of heavy machinery at a large contentious multinational mine project (Las Bambas) under construction in the south of the country. I also interviewed 8 professionals who were directly involved in the conflict. This included representatives from the mine[3], government representatives from the Jangas municipality, the local water authority and from the *Presidencia de Consejos de Ministros,* (PCM), the state organisation which was overseeing the conflict. I conducted a further 12 interviews with left-wing politicians, university and NGO professionals who were working on mining-related issues at the national level, and 5 civil society actors working at the local level. These interviewees included local university staff and NGO professionals working on development and mining issues and a representative from the Agrarian Peasant League in Ancash. I also participated in *Grupo de Dialogo Ancash,* a group that existed to promote the value of dialogue and to share experiences between the private, public sectors and civil sectors of society. I initially made contact with representatives from Mataquita at one of these meetings. Following that initial meeting, I regularly visited the village of Mataquita and was invited to attend and to audio record four key dialogue table meetings between the mining company and the community, each lasting over 3 hours in

length. These meetings were when specific commitments were extracted from the mine, and so were an important source of data in the project as they were 'raw social discourse' (Geertz, 1973), rather than the reinterpretation of events for my benefit. During meetings and interviews, emotional states were observable when participants spoke, and emotions were regularly referenced when interviewees reflected on their situations.

Background to the conflict

In 1997 Minera Barrick Misquichilca, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Canadian gold mining company BarrickGold, arrived in Ancash, a north-central region of Peru and began building Pierina, a large opencast goldmine. This was the first BarrickGold mine to open in Latin America (where it now owns and operates five mines) and is considered an important foreign direct investment project after the profound disruption of the 1980s when spiralling debts, inflation and civil war led to a serious economic crisis in Peru (Kiguel and Liviatan, 1995).

Prior to Barrick's arrival in the zone, the exploration work for the Pierina mine had been carried out by a company known as Acuarios[4]. In 1996, during exploration work, there was a substantial reduction in the flow of the Uliyacu stream[5], an important contributor to the drinking water supplies of the nearby villages of Mataquita and Mareniyoc. When this occurred, two meetings were held between representatives from the villages and other local stakeholders, including the Mayor of Jangas and mining company representatives. These meetings resulted in the signing of two *actas*[6] in which Acuarios appeared to admit responsibility for damage to the stream and promised that the water would be recovered by the mine. Shortly after these *actas* were signed, the Acuarios company was acquired by Barrick 'with all its assets and liabilities'[7], and this acquisition allowed the exploitation of the gold deposit which eventually became the Pierina mine. Although the water from the Uliyacu stream had been used by both Mataquita and Mareniyoc, it was only Mareniyoc who held a formal permit for the stream's use. When the reduction in flow occurred, there was no longer enough water for the two villages to share, and so Mareniyoc 'cut' the water to Mataquita and continued using the available water themselves. At this point, in 1996, Mataquita had sufficient water from other sources, so no further action was taken. Sometime after that, the *actas* crucial to resolving the dispute disappeared until around 2012 (more details below)[8].

The village of Mataquita is located 2 km from the northerly end of Pierina's operations. It has a population of approximately 681 inhabitants, spread across 195 houses. The altitude is 3360 m above sea level. Plots owned in the village range from 0.2 to 1 hectare with 86% lacking a direct water supply, the plots without water supply are only able to engage in rain-fed agriculture. Due to the small size of the plots, the principal economic activity in the village is subsistence agriculture and livestock keeping (Diagnóstico, 2015; PDC, 2007). Agriculture is supplemented by waged labour when it is available. Waged labour generally necessitated long absences from the village, and the lack of continuous presence of younger and more educated men in the village had a detrimental impact on their ability to hold the mine to account.

Although there was little resistance to mining at the beginning of the exploitation period, relations with local stakeholders quite quickly deteriorated once the construction phase was over. Between 2002 and 2005 the company was embroiled in a tax avoidance scandal that cost the Peruvian government 141 million US dollars. Then in 2006, another significant conflict occurred when the villages around the mine coordinated a strike to protest the outsourcing of contracts and the low daily wage for unskilled manual labour which had remained constant for over a decade. The ensuing confrontation left one dead and at least 10 people seriously injured (Himley, 2013). Further, by 2005 the Uliyacu stream had dried up completely, the mine accepted some liability for this damage in terms of the impact its loss had on Mareniyoc, and they agreed to deliver drinking water to the village by tanker. When these failed to arrive in September 2012 there

was another serious conflict which left one person dead and another seven badly injured (SPDA Actualidad Ambiental, 2012).

Pierina is now nearing the end of an extended phased closure period,[9] so in recent years, the already limited social spending by the mine has contracted further. Lower extraction rates mean reduced tax income for the local government and so state spending also reduced significantly between 2012 and 2016 (CEPEP, 2016). Meanwhile, pressures on local water resources have been ratcheting up. In 1998 the mine was granted a license to extract up to 3.6 million m^3 of water a year from the aquifer underneath the mine, the extent of extraction is unmonitored by the state but has presumably continued apace. Local populations are also increasing, and recently flushing toilets have been installed in some of the villages. Some Mataquitans suggested that climate change was affecting local rainfall patterns, a theory also endorsed by the mine, although empirical analyses conducted in the area do not confirm this (Gurgiser et al., 2016; Murtinho, et al., 2013; van Soesbergen & Mulligan, 2018). Regardless of the cause,[10] there now exists a water deficit across much of the District of Jangas, in some villages there is insufficient water to meet even basic household needs with irrigation also suffering (Peruvian Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, 2016). As such, in October 2013 Mataquita lodged a formal complaint (*denuncio*) against the mining company. When I arrived in Ancash in 2015, the village was suffering intermittent water scarcities during the dry season, meaning the drinking water connection was disconnected for days and occasionally weeks at a time.

The village's complaint to the mining company was framed around the damages caused to the Uliyacu stream that occurred during the exploratory period of mining (discussed above). Although grievances relating to mining impacts and interventions were much more multifaceted than this claim suggests; previous interactions with the mine had taught them that without proper documentation, i.e., proof of damages or unfulfilled mining company commitments their complaints would be easily dismissed. The villagers took the decision to lodge their complaint, partly because the *actas* signed in 1996 were rediscovered and they hoped that having these documents would enable them to hold BarrickGold to account. However, as the stream had been shared between the villages of Mataquita and Mareniyoc under an informal agreement, BarrickGold was unwilling to recognise the legitimacy of the Mataquitan *denuncio* and instead framed it as a spurious complaint, intended only to attain undeserved compensation[11]. The community rejected this claim wholeheartedly and eventually a dialogue table between mine and community was formed. The institutionalised meetings of the dialogue table were supplemented by direct actions that included marches and roadside protests when the Mataquitans felt that progress was too slow, or water scarcities necessitated more immediate interventions, such as the delivery of water by tankers to the site.

During the early stages of the conflict, Barrick not only rejected the community's request for a replacement to the water that was previously provided by the Uliyacu stream, but also claimed they already had sufficient resources to meet their daily living needs.[12] To resolve this difference of opinion, one of the first actions of the dialogue table was to commission a study into the water balance in the village. This was eventually published in 2015 and titled *Diagnóstico de Agua para el Uso Poblacional de Mataquita distrito de Jangas – Huaraz – Ancash*. The report found that a water deficit did exist between the months of June and December. This finding led a follow-up document to be commissioned, this would consider potential engineering solutions to the problem and was titled *Expediente Técnico: Construcción de Reservorios de Almacenamiento de Agua para Uso Poblacional de Mataquita, Distrito de Jangas, Huaraz, Ancash.* According to this document, the solution to Mataquita's problems was to build a number of storage reservoirs that would collect water during the rainy season for distribution later in the year. The size and scope of the water storage reservoirs that were needed by the village were then disputed during the following phase of the conflict (see Balderson, 2022). In the sections below I present the different ways in which the emotional climate and shifting emotional subjectivities at the site shaped the conflict.

Fear and hope energise the conflict

Fear for the future is an important part of the emotional climate in the community and has played an important role in triggering and maintaining the conflict. Although water has always been a scarce resource in this part of the Andes, my interviews revealed that most people felt that stream flows were decreasing, and insufficient availability of water was a serious source of concern. The villagers often expressed their situation as 'suffering for water', a reference to 'the physical and emotional hardships and the social conditions' that access to an inadequate supply of domestic water causes (Ennis-McMillan, 2001, p. 368). In their initial letter of complaint to the mine, the community explained the effect the mining-induced water scarcities were having: 'denying and depriving us the right to life, to enjoy good health, threatening our development and impoverishing us'. As one villager commented:

> For the future more than anything the worry is for the water. For the water, because with each year the rain gets less, and the streams get diminished. Nature is no longer as it used to be. The flow of water in the springs that are for drinking water get less. So, my idea is, my worry is, whatever happens, there must be a solution for the water with the mine to make a reservoir, to look for more filtrations and to construct and capture this water so we don't lack water. (Oswaldo[13]: interview)

This quote makes clear that it is the worsening of the situation, which is amplifying community fears. Fear for the future was not evenly distributed throughout the village as the five geographic neighbourhoods in the community were not equally affected by the water scarcities. 'The population of Mataquita we are already moving backwards too much' commented one resident during a dialogue table meeting. As historically, in this part of the country, insufficient water for daily living activities is rare, the emergence of water insecurity is perceived as a step backwards for the community at a time when they were expecting their living standards to improve.

The quote also reveals that the speaker is unwilling to passively accept the diminishing availability of water and is aware that action must be taken in the present to protect resources in the future. Stensrud, who has researched how climate change is affecting water resources and economic opportunities further south in the country, uses the term 'response' instead of 'adaption' or 'resilience' to conceptualise how people struggle for change in a changing climate (Stensrud, 2016). She notes that the previous terms have been criticised for their inadequacy in capturing the way people attempt to create alternative futures, rather than accepting or adjusting to external harms (Lindisfarne, 2010). This indicates the conflict cannot be viewed simplistically as a struggle over scarce resources, but also needs to be understood as 'the result of ongoing political struggles to maintain control over fluctuating resources in the future' (Turner, 2004, p. 879).

Conversely, the rediscovery of the *acta* which linked the actions of the mining company directly to the loss of the Uliyacu stream triggered significant hope in the community. In addition, information about the type of projects other communities had received flowed from news reports and capacity-building sessions organised by a consortium of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in the region and led by Proyecto Dialogo SUR. The sessions organised by Proyecto Dialogo SUR were, as the name suggests, intended to impress upon the attendees the importance of using dialogue to resolve conflict rather than direct action or violence. Although this was their main aim, the sessions were also valued by the attendees for the opportunity they provided to discuss and exchange ideas with other community leaders about how they had responded to problems with mining companies in their own communities, and what sort of 'projects' they had been able to achieve. This seemed to be fuelling hopes of what could be expected from the mining company if their claim did manage to garner a degree of social legitimacy.

The significance of rumours about investments secured at other sites in generating hope was revealed during a meeting that took place during the dialogue table. The topic under discussion was whether BarrickGold would fund the construction of four water storage reservoirs as it had previously implied:

> [Y]ou have to let us have the resources [to build it] because there are other companies, one is Chinese if I am not mistaken, and the project that it has done there is a drinking water project, for one district for 41 million. This project barely reaches two million. Imagine it! (Miguel: comment at dialogue table meeting, 2016)

As many highland communities feel themselves to be 'abandoned' by the state (Harvey & Knox, 2012; Rasmussen, 2016a) the monetary value of mining project allocations is one way in which local people derive a sense of self-worth. In this context, water infrastructures become the materialisation of social value (Balderson, 2022). Aráoz has discussed the imposition of transactional logic in which hopes inhabit constrained horizons as 'mineralisation' (Aráoz, 2014, p. 65). Processes of commensuration distort ideas of value: the village knew that a trade-off between incommensurable goods was taking place and so in some moments, there was a shift from the practical reasoning we see below towards the more abstract logic of the market. Between 2002 and 2012, Peru enjoyed growth rates of an average of 6.3% per year, a period sometimes termed the 'the Peruvian Miracle' (Mendoza, 2013). Their feelings of hopefulness that there might be some form of tangible investment by the mine relates to the changing political-economic context, their awareness of the value of gold and its role in increasing the wealth of the nation.

The discussion above indicates the close relationship between hope and fear and the development of political subjectivities which led the community to feel sufficiently confident to challenge the mine. 'Hope is not 'utopian' in the wishful sense, but it guides concrete action, i.e., wilfulness' (Levitas, 1990 in Dinerstein and Deneulin, 2012, p. 12). As has been noted in other contexts, it is the subjective experience of power that determines the nature of people's emotions (Goldin, 2015).

The contradictory emotions of hope and fear act as a mutually reinforcing emotional dynamic which is often associated with the emergence of resistance. Jasper has referred to their interrelated impact as an 'emotional battery' which powers acts of resistance (Jasper, 2012). The amplification of fear (due to ever-decreasing water availability) and hope (due to the recent emergence of the acta, increasing education and self-confidence of villagers, and better awareness of projects being negotiated at other sites) helps explain why the complaint was lodged with the mine, and why this happened 17 years after damage to the Uliyacu stream had taken place. This highlights the role that changing subjectivities can play in the emergence of resistance.

The threat of compassion contagion

The dialogue table meetings were the most substantive part of the dialogue process as it was during these interactions that the community had the greatest power to influence the behaviour of the mine and thus the outcome of the conflict. The location of meetings was often disputed with the mine preferring to hold meetings outside the village (e.g., in Jangas, Huaraz or even Lima) whilst the community preference was for their communal meeting room, or on one occasion during a protest event, the road that provides access to both the mine and the village. As Harris (2006) has noted, the place has implications for the power dynamic between actors. Holding meetings in or beside the village enabled fuller participation by the community and thus a 'thicker' emotional climate.

The community implicitly understood the power of emotion to shape the trajectory of the conflict and as such, tried to elicit feelings of compassion from the company representatives in meetings: 'We have tried to collect water from the roofs, for what? In order to survive' commented one

man. They encouraged the mine representatives to visit their homes and experience water scarcity, as they did on a daily basis. The meetings often occurred during moments of acute crisis such as when the village had been without a water supply for almost a week, but the mine was refusing to pay for a tanker to deliver water to the site. In their study of water insecurity in a Bolivian squatter settlement, Wutich and Ragsdale note that water-related emotional distress was a by-product of the social and economic negotiations employed to gain access to water distribution systems as well as the absolute scarcity of water (Wutich & Ragsdale, 2008). Here also, a significant quantity of emotional labour was required on the part of village inhabitants to secure access to water. Emotional labour is often associated with women (Sultana, 2011) but during these meetings, the emotional load associated with securing access to water was borne primarily by men, as women made few interjections in meetings.

Writing about the role of affect in political-economic transformations, Richard and Rudnyckyi describe how rural development organisations in Mexico have tried to build 'bridges of love' through invitations to Northern visitors to experience the daily reality of poverty in the villages, aiming to open their hearts and allowing enduring personal ties to be created. The practice is explained using the Mexican proverb: '*Ojos que no ven, Corazon que no siente*' (That which the eyes do not see the heart cannot feel), this strategy has echoes of the way the Mataquitans are trying to leverage the power and a kind of moral-emotional agency with the mine, by inviting the mine to directly experience and observe the lack of water in their houses (Richard & Rudnyckyi, 2009).

The mining company also seemed to recognise the potential of emotional contagion as throughout the conflict, a disturbing lack of continuity was observable in mining personnel. Often describing it as a form of 'trickery,' community members claimed that Barrick would regularly change the community relations representative who worked on the ground, making relationships of trust harder to sustain. Some claimed that when this happened, the new representative would not recognise agreements thrashed out by their predecessor. The head of community relations, who is based in Lima and only attends meetings during moments of high conflict, has been in his job for over 10 years. However, he acknowledged that during 19 years of operations, the representative on the ground in Jangas had been replaced approximately 10 times. In fact, the exact pattern noted by the community played out whilst I was observing the conflict. Days after a deal to build reservoirs had been reached in January 2016, the representative who had brokered the deal, who had seemed increasingly sympathetic to the community's position, disappeared without warning, and a new community representative was installed in his place. It could be a coincidence, but as the unstable relationships at the site work in favour of the mining company, it is easy to see why, to the community, it appeared to be a deliberate strategy. One effect of this instability is that the community relations representative is less likely to develop empathy and compassion for the community position.

Senior staff at the mining company also mobilised discourses that questioned the moral worth of the villagers, claiming that the community were lazy: 'The people don't want to stop being poor so that they don't stop getting subsidies for free […] So, they think what is the best business for me? It is better that I remain poor, and I get donations of flour, donations of oil, no?' as well as greedy and 'manipulative' thereby undermining potential feelings of compassion in other stakeholders in the conflict. Presumably, this makes it less likely that actors will take decisions that go against the financial interests of the mine. These attempts to neutralise feelings of compassion seem to be an explicit recognition of the power such emotions have to disrupt the capital accumulation process if allowed to circulate unchecked at the site.

Disappointment, resentment and contested commensuration

The Pierina mine has been a highly profitable operation. During its first few years, BarrickGold claimed it was the gold mine with the world's lowest production costs. '[W]e have an unrelenting

focus on cost mitigation' the company stated (Barrick, 2005, p. 4). This drive towards profit maximisation means that investment in social development has been minimised where possible, despite rhetoric to the contrary. As in other similar mining conflicts (Li, 2016), interviews and conversations in the village showed that expectations on the arrival of the mine had included jobs, access to training courses, funding to improve existing agricultural technologies, water infrastructure investments, and even possible water transfers from the Cordillera Blanca. Twenty years after the mine's arrival, the villagers were aware that vast profits had been made at the site, but most people living locally felt they had seen a limited material change in their circumstances: 'I wouldn't say there has been nothing, more that, just by a few per cent our life has changed' one person told me. The frustration that BarrickGold had not fulfilled expectations, and that 'they don't give opportunities' had built up over a period of many years.

The failure of the mine to offer meaningful development combined with its unwillingness to properly compensate or rectify the damage caused to water resources was interpreted by the community as a form of disrespect. This led to feelings of resentment, in the words of one interviewee:

> I think that the Barrick Company has taken us for a ride, or *made a joke of us* for a long time, no? … Since their arrival, this *mine has marginalised the community*. … But so many streams have disappeared and that has caused all the citizens starting with me this resentment. And why is that? Because the company in spite of this with its operations has made an impact on various streams and *yet still it excludes us.* (Alberto: interview emphasis added)

The quote reveals the complexities of grievances at the site and the imbrication of social and environmental concerns. Compensating environmental damages involves commensuration between goods that under different circumstances would be understood to be incomparable. Commensuration between lost streams and CSR initiatives is inevitably a highly political and power-laden process, involving 'contestations around knowledge, meaning and value' (Espeland & Stevens, 1998; Hoogendam & Boelens, 2019, p. 139). As we have seen and I have discussed elsewhere, the extent, implications and means of knowing the scarcity were all under dispute (Balderson, 2022). It is the unacceptability of the commensuration process in the eyes of the community which is eliciting their strong emotional response to the situation and thus driving the conflict. Resentment has been considered a moral emotion, as embedded within it are norms of fairness and justice (Barbalet, 1992; La Caze, 2001; Stockdale, 2013). Drawing on philosophical understandings of resentment, Ure claims it emerges when 'contempt or indifference' are shown towards us. 'The motive of resentment is therefore the restoration of wounded honour or recognition-respect' (Ure, 2015, p. 599). A tangible and visible intervention from the mine, such as the water storage reservoirs which were eventually negotiated via the dialogue table meetings, thus has an important symbolic as well as practical value (Balderson, 2022).

The supposedly benign nature of *nueva mineria* has also raised the community's expectations. In the words of another interviewee:

> As I am young, I can see that Barrick doesn't behave as it should do. In their slogan, it says I am a responsible mine, but if it was responsible it must say that I have affected, I have impacted the water of Uliyacu, and I can put it back or replace it. So, it isn't acting like its slogan says, so it isn't really a company that acts responsibly. (Grimaldo: interview)

The speaker's emphasis on his age implies that subjectivities are evolving, and community members now have the confidence to challenge the neo-colonial relationship they had with the mine, in which the mine feels able to act with impunity, extracting gold and water but offering very little in return. However, despite positioning themselves as modern rational citizens of Peru

who are entitled to basic rights such as access to water for daily living activities, they were often perceived as 'unruly' and self-interested by other actors involved in the conflict (Balderson, 2022; Hale, 2004). Embedded within both comments above is the sense that the mine was not acting *reasonably* (Sayer, 2011). As noted at the start of this section, the mine had sufficient resources to make a meaningful difference in people's lives but they chose not to, and the community viewed this as a wilful obstruction of their flourishing. The feelings of resentment and frustration underpinned the righteousness of the community's complaint. In the section below, I explore in more detail what was meant by the terms 'marginalised' and 'excluded' used by the speaker above.

Some of the people I spoke to in Mataquita indicated that they felt inter-village rivalries were being intentionally fomented by mining company representatives:

> The mine had a strategy because they started to walk between villages and in each village they offered I don't know what, so the villagers were convinced. For example, in one place they facilitated [the formation of] various people into [micro]companies, and from then there was no unification. Of course, a few times we have wanted to unify ourselves again to protest about the water but we have not been able to because there was no longer union, [and] because there were these agreements. Or if not there was disagreement, one community wanted to, the other didn't. (Raul: interview)

As the speaker above is explaining, part of the reduction in cohesion was institutionalised by mine protocols; once a community has formed a micro-company (*empresa comunal*), which will tender for services from the mining company, sometimes in direct competition with other nearby villages, written into their contract is an agreement not to partake in protests or *paros* that could interfere with mining operations. (See Himley, 2013, p. 406–410 for more on the anti-union practices of BarrickGold during the 2006 conflict). Another aspect of it was less formal; when tensions began to escalate the mining company negotiated benefits packages separately with the authorities of each settlement[14] around the mine. Agreements brokered included a lump sum compensation payment, help to form micro-companies which may or may not be offered contracts at the mine, contributions towards the maintenance of a small (30 cow) collectively run dairy, regular cash payments, the construction of water storage reservoirs or nothing at all. This unequal treatment exacerbated local inequalities and tensions, increasing feelings of relative deprivation and making conflict more likely at the site. Further, to become part of the micro-companies, a cash buy-in was required, so the poorest villagers were excluded from some of the benefits offered by the mine.

The company's unequal contempt towards local villages helps explain the puzzling lack of solidarity between them, even though many have similar grievances against the mining company. Pre-existing identities and organisational structures also affect the shape of a conflict (Tanaka, 2005). Until the Agricultural Reform of 1969, most of the Jangas district belonged to the hacienda Vizcarra. Four Campesino communities were formed to hold land collectively during the 1970s (Perla, 2012) but these organisations proved relatively fragile and have fractured in the years since the reform, as members found that private rather than communal land ownership better suited their needs[15]. At the Las Bambas conflict site in Apurimac, an area that has many similarities to the Jangas region, it was noted that '[p]easant communities have not developed political identities and demands, but remain fragmented […] mak[ing] it difficult for these groups to identify common interests in relation to the mining project. This dynamic is, however, not created by the corporation, but is as much as a reproduction of pre-existing clientelistic dynamics, the difference being that a transnational mining company has replaced the local elite' (Gustafsson, 2015). This is in comparison to places such as Cajamarca 'where the dynamic of the protest is more intense, thanks to a much more developed web of organisations, social networks and capacities, and the presence of skilled social operators and politicians' (Tanaka, 2005, p. 14 own translation). Research at Las Bambas has suggested that the unequal treatment of villages within the vicinity

of mining operations has proved an important driver of conflict there also (Hermoza, 2014). Although research at sites with more developed organisational structures has shown that even when collective action does occur, the frequently obdurate attitude of mining companies means that there may be little chance of success. This can lead communities to abandon the risky strategy of collective mobilisation and instead, negotiate individually with mining companies to secure funding for water resources (Li, 2015; Sosa & Zwarteveen, 2016).

Gago has written extensively about how neoliberalism is no longer contained within a specific set of policies or state decisions, instead, it has leaked out and inheres 'as a rationality that negotiates profits in this context of dispossession, in a contractual dynamic that mixes forms of servitude and conflict' (Gago, 2017, p. 5). The emotional climate described here is distinct from the situation found by González-Hidalgo et al. (2019), who showed how positive emotions are intentionally stimulated during CSR programmes to facilitate extractivism and accumulation as they function as 'painkillers' that allow communities to endure the loss associated with these processes. Instead, here we see CSR being used to foment internal rivalries and frustrations and playing an important role in the ongoing processes of imagining and un-imagining the boundaries of what constitutes 'the community' and who is accorded what value in a way that influences the micropolitical ecology of the site (Horowitz, 2008, 2011). Distrust and competition between neighbouring villages is a long-standing feature of Andean social life (Gelles, 2000; Rasmussen, 2016). However, the ad hoc and informal CSR allocations exacerbate local distrust and inter-community rivalries in a way that conveniently serves the agenda of the company. Attention to emotions here is crucial, as they can facilitate subjectivities that constrain the formation of well-organised alliances capable of holding the mining company to account.

Conclusion

The complexity of emotional entanglements with mining activity can sometimes get sidelined in favour of simple narratives about environmental loss. To understand why the community lodged a *denuncio* against BarrickGold and the Pierina mines, when they did, and in the way that they did, we need to consider both the shifting emotions elicited by interactions with the company and the evolution of the Mataquitan people's subjectivities over a 20-year period. Certainly, fear for current and future water access is an important part of the emotional climate at the site as it encompasses a fear that the incremental improvements in living standards seen so far could be lost. However, equally important, are aspirations for a better life and interactions between actors through which relationally produced subjectivities emerge further shaping the trajectory of conflict.

This paper builds on the previous work in emotional political ecology which has emphasised how subjectivities both shape and are shaped by interactions with natural resources (Behzadi, 2019; Harris, 2006; Nightingale, 2013; Sultana, 2011), as well as work that has highlighted the important role that emotions play in the development of political subjectivities (González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2017; Gould, 2009; Leder, et al., 2019; Morales & Harris, 2014). My discussion has shown how the desire for action is augmented by increasingly empowered subjectivities in which, rather than perceiving themselves as passive victims of unfair mining practices, the community increasingly, although intermittently, experience themselves as citizens who, whilst fearful for the future, are willing to directly challenge the narrative of the mine. As people's sense of their own worth evolved, so did their resentment towards mining company behaviour.

A key aim of political ecology is to develop a 'more complex understanding of how power relations mediate human-environmental interaction than was hitherto the case' (Bryant, 1998, p. 82). This paper has discussed how the failure of the mining company to adequately and fairly compensate local communities for damages, led to feelings of resentment and the desire for recognition and

respect, albeit in a very localised form. These emotions were rational responses to the seemingly emotionally manipulative behaviour of the mining company, and its transgression of normative expectations of compassion for their situation and fair treatment. Crucially, the development of particular emotional subjectivities was recognised by both actors as tools which can impact material and economic conditions in the villages, as well as the possibility for capital accumulation by the mine. Compassion was implicitly understood by both the community and the mine as a force which could improve the commensuration process. As such, BarrickGold acted to eliminate or repress this emotion via constant churn in CSR personnel, suspecting if company representatives sympathised too much with the community's point of view, this could threaten mining revenues. The opaque and slippery practices of the mining company helped create a climate of distrust in which suspicion bled into other aspects of social life such as inter-community relations.

My holistic focus on multiple emotions reveals that perhaps part of the reason some low-level conflicts do not jump scales is because of the complex subjectivities created by proximity to mining developments. These emotional subjectivities pull communities in different directions and make organising resistance difficult. Attending to the multiplicity of emotions that mining activity engenders is useful, as it prevents a flattening of community experiences and reveals that communities engage in mining conflicts with various legitimate aspirations for material and symbolic gains.

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Notes

1. The *mita* was largescale forced labour between 1572 and 1819 (see Moore, 2010 for more details).
2. Although I interacted informally with women in the village, most spoke limited Spanish and with two exceptions, they declined to be interviewed. The gendered division of labour also means they did not participate verbally in meetings.
3. This interview took place in a restaurant with three members of the mine's social relations team present.
4. Known as Arequipa Resources outside Peru.
5. Known in some records as Shulcan.
6. *'Actas'* are minutes of meetings or events; they record the place, date, who was present, a summary of what was discussed, and any decisions taken, or actions planned as an outcome. In Peruvian rural communities *'actas'* are seen as having legal authority.
7. Document seen by the author.

8. The *actas* and other documents relating to the conflict were included in the *Diagnostico* (see p. 12) which was published shortly after I arrived in 2015.
9. The majority of the commercially viable metal deposits, primarily gold, have been extracted. During the closure period, restoration work takes place at the site to reduce water contamination from mine tailings. Throughout this period (approx. 15–20 years) some mining has continued according to fluctuations in the price of gold. High gold prices can make re-washing with cyanide solution 'heaps' of extracted ore economically viable. (See Zhan, et al., 2012 for more details about the mineral extraction process at the Pierina site).
10. The impact that mining has had on water availability is highly disputed. The mine accepts damage to some streams providing a total flow of 20L/s; however, much more widespread reductions are claimed by the villages within their area of influence. In 2014 a large study titled 'Optimised multi-criteria valorisation of the environmental impact in the area of influence of the project Pierina, Ancash, Peru 2014–2015, for the design of a model of sustainable cohabitation' was commissioned. This intended to draw on the expertise of 20 professional consultants from around the world. Unfortunately, the study was dropped when the Principal Investigator, who was based at the local university, was promoted to University Dean. Even amongst those who agree that the mine is the cause of the scarcity, there is disagreement about the exact mechanism of water loss with some blaming aquifer extraction whilst others claim the loss is due to the blasts from the mine which makes small streams disappear further underground.
11. This response is typical of the way powerful actors delegitimise water rights claims see Boelens, 2009, 2015 for a more detailed discussion.
12. Although these events took place before I began fieldwork, they were reconstructed using copies of the letters sent between parties during this period. (These were published in the *Diagnóstico*).
13. All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants. Locally appropriate names have been used so that certain intangible aspects of identities are not entirely lost.
14. The settlements around the mine included villages (*centros poblados*), hamlets (*caserios*) and small campesino communities.
15. In other parts of Peru historic connections to the land bind communities together via the allyu system: 'humans and other-then-human beings do not only exist individually, for they are inherently connected composing the allyu of which they are part and that is part of them – just as a single thread in a weaving is integral to the weaving and the weaving is integral to the thread' (de la Cadena, 2015, p. 44). However, it would be a mischaracterisation of Peru's history to suggest that all campesino communities were rooted in such understandings of place.

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