

Energy transition, minerals, conflicts and civil society participation in Latin America and the Caribbean

Panel session at the event [Pathways to sustainability: knowledge, politics and power](#)
8 December 2021 at 13.00-15.00 UTC

Speakers: Anabel Marin, Alvaro García Hurtado, Mariana Walter

Responding to climate change requires transitioning at pace and scale to low-carbon energy sources. However, this in turn requires a huge supply of minerals, from lithium and nickel for electric vehicle batteries to copper for conducting wind power. With many of these natural minerals found in many low- and middle-income countries this presents significant economic development opportunities but also multiple uncertainties, particularly for citizens whose lives and livelihoods are impacted by mining companies and biodiversity loss or land grabs due to mining expansion.

Conflicts associated with mining have increased significantly in recent years and they are likely to increase even more with the increasing demand for critical minerals. The mining sector has become more intensively monitored and contested by social movements involved in conflicts whose actions have been limiting mining activities, while promoting positive socio-cultural and institutional changes in contexts impacted by mining activities. In Argentina, for instance, social movements led to regulations that limit mining activities in seven out of the 23 of provinces.

Possible institutional changes are being investigated and proposed to include civil society more centrally in decision making processes related to minerals, and so address the challenges that conflicts bring to a sector that is considered strategic for many countries and regions, but rejected by large parts of civil society.

In this panel we will discuss social movements involved in environmental conflicts in LAC, the new forms of participation that are being proposed and how they can support or limit the transformative potential of conflicts in promoting socio-technical transformations in the mining-energy system.

Speakers

- **Anabel Marin**, Anabel Marin is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, and leads the Business, Markets and the State research team. She is also Chair of the Global Network for [Open Source Seed Initiatives](#) and [Director at Bioleft](#), an open source initiative for seed breeding.
- **Alvaro García Hurtado** is the Program Director of Alianza Valor Minero (Alliance Mining Value), Chile. He is an economist, and was formerly Minister of Finance in Chile.
- **Mariana Walter** is a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Autonomous University of Barcelona (ICTA-UAB). She is an environmental scientist working on ecological economics and political ecology. She is interested in social metabolism, resource extraction conflicts, environmental justice, knowledge co-production and institutional change. Before joining the ENVJUST she was the Scientific Coordinator of the ACKnowl-EJ Project (Academic and Activist Co-production of Knowledge for Environmental Justice), a 3 years project funded by the International Social Science Council. She has published her work in books and journals such as Global Environmental Change, Ecological Economics, Geoforum, Land Use Policy and Local Environment.