

Abstract

Social movements have been viewed as vehicles through which the concerns of poor and marginalised groups are given greater visibility within civil society, lauded for being the means to achieve local empowerment and citizen activism, and seen as essential in holding the state to account and constituting a grassroots mechanism for promoting democracy. However, within development studies little attention has been paid to understanding how social movements can affect trajectories of development and rural livelihood in given spaces, and how these effects are related to movements' internal dynamics and their interaction with the broader environment within which they operate. This paper addresses this theme for the case of social movements protesting contemporary forms of mining investment in Latin America. On the basis of cases from Peru and Ecuador, the paper argues that the presence and nature of social movements has significant influences both on forms taken by extractive industries (in this case mining), and on the effects of this extraction on rural livelihoods. In this sense one can usefully talk about rural development as being co-produced by movements, mining companies and other actors, in particular the state. The terms of this co-production, however, vary greatly among different locations, reflecting the distinct geographies of social mobilisation and of mineral investment, as well as the varying power relationships among the different actors involved.

Keywords: social movements; rural development; extractive industries; Peru; Ecuador; Andes