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# Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru

*Fabiana Li*

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**Fabiana Li : Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru:

In Unearthing Conflict Fabiana Li analyzes the aggressive expansion and modernization of mining in Peru since the

1990s to tease out the dynamics of mining-based protests. Issues of water scarcity and pollution, the loss of farmland, and the degradation of sacred land are especially contentious. She traces the emergence of the conflicts by discussing the smelter-town of La Oroya—where people have lived with toxic emissions for almost a century—before focusing her analysis on the relatively new Yanacocha gold mega-mine. Debates about what kinds of knowledge count as legitimate, Li argues, lie at the core of activist and corporate mining campaigns. Li pushes against the concept of "equivalence"—or methods with which to quantify and compare things such as pollution—to explain how opposing groups interpret environmental regulations, assess a project's potential impacts, and negotiate monetary compensation for damages. This politics of equivalence is central to these mining controversies, and Li uncovers the mechanisms through which competing parties create knowledge, assign value, arrive at contrasting definitions of pollution, and construct the Peruvian mountains as spaces under constant negotiation.

"Unearthing Conflict is the first really good, English-language ethnography of mining in Peru, and its appearance especially timely given that mining has become the backbone of the Peruvian economy. Based on fascinating fieldwork, Fabiana Li's book will be of much interest to scholars of Peru and the Andes as well as those trying to better understand mining and the fraught politics of money, nature, corporate capitalism, and social protest around this gigantic global industry."