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Bebbington, A., Abdulai, A.-G., Bebbington, D. H., Hinfelaar, M., & Sanborn, C. (2019). *Gobernanza de las industrias extractivas: política, historia, ideas*. Lima: Universidad del Pacífico.

*Gobernanza de las industrias extractivas* deals with what Tilly (1984) calls “big structures, large processes, huge comparisons.” Employing a comparison of two Latin American cases (Peru and Bolivia) and two African cases (Zambia and Ghana), the authors provide an enlightening analysis of the external factors that affect institutional change in the governance of extractive industries, and the implications of this influence on the patterns of social, political, and economic inclusion that evolve as a result.

The four countries analyzed all have economies historically linked to more than a century of intensive exploitation of their natural resources: from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st. These economies also share a colonial history of resource exploitation, and the authors point out the persistent dependence of their economies on the primary sector despite attempted institutional changes and opportunities that opened up. The book explores the factors that stand in the way of successful governance in extractive industries.

The book is organized into six chapters. In the first, the authors present the basis of the conceptual framework they use to analyze the cases, and go on to describe the specific cases of Peru, Bolivia, Zambia, and Ghana. Each chapter starts with a historical review of the political agreements in place in these countries, primarily since the 1990s, and then analyzes the implications that the types of institutions created have on the governance of resources. The book ends with findings of the study and a comparison of the similarities among the four countries. In each chapter, the authors put special emphasis on the effects that the prevailing political agreements and sociopolitical conflicts have on the type of governance of natural resources in each country.

One of the key concepts in the analysis is that of “holding power,” which refers to the power of the elites and/or actors involved in political agreements to influence the conditions in which institutions and norms related to the governance of extractive industries are established. Rather than the design of institutions, the emphasis in the case studies is on understanding how the creation of institutions is affected by the power relationships that shape unequal arrangements that organize the distribution of earnings and opportunities among the parties involved in the agreements. In addition,

using the concept of meta-agreements, the analysis provides an enlightening perspective that underlines the importance of the temporal dimension in these political agreements, which outlive any government in power, and their geographical dimension, which is evident in the territorial projects in which particular geographic spaces related to natural resources are constructed.

In addition, the authors consider the possibility of change and power imbalances within these political agreements. Their analysis of the four countries allows them to recognize the susceptibility of such agreements to new ideas and influential actors, who appear on the political scene to question the legitimacy of how the political and economic opportunities provided by natural resource exploitation are organized and distributed. Thus, a leading role is assigned to the contentious politics that surrounds the extraction of resources, and the power of the ideas of “nation,” “sovereignty,” and “national unity” when it comes to these resources, which are proposed as important catalysts for the rise and fall of powerful actors that are involved in the governance of extractive industries.

The book presents a variety of findings. Here we will review two. On the one hand, there are the clear consequences related to the patterns of dependence of these Latin American and African countries on commodity price cycles, even though they are distinguished by very different histories, processes, and cultures. As a whole, the book's chapters clearly demonstrate the strong and often repetitive influence of global commodities markets on national politics, on the room for maneuver and the attitudes of national elites, and on the emergence and collapse of national and subnational actors that participate in the agreements. Thus, the analysis is enriched to the extent that it demonstrates how, in such different countries, the relative levels of holding power and inclusion in prevailing agreements will be dependent on transnational factors. Indeed, the consequences of the 1980s commodities price crises for Bolivia and Zambia, and the impact of the re-privatization of extractive industries on the governance policies adopted in Peru and Ghana in the 1990s, clearly demonstrate this.

I would also like to highlight the importance that the book places on the ideas of excluded groups and their impact on political agreements in the context of political conflict and the disequilibrium of holding power. In particular, in each chapter the authors describe how ideas about the nation, national unity, and national sovereignty interact with the material characteristics of resources, which in turn has strong implications for the governance of these resources and politics in general. As a result, the book makes a valuable contribution to the debate on extractive industries, reintroducing the ideological signification related to natural resources in each

country as an important variable in the creation of spaces of conflict and opportunities, which can undermine the established power agreements. Bolivia and Zambia, on the one hand, were countries whose resource governance was very fluid as a result of nationalist ideas about the nature of these resources; this, during the emergence of a new bonanza in the 1960s, led to the growing influence of miners in western Bolivia and the Zambian Copper Belt, respectively. Similarly, in Ghana and Peru, the expansion of the mining and petroleum frontiers, resulting from an increase in the global prices of these commodities, promoted the appearance of subnational political actors with enough demands and autonomy to give them holding power and the capacity to get involved in the debate on the governance of resources.

In conclusion, this book represents an important contribution to the debate on institutional change in the governance of extractive industries, because it analyzes these phenomena from the perspective of power and the political conditions that preceded and influenced institutional change. However, what is missing is an analysis of ongoing change; that is, the origins of divergences between countries after all these years. Did any of the countries take different paths in relation to some aspects of governance? The question of whether Bolivia and Peru, for example, emerged from the crisis of the 1980s on similar or different trajectories remains unanswered, as does the question of whether the redistributive agreements during the 2000s—so different in the two countries—are related to the ways in which previous political agreements unraveled. These are the issues that this book leaves us to reflect upon in relation to the effects of the exploitation of national resources on national development. In addition, the book challenges us to think about how to create sustainable and inclusive governance of natural resources in a context of permanent power struggles and constant changes, which are borne of the fluctuations that characterize the global commodities market and the continuous entry of new national and subnational actors with their own agendas.

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## References

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