

EXTRACTIVES AND CATHOLIC PEACEBUILDING – INTEREST GROUP

Topic: Extractives and Catholic Peacebuilding
 Convener: Caesar A. Montevecchio, University of Notre Dame
 Moderator: Laurie Johnston, Emmanuel College
 Presenters: Lisa Sowle Cahill, Boston College
 William George, Dominican University
 Erin Lothes, St. Elizabeth University and *Laudato Si'* Movement

This was the third and final session of this interest group, which was connected to a broader initiative on extractives and peacebuilding by the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, at the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. The interest group was directed toward the new book *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology*,²³¹ and this third panel was a review discussion of the book.

The first commentator was Erin Lothes. Lothes had three main points regarding the book. First, its case studies help amplify the critique from Pope Francis of "ecological debt," whereby the global North owes a debt because of the way its consumption patterns have inflicted ecological harm disproportionately affecting those in the global South. In her assessment, the book's case studies help illustrate this debt and its ripple effects, but also show the potential for the church to be a mediator of a "deeper and more ambitious vision of justice." Second, Lothes observed that the book's analysis chapters offer a cogent critique of neocolonial exploitation. More particularly, Lothes commended the way the book emphasizes greater awareness of how individual consumerism attaches to neocolonialism, but also of the structural factors that sustain it. Lothes found the book to provide a useful vision of alternatives rather than stopping at articulating the negatives. Which led to her third and final point, that the book gives a "roadmap" for navigating the challenges and potentials of mining. She noted the book offers an emphasis on positive peace rooted in ecological, social, and economic justice; a call for restoration in cases of harm done by mining; and a radical vision rooted in the revolutionarily integral understanding of peace, development, and ecology in *Laudato Si'*.

William George presented next and began by highlighting the book's availability as an open-access e-book, expressing gratitude that that would make it much more widely accessible, especially for students. Substantively, he observed that the book demonstrates a very collaborative approach, both among the authors with frequent intertextual references and within the content with chapters stressing the need for Catholics to engage with other religions, NGOs, secular and civil society groups, as well as mining companies. George also said that the book includes a global scope and effectively illustrates specific cases of peacebuilding praxis, which he called demonstrations of contextual theology in action. After explaining the value of the book's integrative approach, George singled out two chapters in particular. Tobias

²³¹ Caesar A. Montevecchio and Gerard F. Powers, eds. *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining: Integral Peace, Development, and Ecology* (London: Routledge, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003094272>.

Winright's, which drew an analogy between just war principles and principles of what might form a standard for just extraction, and Douglas Cassell's, which showed the potential in a stronger relationship between international human rights law, mining advocacy, and peacebuilding. George articulated several questions that he thought the book raised: 1) How do we bring more nuance to the accounting of tradeoffs between mining damages and positive benefits like clean energy technology? 2) Could focus on deep-sea mining have helped the book better confront vital questions of mining and international law? 3) How can we overcome intra-ecclesial divisions among Catholics with regard to mining? And, 4) does the Catholic community need to be better learners in order to effectively address the technical and business issues associated with the mining industry and to make Catholic social teaching more responsive to contemporary problems like mining? George closed by urging education that focuses on ethical issues of mining to be sure to engage the STEM community in order to develop a more truly integral approach to the problems involved.

Finally, Lisa Sowle Cahill gave comments focused primarily on gender. She called gender a significant blind spot in Catholic social teaching broadly, and in the book specifically. She reads this lacuna as especially lamentable because of the prevalence of women's advocacy in the mining sector and the way women are more greatly impacted by both mining and conflict. For example, she referred to the case of women in the Andes leading resistance to mining while coping with mining's consequences for water and agriculture and while facing more violent reactions to their resistance. Cahill added that while there are instances of local churches or other organizations supporting women's groups, including indigenous women, the important role of women is not frequently enough held up or publicized. Relatedly, she pointed out that the book chapter written by José Bayardo Chata Pacoricona from Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente-Puno (Peru), an organization that does mining advocacy work with indigenous women, did not mention women's roles in any particular way. Despite this area of critique, Cahill praised the book for showing a breadth of networking from local to international levels and for representing wide geographical diversity. She also affirmed the book for demonstrating the Catholic community's potential for structural impact with regard to mining and conflict.

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