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Contesting the hydrocarbon frontiers: State depoliticizing practices and local responses in Peru

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Based on primary sources, this article analyzes 150 participatory events related to planned hydrocarbon projects in Peru (2007–2012). Therein, it sheds light on state depoliticizing practices and local populations' contestations thereof. We argue that participation in the extraction sector has not enabled effective participation and has instead been used to pave the way for expanding the extractive frontiers. We find that the state entity responsible for carrying out the events applied three main depoliticizing practices: (a) the organization of exclusionary participatory processes, (b) the provision of pro-extraction information, and (c) the identification of critical actors and discourses in order to formulate recommendations on how to weaken resistance against the planned activities. This study also reveals that local populations often contested the participatory events and identifies subnational patterns of local contestation. We find that higher degrees of contestation were fueled by previous negative experiences with extraction activities and the existence of local economic alternatives. To assess the histories and results of contestation over specific extractive activities over time, the study draws on monthly conflict reports produced by the Peruvian ombudsperson (2007–2016). We find that local contestation was quite influential, leading to increased social investment programs in the affected areas, the withdrawal of several extraction corporations, and Peru's adoption of the Law on Prior Consultation (2011). However, the long-term prospects of the transformations provoked by repoliticizing processes need to be evaluated in the years to come.

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1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, different forms of participation have increasingly been established in environmental governance from the local to the global (Bäckstrand, 2006; Leifsen, Gustafsson, Guzmán-Gallegos, & Schilling-Vacaflor, 2017). For instance, principle 10 of the Rio Declaration from 1992, which stated that "environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all citizens concerned," has entered a significant amount of domestic legislation. In addition, specific participatory rights of indigenous peoples, such as the right to prior consultation and to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), have been legally recognized by international organizations and states (Rodríguez Garavito, Morris, Orduz Salina, & Buriticá 2010). Latin America is home to most of the countries that ratified the International Labor Convention 169 on the rights of indigenous peoples and has recognized the rights of indigenous peoples to the greatest extent.

In practice, however, the great majority of Latin American states have failed to comply with indigenous peoples' right to prior consultation and FPIC (see Flemmer, & Schilling-Vacaflor, 2016; Leifsen et al., 2017). Instead of organizing comprehensive prior consultation and consent processes with indigenous communities affected by planned resource extraction, most states have merely organized public participation events. Interestingly, the large number of such tokenistic participatory practices have rarely been covered by academics, whose work has focused on the comparatively few prior consultation and consent processes (see Rodríguez Garavito, 2011; Flemmer, & Schilling-Vacaflor, 2016; Faletti, & Riofrancos, 2017; Leifsen et al., 2017; Machado, López Matta, Campo, Escobar, & Weitzner, 2017).[1] In this article we share O'Faircheallaigh's (2010) broad understanding of the term "public participation," which encompasses the full range of ways in which

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[1] Only a few case studies on such practices in Latin America have been published (see Section 3 in this article).

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citizens and local populations are involved in decision making about planned extraction projects, spanning from lower gradations of citizen participation (such as manipulation, tokenism, information, consultation and placation) to more influential forms of participation (partnership, delegated power, citizen control) (for a typology, see Arnstein, 1969). Out of the broad range of different participatory mechanisms, this article focuses on participatory events carried out by the Peruvian state about new hydrocarbon projects, including both indigenous and nonindigenous citizens and communities. To find out more about the specific characteristics of these events – especially about the opinions, questions, and claims brought forward by the participants – we analyzed a rich volume of primary data on 150 participatory events. The analyzed data were produced by Perupetro (PP), the state entity responsible for organizing public participation in Peru's hydrocarbon sector. To our knowledge, this paper represents the first systematic analysis of such a large number of participatory events.

The covered events are situated at different sites of Peru's hydrocarbon frontiers. As in other countries, extractive frontiers have expanded here significantly in the past few decades, producing new and diverse places of encounters (Peluso & Lund, 2011). The expansion of the hydrocarbon frontiers has provoked or exacerbated processes of contestation and conflict (see Bebbington, Abramovay, & Chiriboga, 2008; Bebbington, 2011; Bebbington & Bury, 2013a; De Castro, Hogenboom, & Baud, 2016).[2] In this conflict-ridden context the participatory events brought together state and local actors, who debated the future of new extraction initiatives. The state used different practices to depoliticize the events and to tame dissent against resource extraction. In turn, local populations often contested and thereby repoliticized the events and planned resource extraction projects in their vicinity. Our concept of contestation – which is in line with those of Wiener (2014) and Engels and Dietz (2017) – refers to a social practice in which at least two actors are involved and that encompasses claim making, the expression of disapproval, and ''objection to specific issues that matter to people'' (Wiener, 2014, p. 1). The practices used to express contestation range from subtle expressions like critique to visible forms of protest. Against this backdrop, there are two guiding questions: How did the depoliticizing practices of the state interplay with local populations' contestation over controversial extractive projects and flawed participation processes? What were the results of local contestations, i.e. was repoliticization effective over time?

Sections two and three of this article briefly outline the methods and empirical data used and review previous literature from political ecology and development studies on the depoliticizing and repoliticizing effects of participation. Section four then provides information about the historical background and legal framework of public participation in Peru's hydrocarbon sector. Section five illustrates three practices that the state used to depoliticize the participatory events. Section six sheds light on the different manifestations of local contestation expressed in the events. All events were classified according to a scheme we elaborated, which distinguished four degrees of local contestation according to their intensity. Moreover, we georeferentially map all events and briefly discuss the different degrees of local contestation in subnational contexts. Section seven assesses the results of depoliticizing and repoliticizing practices in the short run and in the long run by reconstructing longer histories of contestation surrounding 13 hydrocarbon concessions. This required us to draw on an additional database elaborated from the monthly reports on social conflicts produced by the Peruvian ombudsperson (2007–2016). In the final section, we reflect upon our findings and their broader implications regarding participation and contestation over extraction activities.

2. Data collection and data analysis

This article's findings are foremost based on the systematic analysis of two complementary sources of data: PP reports on 150 participatory events carried out about new hydrocarbon concessions in Peru (2007–2012) and monthly reports from the Peruvian ombudsperson on social conflicts (January 2007–June 2016) (Defensoria del Pueblo, 2007–2016).

The 150 participatory events covered in this article concerned 72 different hydrocarbon blocks (i.e., the concessions of specific areas for carrying out future oil and gas projects). The data about these events comes from reports that PP sends to the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) after the conclusion of each event. The reports are detailed and akin to internal administrative documents given that their main objective is to inform the MEM about the events. Once PP completes the events, the MEM is responsible for further environmental licensing procedures. Despite Peruvian transparency laws that oblige PP to make this information accessible, most of the reports were not published online. PP only gave us the reports in the form of digital copies (14 CDs) after several months of insistence. The reports cover all informative events about new hydrocarbon concessions carried out between 2007 and 2012, except the cases along the Peruvian coast and offshore projects.[3]

PP's reports document the content of the events, information about the participating persons and institutions, the characteristics of the events, and information on participants' perceptions, critiques, conclusions, and/or recommendations. Each report has an annex that contains the following documents with varying levels of detail: attendance lists, transcripts of the participants' questions, maps of the relevant hydrocarbon block, photos of the event, the PowerPoint presentations that were shown to the participants, written declarations or flyers from participants, and/or participant surveys concerning hydrocarbon projects before and after the event. Interestingly, the reports also contain detailed information about any ''extraordinary incidence,'' such as the presence of extraction-critical institutions/persons or participants who were reluctant to sign the attendance list. PP reported all incidents meticulously in order to inform the MEM about relevant local actors and their stances toward hydrocarbon projects. Consequently, we were able to gain detailed insights into the contested character of these events. Hence, despite the fact that the PP reports clearly present a biased view, they provided us with highly relevant primary data.[4] In order to systematically analyze the events, we elaborated a scheme and then coded the text corpus accordingly. We used ATLAS.ti software for the qualitative analysis, Microsoft Excel for the descriptive statistics, and QGIS for the georeferential mapping. In the first phase, we assessed the general characteristics of the participatory events. In the second phase, we focused

[2] According to the Peruvian ombudsperson, the percentage of socioenvironmental conflicts from the total number of conflicts in Peru has exponentially increased from 31 percent in March of 2007 to 79 percent in March of 2016 (see Defensoría del Pueblo, 2007–2016). Hence, the highly visible conflict of Bagua in 2009, which caused the death of at least 33 people, was only the tip of an iceberg. The lack of participation or, more specifically, the passing of dozens of governmental decrees that restricted collective rights without the prior consultation of indigenous peoples played a major role in this conflict (see Hughes, 2010; Acuña, 2015).

[3] According to internal regulations, three events should be carried out in each hydrocarbon block in order to (1) inform local populations about the initiation of the licensing process, (2) announce the closure of the application process, and (3) present the selected company.

[4] In terms of data and privacy protection it was critical that extraction-critical institutions and persons were often listed by name and with personal details within PP's reports. Due to the sensitivity of these data, we have anonymized such information in this paper. In the following, reports will be cited by their official numbers (see Online Appendix for an overview of all participatory events and their official numbers).

on identifying specific state depoliticizing practices as well as on the expressions and themes of local contestation. In the third phase, we developed a classification of different degrees of contestation, ranging from "no contestation" to "very high levels of contestation" (see Section 6). To guarantee the reliability of the classification, we employed three coders. Whenever a classification diverged, the case was debated among the three authors of the article in order to find a consensus over the most appropriate value.

In addition, we composed a second data set based on the monthly conflict reports from the Peruvian ombudsperson (Defensoria del Pueblo, 2007–2016), which are openly accessible online and contain reliable and specific data about conflicts in Peru. The reports comprise data produced by the decentralized offices of the Peruvian ombudsperson, which are located in every department of the country. The ombudsperson monitors latent and active social conflicts and provides information on the involved actors, conflict issues, and the trajectories of each case. Based on these reports, we established a database containing information about the involved actors, settings, themes, and processes of all hydrocarbon-related conflicts between January 2007 and June 2016; their connections with specific hydrocarbon blocks; and the outcomes of the conflict. We found that the conflict reports from the Peruvian ombudsperson contained information about contestations and conflicts related to 13 of the 72 hydrocarbon concessions that are included in our database on participatory events. In these 13 cases we were able to trace the results of high degrees of local contestation during the events over time because they turned into publicly visible social conflicts. The conflicts assessed by the ombudsperson usually arose after the participatory events; at the time when the corporations initiated the exploration activities. Of the 13 cases, seven were located in the department of Loreto; two in the department of Puno; and one each, in the departments of Junín, Madre de Dios, Amazonas, and Ucayali. All of these conflicts lasted several years, and some of them are still ongoing.[5] Despite substantial variation in the conflict trajectories, both data sets revealed that previous negative experiences with extraction and the existence of local economic alternatives were the main drivers of local contestation and conflict. In order to follow up on the cases and contextualize them in their regions, we complemented our database with additional sources from public media and secondary literature.

3. The depoliticizing and repoliticizing role of participation

In this section we present a brief review of previous studies discussing the depoliticizing and repoliticizing role of participation as well as the effects of repoliticizing practices. This literature was mainly produced by scholars of political ecology and development studies.

Academics investigating participatory processes have criticized participation as a depoliticizing and therefore particularly powerful form of political control. For instance, Ferguson (1990) argues that development policies and practices constitute an "antipolitics machine" and that participation provides an efficient means of greasing its wheels. Based on his field research in Lesotho, Ferguson characterizes an antipolitics machine as "depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own preeminently political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power" (Ferguson, 1990, p. XV). In the same vein, Kothari (2001) suggests that participatory development programs draw previously marginalized individuals and groups into the development process but do so in ways that bind them even more tightly to the asymmetric structures of power. Thus, under the cover of emancipatory language, marginalized populations of the Global South would be incorporated into an unreconstructed project of capitalist modernization (Cooke, & Kothari, 2001; Williams, 2004; see also Fox, & Starn, 1997; Kirsch, 2007).

Similarly, postpolitics scholars have argued that superficial participation processes are a mode of postdemocratic governance, which ensures that the existing neoliberal politico-economic configuration is not questioned (see Crouch, 2004; Swyngedouw, 2005, 2010a, 2010b). In this sense, Wilson and Swyngedouw (2014, p. 6) contend that political contradictions are reduced to policy problems managed by experts and legitimated through narrowly defined participatory processes. Accordingly, Swyngedouw (2010b, p. 309) criticizes the new networks of governance, including stakeholder participation, as policy arrangements designed "to ensure that the world as we know it stays fundamentally the same."

In the light of Latin America's (neo)extractivist development path (Bebbington & Bury, 2013a; Burchardt, & Dietz, 2014), the critique that public participation is used to depoliticize development has been picked up by scholars of political ecology (Li, 2009; Jaskoski, 2014; Perreault, 2015; Aguilar-Støen, & Hirsch, 2015). In the region different forms of participation have been established in the extraction sector, especially since the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s.[6] In most countries public participation in planned projects' environmental impact assessments (EIA) is mandatory, and in many cases the events are organized by the corporations themselves and not by the respective state, an independent body, or an international organization. Li (2009) and Jaskoski (2014) critically analyzed such public participation processes in Peru; Perreault, (2015) in Bolivia; Leifsen, Sánchez-Vazquéz, and Reyes, (2017) in Ecuador; and Aguilar-Støen and Hirsch, (2015) in Guatemala. All of these publications are based on in-depth case studies in the respective countries' mining sectors. Li (2009) argues that EIAs as participatory processes create collaborative relationships between state agents, corporations, NGOs, and communities, which strengthen EIAs' claims of accountability while circumscribing the spaces for opposition to a proposed project. She shows that EIAs' emphasis on participation, combined with the use of pro-extractive discourses and the delegitimization of critics, can in fact limit public critique and reduce opposition to mining activity. Hence, people in communities affected by mining activities in Peru often felt that the very processes that elicit their participation actually disempower and exclude them. Likewise, Perreault (2015) convincingly claims that public consultation in Bolivia operates as a mode of power. Perreault concluded that participation has been "intended not to foster meaningful participation, but rather to depoliticize extractive activities, defuse tensions, and enroll community members in state projects of resource extraction" (pp. 434–435). Adding to this strand of literature, Aguilar-Støen and Hirsch (2015) argue that investors only view participation in environmental licensing processes as a prerequisite that should be fulfilled as part of a set of bureaucratic procedures, filling them with meanings and practices that are in their own interests.

Local populations, including Afro- and indigenous communities, often contested and thereby repoliticized narrow participatory

[5] Our database contains information about the histories of contestation surrounding block 64 (reports from October 2008 to June 2016); block 76 (reports from September 2009 to June 2016); block 108 (reports from September 2014 to June 2016); block 116 (reports from March 2008 to June 2016); block 117 (reports from March 2009 to March 2014); blocks 123 and 129 (reports from April 2012 to December 2015); blocks 135, 137, 142, 152 (reports from June 2008 to August 2014) and blocks 155 and 156 (July 2009 to March 2012).

[6] Among these forms of participation have been public consultation processes with the general citizenry, prior consultation, and consent processes for indigenous and Afro-descendent communities, participatory planning exercises, and community-led consultations (see Leifsen et al., 2017).

events. In line with emancipatory approaches to rights-based development, we understand repoliticization as a process that can help to turn participation into an effective tool for empowering disadvantaged groups and thereby contribute to emancipatory transformations (Cornwall, & Coelho, 2006; Hickey, & Mohan, 2004; Williams, 2004). Even quite closed and technocratic environmental licensing processes can be (re)politicized if the public becomes aware of the project and begins to mobilize against it (Devlin, & Yap, 2008). Several case studies from Latin America's extractive industries provide evidence of the different forms of contestation used by local populations and other critical actors to challenge their exclusion from decision-making processes (Li, 2009; Jaskoski, 2014; Aguilar-Støen, & Hirsch, 2015; Walter, & Urkidi, 2017; Leifsen et al., 2017). Thus, participatory processes can never be predetermined and their subjects can never be completely controlled (Williams, 2004; Cornwall, & Coelho, 2006).

There is little research on the effects of contestation in the extraction sector, and the existing literature has come to divergent conclusions: some authors highlight the considerable influence local contestation has on public policy and corporate activities, while others are rather pessimistic. Making a more optimistic claim, O'Faircheallaigh (2014) refers to the case of the Mirrar Aboriginal people of Australia's Northern Territory to contend that economically marginalized groups – outside of institutionalized procedures – can use "their control over an important infrastructure corridor to force changes to project design" (pp. 160–161) and that "coercion, in the sense of a capacity to threaten key material interests of states and corporations, can be a significant part in the armoury of Indigenous groups" (ibid.: p. 163). Likewise, Jaskoski (2014) found that limited spaces for community participation in environmental licensing processes have actually prompted popular mobilization in extractive zones, leading to the stalling of major projects. In contrast, Devlin and Yap (2008) relativize the success of local opposition to stop undesired projects and argued that such cases would represent "rare examples" or "major anomalies." This assumption, however, remains to be investigated in greater detail. Moreover, it is still unclear whether resistance against planned projects can be upheld over a longer time period (Bebbington, Bury, & Gallagher, 2013) and if induced institutional changes translate into substantial outcomes (Peralta, Bebbington, Hollenstein, Nussbaum, & Ramírez, 2015).

4. Public participation in peru's hydrocarbon sector

The participatory events analyzed in this article took place at different sites of Peru's hydrocarbon frontiers. Most events were carried out in Peru's Amazonian rainforest, an area that has been hit particularly hard by the massive expansion of the extractive frontiers in the twenty-first century (De Castro et al., 2016). Historically, frontier expansion in the Amazon is not a new phenomenon (Little, 2001). Waves of frontiers spanning centuries, many tied to "cyclical booms in different commodities" (Hennessy, 1978, p. 12), generated a long-term globalization process in this area. However, the expansion of extractive frontiers has recently been accelerating at an unprecedented rate. In 2003 only 7.1 percent of Peru's Amazon was covered by oil and gas concessions; now, over two-thirds of this area is zoned for hydrocarbon activities (Bebbington & Bury, 2013b, p. 16). Most of these activities affect one or more communities of the 60 different indigenous peoples inhabiting the Peruvian rainforest. However, the hydrocarbon frontiers have also expanded in the highlands and the Andean foothills, zones that are usually inhabited by peasant communities and that had previously been mainly affected by mining activities (Li, 2015).

Public participation was legally introduced into Peru's extractive industries sector as part of the environmental reforms in the 1990s. International pressure – especially from the World Bank, which promoted the participatory principle of the Rio Declaration – led to these reforms in state administration, which were designed to accompany the privatization policies carried out under Fujimori's government (Orihuela, 2014). Today, the relevant legal framework is General Environmental Law No. 28611 (2005); though each sector also has its own regulations concerning participation in environmental licensing processes. The events analyzed in this article were first regulated by Supreme Decree 015-2006-EM and since 2008 by Supreme Decree 012-2008. These participatory events concerned mainly indigenous communities but were open to all persons affected by the projects (i.e., populations living in towns and settler communities). The events were part of public participation mechanisms and did not comply with the requirements of the indigenous peoples' right to prior consultation or FPIC.[7]

The analyzed participatory events were carried out by PP,[8] which is subordinate to the powerful Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM). By law, PP has the "social objective" to promote investment in the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons (Law No. 26221, Article 6, a). This means that PP has a clear interest in advancing new hydrocarbon projects and is part of the sectoral administration that has long tried to oppose participatory mechanisms. The pro-extraction agenda of PP has been harshly criticized by human rights and environmental organizations.[9] The participatory events covered here were conducted between 2007 and 2012 and took place in cities and local communities. Approximately 200–500 people participated in cities, and about 50–200 in local indigenous or peasant communities. On average, each event lasted about six hours, ranging from three hours to two days in exceptional cases. From 2007 to 2012, PP organized 10–40 participatory events each year. Thereafter, no further participatory processes were carried out until the implementation of prior consultation processes according to new Peruvian legislation which came into effect in 2012/2013.

The participants comprised members from indigenous organizations and communities as well as representatives from local government, regional government, and civil society organizations (e.g., producers' associations and the church). Participants were invited to the events via letters, posters, and radio and/or newspaper announcements, sometimes in coordination with regional governments or indigenous federations. PP led the events, but other state institutions were also occasionally present, such as the National Institute for the Development of Andean, Amazonian and Afro Peruvian Peoples (INDEPA), the national authorities for environmental affairs, the National Service for Protected Areas (SERNANP), and the Peruvian ombudsperson. In some cases the audience was asked to vote whether they needed a translator. If required, a translator was recruited from among the participants on an ad hoc basis.

[7] The state only organized informative events and public audiences about hydrocarbon projects until the new Law on Prior Consultation was adopted. According to international norms, prior consultation should (a) be carried out in good faith, (b) be prior to the planned measure, (c) be done with the representative authorities and institutions of local communities, (d) be based on complete and nonbiased information, (e) be culturally appropriate, and (f) seek the consent or an agreement with the consultation participants (see Rodríguez Garavito et al., 2010).

[8] PP was created in 1993 by Law No. 26221 (Organic Law for Hydrocarbons), which determined that the state transfers the property of extracted hydrocarbons (in situ hydrocarbons remain government property) to this company.

[9] Scholars, activists, and the ILO repeatedly criticized the MEM for violating indigenous peoples' right to prior consultation. Finally, the Peruvian Constitutional Court obliged the Ministry of Energy and Mines in 2010 to elaborate a proper norm on prior consultation (No. 05427-2009-PC/TC). In 2013 the Peruvian Supreme Court explicitly declared parts of the Supreme Decree from 2008 (012-2008) to be unconstitutional (A.P. N° 2232-2012). These court decisions granted additional power and legitimacy to Peru's civil society actors' demands to adopt a specific law on the right to prior consultation (see Schilling-Vacaflor, & Flemmer 2015).

After an event's inauguration, the participating public institutions and corporations presented themselves and their work, often with the use of PowerPoint presentations. They also provided brief information about the legal framework regulating participation and extractive industries and about the planned hydrocarbon activities. At the end of an event, questions were taken by staff from the public institutions or the company. No specific agreements between PP and the participants were signed as a result of these processes. The participants were only asked to sign the attendance lists and in situ protocols.

5. Taming dissent: state depoliticizing practices

In this section we will outline PP practices for depoliticizing participatory events and taming dissent against extraction activities. Formally, the purpose of the participatory events was to provide local populations with information about planned hydrocarbon projects. However, the analyzed reports make it clear that the events also pursued other aims – namely, to prepare the path for expanding the extractive frontiers in Peru. In this sense, PP states in its reports that the informative events help "to strengthen the relationship between the corporation, the state and civil society and to minimize the fears and preoccupations of the affected populations concerning planned hydrocarbon projects" (see, for instance, GFPR-0195-2007).

Based on our analysis of PP's reports, we identified three main depoliticizing practices: (a) organizing exclusionary participatory processes, (b) providing pro-extraction information, and (c) identifying critical actors and discourses in order to formulate recommendations on how to weaken resistance against planned extraction activities.

5.1. Exclusionary participatory processes

The organized participatory events were exclusionary in two respects. First, it was not possible for all interested citizens to participate in the events – particularly when the events took place in cities far from the affected communities and transport was only provided to a limited number of people. Second, we found evidence in several PP reports that the concrete locations for carrying out the participatory events were selected according to the state entity's aim of excluding critical voices. When PP received indications that local actors had very critical attitudes and were likely to openly challenge the planned event, the state entity suspended, postponed, or changed the location of the event. For example, a participatory event that was supposed to be carried out with a native community in Loreto was suspended because of the "hesitant, hostile and martial" attitude of some of their leaders (GFPC-0290-2010). Another planned event in Loreto was postponed for one day at short notice because PP was informed that an indigenous organization planned to blockade the development of the event (GFPC-0622-2009).

These incidents show that PP pursued a strategy of excluding critical actors rather than trying to create an arena of exchange and open-ended negotiations aiming to achieve consent. Here, we can draw a parallel to Aldrich's (2008) research into facility siting in France and Japan. He finds that locations where resistance is expected to be low are selected as sites for large-scale projects (such as airports and nuclear power plants). In the case of hydrocarbon projects, although the siting of the extraction projects cannot be freely determined, the siting of the respective participatory events and the inclusion or exclusion of actors can be handled with a certain flexibility. In the analyzed Peruvian cases, the siting of the events was used strategically to exclude critical voices.

5.2. The provision of pro-extraction information

The information provided by PP reflected its pro-extraction agenda, as it highlighted the opportunities related to planned extraction projects while downplaying expected negative impacts. Their answers to questions and critique remained vague and general. PP presented hydrocarbon activities as an opportunity for the local populations to gain access to basic services provided by the future company, such as schools, health care centers or electrification. The most important development promise, however, was the provision of jobs for local actors, given the generally high rates of unemployment in the Amazonian and rural Andean communities (INEI, 2015). At the same time, the adverse socioenvironmental impacts of hydrocarbon projects were neglected. For example, one PP report stated that "[the extraction corporation] presented its work plan. The corporation emphasized that the planned activities will not cause any environmental or social damage" (PRRC-041-2010). Another illustrative example in this regard is PP's questionable comparison of hydrocarbon projects with hunting activities, which was presented at several participatory events. With the help of pictures, PP compared the search for oil and gas to a hunter who looks for prey, thereby naturalizing and trivializing extraction activities. The final slide reads, "Animals give us their flesh, their bones, their skin, their fat, their teeth. Hydrocarbons give us fuel, heating, paint, plastic, medicines and oil" (PPPC-0323-2007).

When confronted with critical questions about the possible negative environmental impacts of oil and gas extraction, PP or the interested corporation responded with superficial technical or legal answers, trying to convince participants that such fears would have no foundation. PP presented contamination as something that only happened in the past and explained that today's environmental impact assessments (EIAs), existing environmental legislation, and new technology would prevent any negative impacts. In this regard, we share Aguilar-Støen's and Hirsch's, (2015) observation that such framing political questions concerning ecological impacts as technical/legal problems has strong depoliticizing consequences.

5.3. Identifying and weakening critical actors and discourses

As mentioned above, PP's reports contained detailed information about critical actors, discourses, and evidence of contestation expressed during the participatory events. Among the critical actors listed were indigenous leaders and federations, peasant organizations, local communities and specific community members, NGOs, members of local churches, representatives of subnational governments, teachers, and entrepreneurs. In the reports critics were represented as sharing wrong or tendentious opinions about extraction activities. Vocal members of local populations were presented as having been manipulated by outsiders. In turn, PP's own position was implicitly or explicitly portrayed as correct and neutral. This finding resonates with Li's (2009) insight into Peru's mining sector on how criticism expressed by peasants and NGOs has often been declassified in participatory events as uninformed, biased, and inaccurate.

The identification of critical voices was often connected to specific recommendations on how to handle them. For example, in one report PP recommended establishing strategies to communicate directly with indigenous populations "to countervail the tendentious [extraction-critical] opinions from some NGOs" (PPPC-0787-2007). In response to strong opposition against extraction projects expressed during a participatory event in Junín, PP suggested establishing a strategy for identifying which local actors could help to build a "convenient dialogue for strengthening PP's work and to make the hydrocarbon activities in the region viable"

Table 1
Overview of the definition of the four degrees of intensity of local contestation.

Degree of contestation	Description	Number of Events
0 (green dots)	"No contestation": pro-extraction attitude of participants or absence of critique; in many of these cases the participants' expectations of benefits prevailed	43
0.33 (yellow dots)	"Low degree of contestation": informative questions, expression of concerns, a few critical questions or comments	40
0.67 (orange dots)	"High degree of contestation": expression of opposition against extractive activities by part of the participants (divided opposition); more than 10 participants refused to sign attendance lists; massive substantial critique of participatory process, energy politics, and/or hydrocarbon activities	52
1 (red dots)	"Very high degree of contestation": united opposition against extraction activities, mobilization, blockade of participatory events	14
		Total: 149 (+1)[a]

Source: Authors' own elaboration.
[a] The degree of contestation of one event is unknown because the report of this case is missing (ID 143 in the Online Appendix).

(PPPC-0318-2007). In reaction to contested participatory events carried out in Puno, PP concluded that the opposition to the hydrocarbon projects was due to these populations' negative previous experiences with mining activities. Hence, PP proposed organizing additional events to "gain the trust of the population in order to make them accept the development of hydrocarbon activities in their territories and to dissipate the doubts about a possible contamination of their water and soil" (GFPC-0328-2008).

6. Mapping local contestation

In this section we illustrate the ways participants contested and thereby repoliticized the biased, pro-extraction participatory events. In doing so, we also offer an insight into main themes of local contestation reflected in participants' questions and claims. We applied a fine-grained scheme for assessing different degrees of local contestation, ranging from publicly visible performances of protest to subtle expressions of contestation (e.g., the expression of distrust and asking critical questions), which are usually overlooked by both the general public and in academia (see Scott, 2008).

Although we collected a considerable amount of evidence of diverse local contestation, we have good reason to assume that the actual degree of resistance against hydrocarbon projects in Peru is even higher. Local populations may have been reluctant to express their critique openly within formal, manipulative, state-led participatory events. An enlightening observation in this regard is that of Scott (2008, p. 324), who claims that "No matter how conscious members of a subordinate class may be of having gotten a raw deal, the daily pressures of making a living and the risks of open defiance are usually enough to skew the ethnographic record systemically in the direction of compliance, if not acceptance, of the inevitable." In addition, many critical local voices were excluded from the events beforehand by PP's selective invitations or due to the siting of events.

In the following we will provide an overview of the identified degrees of local contestation, localize the participatory events on a georeferential map, and briefly contextualize subnational patterns of contestation.

6.1. Degrees of local contestation expressed in participatory events

We systematically assessed local contestation expressed in the participatory events and elaborated a classificatory scheme that distinguishes between four degrees of intensity. Table 1 gives an overview of the definition of each level of contestation. In addition, a detailed account explaining the classification of each case and illustrating the expressions and specific themes of local contestation can be found in the Online Appendix.

In order to visualize the differing degrees of local contestation and their geographical distribution, we created a georeferential map locating the participatory events (see below). The map shows all of Peru's 24 departments and its river system,[10] which is of importance in terms of mobility in the Amazon. The hydrocarbon blocks are drawn in the map as rectangles in different shades of brown, which are marked with the identification number PP uses for each block. The blocks with red boundaries in Fig. 1 below are the 13 oil blocks that were selected from the Ombudsperson reports about socioenvironmental conflicts in Peru. We divided the map into five geographical zones (I-V), which reflect specific subnational patterns (see Section 6.2). The dots in the map represent all 150 events analyzed and the different colors indicate their respective degrees of contestation. A score of 0 (green in the map below) means "no local contestation" – that is, data from the reports did not indicate any kind of critique during the event. In some cases, participants in this category even expressed positive opinions concerning the participatory process or planned hydrocarbon projects. The score 0.33 (yellow in the map below) indicates "low local contestation." Here, reports revealed the existence of "soft" critiques such as verbal articulations of distrust toward the distributed information or a few critical questions or comments. A score of 0.67 (orange in the map below) indicates "high local contestation." We assigned this category whenever critiques and/or strong threat perceptions were clearly expressed during the participatory event, when a group of participants expressed their explicit opposition to extraction activities, or when more than 10 participants (which is unlikely to happen coincidentally) refused to sign the attendance list. The refusal to sign these lists was usually either a form of protest and/or due to participants' fears that PP could present the lists as evidence of local approval of extraction projects. A score of 1 (red in the map below) indicates "very high local contestation." In such instances event participants either organized protests or expressed their united opposition against hydrocarbon activities.[11]

Of the 150 events, 43 were characterized by no local contestation; 40, by a low degree of local contestation; 52, by a high degree of local contestation; and 14, by a very high degree of local contestation.[12]

The participants of the analyzed events chose different ways in which to challenge the participatory events about planned hydrocarbon activities. These included the most frequent type of contestation, the formulation of critical questions or comments, which

[10] In 1988, President Alan García Pérez introduced a new administrative order in Peru. His original plan was to establish a few regions that would superpose the 24 departments that exist since the country's independence. This project has never been fully implemented, and since 2002, 24 regions exist, which are identical with the departments in their territorial boundaries, but not in their administrative competences.

[11] In the map below (Map 1), one case is marked with gray, which means that the PP report about this case was not detailed enough to enable us to classify the respective level of contestation. The Online Appendix contains an explanation of the classification of each case according to the general scheme.

[12] One of the cases could not be evaluated, because of a missing report.

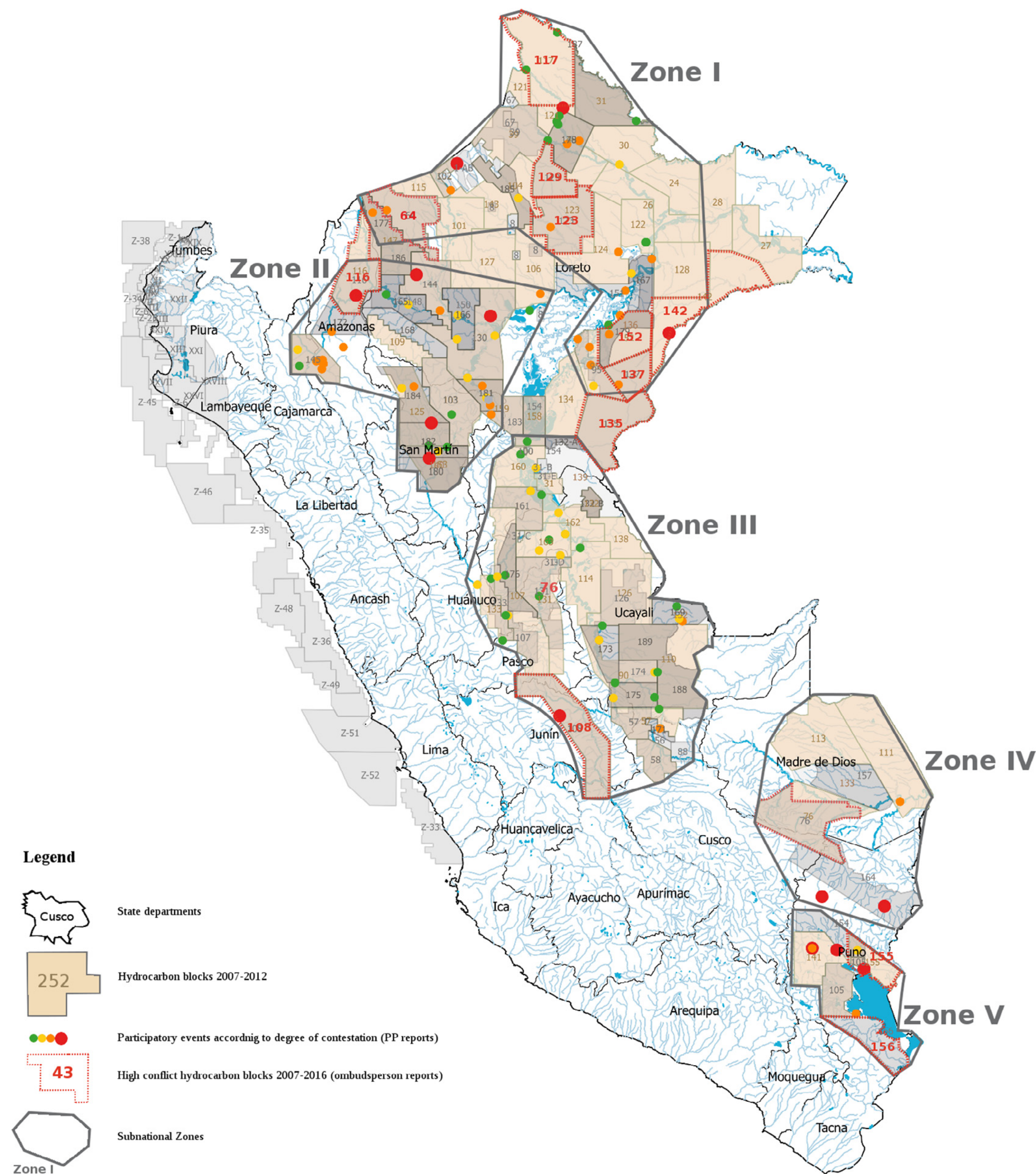

Fig. 1. Overview of the hydrocarbon blocks and the analyzed participatory events according to their degree of local contestation. Source: Authors' own elaboration, based on data from Perupetro and the administrative boundaries from GADM (http://gadm.org/).

were often based on participants own negative previous experiences with extraction activities or their knowledge thereof. In nine cases participants handed written statements over to PP in which they outlined their critical opinion concerning the participatory events and/or the planned hydrocarbon activities. For example, in an event in Puno, a peasant federation handed in a declaration that stated that the local peasants were only willing to participate in decisions via their right to FPIC and to reject hydrocarbon projects in order to protect agriculture in their territories (GFPC-0328-2008). According to our information, participants refused to sign the attendance list in 22 cases; this included 18 events wherein 10 or more participants opposed to sign this list. In another 22 cases, participants orally expressed their outright rejection of any extraction activity within their territories, while in seven cases participants organized protest activities or blockaded the event. The later cases indicate degrees of "very high local contestation" (red dots) and include, for example, an event in Puno where two hundred people chased off PP staff (GFPC-097-2010) and an event in San Martín where over 500 people protested against hydrocarbon projects in the area (GFPC-0239-2010).

6.2. Subnational patterns of contestation

Our analysis revealed that the four most frequent issues addressed within manifestations of local contestation were (a) the general distrust of participants toward the Peruvian state and/or extraction corporations, (b) previous negative experiences of local populations with hydrocarbon or similar industries, (c) fears concerning contamination, especially with regard to the quantity and quality of water sources, and (d) fears that extraction activities would put their local economies at risk. Another reason for critique was the insufficient quality of information provided

at participatory events. Furthermore, participants criticized the unequal distribution of revenues from the hydrocarbon sector and called for more local benefits. However, we also found that subnational differences exist, both with regard to the degrees and specific issues of local contestation.

The georeferential map enabled us to effectively visualize "hot spots" of local contestation. We found that most contested areas lie in the northern foothills, the Andean region of Puno, and in the rainforest department of Madre de Dios. In contrast, participatory events in the northern Amazon were very diverse in the degrees of contestation and in the central Amazon events were, with three exceptions, characterized by low or no local contestation. Our analysis reveals that local contestation depended on participants' prior experiences and expectations, which are rooted in the history of each locality. In order to understand the subnational patterns of contestation, we will briefly contextualize them.

The *northern Amazon* ("Zone I" in the Fig. 1 above, major part of Loreto department) is characterized by a mixture of high degrees of contestation and no contestation – with very high and low levels being the exception. Some "hot spots" of hydrocarbon conflicts are located in this zone (see Section 7). Main issues of local contestation in this area were negative previous experiences with oil contamination as well as the noncompliance of companies and the state with agreements. The critical local positions towards resource extraction can be understood in the light of the decades-old and ongoing contamination caused by Peru's oldest oil block and the related struggles for the remediation of environmental damages (formerly block 1AB/today 192) (see Bebbington & Scurrah, 2013, p. 177; Orta-Martínez et al., 2007). New hydrocarbon projects located in remote areas in the northern Amazon were less or not contested.

In the *northern foothills* ("Zone II", departments of Amazonas and San Martín and the northwestern part of Loreto department) very high and high degrees of contestation were present, which were fueled by the Bagua conflicts – a violent high point of the conflicts in the area. For example, in a participatory event in 2010 the participants made it clear that they were not willing to talk with the government about extraction activities until the indigenous leaders who had been arrested during the conflict were freed (GFPC-0282-2010). In addition, the presence of mining and hydrocarbon concessions and local knowledge about the negative impacts of these industries, both in Loreto and neighboring Cajamarca, have led to extraction-critical alliances between indigenous and peasant organizations (see Greene, 2006; Chirif, 2013). Locals in San Martín department, in particular, have articulated environmental concerns (see GFPC-0239-2010). This department is known as a "green region" with a strong political focus on natural conservation (Kowler et al., 2016, p. 40). San Martín was the first in Peru to propose REDD+ initiatives, and its inhabitants have repeatedly mobilized against extractive industries and the expansion of the agricultural frontiers, especially against palm oil plantations.

In the *central Amazon* ("Zone III", Ucayali department, the southeastern part of Loreto department, and the eastern parts of Huánuco and Junín departments), participatory events showed no contestation or low degrees of local contestation.[13] The events in this area were generally characterized by high expectations concerning economic improvements and employment opportunities. At the same time, the perception of threat of environmental contamination expressed by participants in this area was rather vague. This finding can be largely explained by the absence of both severe negative experiences with similar industries and of strong and critical local organizations capable of articulating community grievances. This finding confirms Devlin and Yap's (2008) argument that it will be difficult to mobilize public opposition to a project that is largely conceived as being necessary for creating jobs, despite concerns that it might have significant negative environmental impacts.

In the *southern Amazon* ("Zone IV", Madre de Dios department and northeastern part of Puno department) the very high and high degrees of local contestation resulted from participants' negative view of hydrocarbon projects, which is rooted in their conflict-riddled history with extraction and infrastructure (La Torre López, 1998; Haselip, & Romera, 2011). The area is one of the most biodiverse hotspots on earth, which is under growing threat from lumbering, (mainly illegal) gold mining, and the Southern Interoceanic Highway, which connects Peru to Brazil and Bolivia. Hydrocarbon projects are placing additional pressure on this part of the rainforest, which is an important transit area for highly vulnerable populations living in voluntary isolation (Huertas Castillo, 2004; Orta-Martínez, & Finer, 2010). Hydrocarbon block 76, which was established in 2007 without prior consultation, overlaps the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve (ACR). This has caused discontent because the ACR had been recognized only a few years earlier in 2002, when it was celebrated as "a great victory for indigenous people" (Alvarez et al., 2008, p. 112).

In the *southern highlands* ("Zone V", major part of Puno department) participatory events were characterized by high or very high levels of contestation. According to our analysis, the strong resistance to hydrocarbon projects in this area is down to the interaction between (a) previous negative experiences with mining activities, (b) the strongly perceived threat to local economic activities, and (c) the tense and conflict-prone relationships between subnational governments and the central state.[14] Opposition to extractive industries has taken the form of several protests and strikes supported by subnational governments in the past few years. Moreover, local opposition to resource extraction has also been supported by powerful local entrepreneurs (see Bebbington et al., 2013, p. 279). Interestingly, the claims voiced by many of the participants in PP events in Puno did not just target single extraction projects but also comprised broader and more fundamental demands, such as the nationalization of extractive industries and the organization of a constituent assembly (GFPC-0631-2008).

In summary, depoliticizing practices were unsuccessful when local populations had already developed a clear negative position toward extraction projects and had formed broader extraction-critical local alliances. This stance could be due to previous negative experiences related to hydrocarbon projects or negative experiences with similar industries, like mining and logging. Furthermore, general distrust or negative attitudes toward the state or extraction corporations – fostered by, for example, corruption scandals, flawed EIAs, or inefficient forms of revenue distribution – have driven local contestation. This finding supports the claim that socioecological conflicts are "multilayered" (Beckert, Dittrich, & Adiwibowo, 2014; see also Bebbington & Bury, 2013b, 19). In this regard and based on the present study, we call upon policymakers and academics alike to pay more attention to the interaction between mining and hydrocarbon conflicts, which have been potentiating each other. High levels of local contestation also correlated with the existence of well-developed local economies, such as those in the northern foothills and in Puno. In these cases

[13] The exceptional case of a "very high degree of contestation" located in the central Amazonian has been the outright rejection articulated by the local Asháninka organization against external interventions such as oil activities in hydrocarbon block 108 in the department of Junín (Map 1). The reason for this opposition is closely related to the "traumatic experiences of violence" the Asháninka suffered during the internal conflict between the state government and the leftist guerrilla Sendero Luminoso in the 1980s and 1990s (CVR, 2003).

[14] Interestingly, we found that local contestation was particularly severe before subnational elections. It seems that candidates for subnational government positions used the expression of opposition within participatory events to gain popularity among local voters (see GFPC-097-2010).

development promises proved to be much less effective than in zones characterized by a lack of economic alternatives.

7. The effect of depoliticization and local contestation

In many PP reports we found evidence of the short-term effectiveness of its pro-extraction strategies. Before and after 26 events, PP conducted surveys with participants on their attitudes toward hydrocarbon projects. While these surveys often included samples of only 10–20 people, they all indicated that after participatory events respondents' opinions were more favorable toward hydrocarbon activities than before. Several reports also contained illustrations of the effectiveness of PP's pro-extraction agenda. For example, a PP report on a participatory event in Loreto stated that "the participants from the native community [...] initially manifested their position against the presence of oil companies in the area due to fears of contamination. This position was minimized towards the end of the event" (GFPC-0273-2010). Another report documented that before a participatory event in San Martín, "a pacific [antiextraction] March through the city was scheduled. This March was suspended because many of its promoters participated in the lunch prepared by PP. During the lunch, the critical statements were attenuated" (GFPC-0239-2010). When only looking at such evidence of the depoliticizing effects of these manipulative informative events, we could conclude that PP practices were very successful. However, this conclusion has to be relativized by taking into account local populations' contestations against extraction activities, which they expressed during and after participatory events.

To assess the effect of local contestation against hydrocarbon activities over time, we compiled a database of monthly reports on social conflicts drafted by the Peruvian ombudsperson (2007–2016). As outlined above, we used this database to trace concrete histories of contestation surrounding the 13 most controversial hydrocarbon blocks as indicated by the monthly reports (blocks 64, 76, 108, 116, 117, 123, 129, 135, 137, 142, 152, 155, 156; see blocks marked with red boundaries in Fig. 1) and to review their results.

7.1. Beyond participatory events: histories of contestation

The Peruvian ombudsperson's reports evince the complex character of the histories of contestation, which were characterized by the involvement of diverse actors. In most cases several state ministries and even the presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM) as well as the Peruvian Congress became involved. The Peruvian ombudsperson always played an important role in the conflicts, either as a mediator or as an observer to guarantee local populations' rights. In many instances indigenous peoples' organizations, agricultural and peasant associations, and environmental groups created antiextraction alliances to voice their opposition to the planned projects.

In turn, state institutions joined forces with private companies. Interested corporations commonly engaged in actions designed to convince local populations to let them enter their territories – for example, by financing social projects, building infrastructure, and engaging in direct negotiations with specific local communities or leaders (blocks 64, 76, 116, 123, 129, 135, 137, 142, 152). Likewise, in several cases (blocks 108, 135, 137, 142, 152) the central state organized working groups composed of state and civil society representatives to discuss the local development of the zones (health, education, etc.) and, within this framework, hydrocarbon activities. The state and corporations thereby established a direct link between extraction activities and the provision of basic needs for local communities. All of these corporation-led and state-led activities were initiated after protests. In many cases the offer of benefits to local populations (often offered to certain groups with pro-extraction attitudes) exacerbated local conflicts and created divisions across local communities and within indigenous organizations (blocks 64, 108, 116). Such divide-and-rule tactics are quite common within the extraction sector in Peru and in neighboring countries (Sawyer, 2004; Schilling-Vacaflor, & Eichler, 2017).

Local populations affected by hydrocarbon activities employed a wide range of activities to voice their resistance, often joining forces with environmental groups and local governments. These activities consisted of distributing public statements, organizing strikes, boycotting state-led or corporation-led events, filing lawsuits, organizing community-led self-consultations against hydrocarbon activities, and collecting thousands of signatures. Social conflicts also resulted in collective actions like the organization of antiextraction conferences and assemblies, street and river blockades, and protests. In some instances, these conflicts even escalated into violence. Protesters also sought allies outside of Peru to pressure the state and the private companies. For example, indigenous representatives from block 116 met with the French minister of External Affairs in 2013 to express their concerns about the planned projects, while indigenous leaders from blocks 64 and 76 met with shareholders from the interested oil corporations. In addition, people affected in blocks 64 and 116 participated in hearings of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) in October 2014 and April 2015, respectively.

Indigenous peoples' right to prior consultation and FPIC was a prominent claim of protestors, and noncompliance with that right has been central to political and legal demands to annul contracts (blocks 64, 108, 116, 117, 135, 137, 142, 152, 155, 156). Nevertheless, state ministries usually responded negatively to such claims, arguing that the law of prior consultation could not be retroactively applied (despite the fact that ILO C169 has been legally binding for Peru since 1995). However, a recent court decision has challenged this narrow interpretation of the right to prior consultation and FPIC and offers greater legal recourse to claimants (see below).

7.2. The results of local contestation

Two frequent consequences of contesting new hydrocarbon projects have been the negotiation of state- and corporation-sponsored development projects in favor of affected local populations, on the one hand, and the suspension of exploration and extraction activities, on the other. According to public media, the great majority of paralyzed hydrocarbon blocks in Peru were the result of social conflicts.[15] However, making clear assumptions about the causality between social conflicts and the renouncement of oil contracts can be tricky because corporations often refer to economic calculations as the main reason for pulling out of contested hydrocarbon blocks.

However, our reconstruction of the detailed contentious processes (based mainly on the Peruvian ombudsperson's reports) allows us to make well-informed assumptions about some of the direct results of contestation in Peruvian energy politics. Our data suggest that the halting of extraction projects due to local resistance is more frequent than previous studies, like that of Devlin and Yap (2008), assumed. For instance, only two months after indigenous leaders in block 76 informed Hunt Oil that the existing conventions would no longer be valid, the corporation decided to give up its plans to carry out exploration activities in the near future and finally abandoned the concession less than two years

[15] National and international media covered that oil companies are leaving Peru due to social conflicts (Hill, 2017; Saldarriaga, 2014, 2017).

later in March 2017. In block 64 the corporation Talisman pulled out in April 2013 after a fierce year-long struggle with the local population. The operating oil corporation in blocks 123 and 129 in the department of Loreto returned its concessions to the Peruvian state in October 2012 after a wave of social protests from May to August 2012. Finally, all hydrocarbon blocks in the highly conflictive department of Puno have either been returned to the central state or projects have been postponed due to social conflicts.

Effectively combining political and legal strategies, the Awajún and Wampis peoples recently won a lawsuit in which they demanded the right to consultation and FPIC in relation to block 116. This block had already been in place since 2006 and had a long history of contestation. After filing their case in 2014 in the IACHR (session on March 17, 2017) for the second time, Peru's Supreme Court of Justice ruled on March 28, 2017 that, due to the violation of the indigenous right to consultation and consent, the contract to explore for and exploit hydrocarbons in block 116 be annulled and all related activities be suspended. The court's ruling was celebrated by indigenous organizations and their allies as a precedent for future rulings in favor of communities opposed to existing concessions in Peru (SERVINDI, 2017).

The analysis of the local populations' critical discourses – both in the framework of the analyzed informative events and in the broader processes – reveal the high level of politicization of many involved groups and their allies. Very often, antiextraction campaigners formulated fundamental critiques of the state's current energy politics (the lack of supervision of environmental impacts, the privatized character of the oil economy, ineffective environmental licensing processes, etc.). In addition, Peru's dominant extraction-based development path has been challenged by many local actors, who have struggled to secure alternative futures in which local agriculture, water resources, and indigenous reserves are safeguarded against the negative impacts of resource extraction.

The Law on the Right to Prior Consultation, a long standing demand from indigenous and peasant communities affected by resource extraction from Peru, was also adopted in response to massive mobilizations and several lawsuits (Schilling-Vacaflor, & Flemmer, 2015).

8. Discussion and conclusion: depoliticization and repoliticization at extractive frontiers

The Peruvian state entity PP systematically used participatory events to pave the way to expand the country's extractive frontiers. We showed that these events had a sales-like character, wherein hopes were raised, fears were downplayed, and questions and critique were evaded. In addition, the state entity used these arenas to identify extraction-critical forces and develop strategies to debilitate them. Our findings are in line with those from several case studies that revealed similar government and corporation strategies in other Latin American countries. We think that it is important to acknowledge that public participation is much more than simply a forum for spreading information or for holding dialogue. Indeed, such encounters are often highly political processes, where the future of local territories and their inhabitants are up for debate.

As a consequence, the first lesson to be learned is that we should not just support claims for more and more comprehensive participatory processes, as such processes might actually prove more effective in convincing local populations to accept extraction activities in their territories (especially when they are combined with the use of questionable practices such as divide-and-rule tactics). Therefore, we think that it is crucial to critically review the quality of participatory processes and to be particularly sensitive to any manipulative undertakings therein. Raising awareness about depoliticizing practices frequently applied in participatory events could help to develop counterstrategies for dismantling such disempowering techniques.

The second lesson relates to the controversial scholarly debates about whether participation can reduce extraction-related conflicts or whether participation is more likely to exacerbate such conflicts by providing political opportunities for mobilization and contestation (see McAdam et al., 2010). The respective positions (participation either as a driver or a tranquilizer of conflicts) were sustained by referring to a few in-depth or comparative case studies. As our study has the advantage of covering a larger number of cases (150 cases), our findings concerning the subnational variation of local contestation substantially contribute to this debate. Our findings reveal that it is highly context-dependent whether participation depoliticizes or repoliticizes with regard to extraction activities. In line with several case studies (Bebbington et al., 2008; Arellano-Yanguas, 2011; Conde, & Le Billon, 2017), we found that local populations tended to contest hydrocarbon projects if they had previous negative experiences with the extractive industries or if local economic alternatives were well developed and perceived to be threatened by planned extraction projects.

The third lesson concerns the effectiveness of state depoliticizing practices and the results of local contestation. In Peru the pro-extraction agenda of PP was rather successful in the short run, as participants' opinions in many places became more extraction-friendly. However, in places where local actors had already developed strong antiextraction attitudes, depoliticizing practices were strongly contested and participants challenged the state's policies toward participation and resource extraction. Local contestation was often quite influential, leading to increased social investment, the withdrawal of corporations, and a law on the right to prior consultation. We believe that the effectiveness of local contestation in influencing the governance of natural resources is particularly underresearched and should be at the center of future research efforts. It would be important to use disaggregated concepts of effectiveness or influence by distinguishing between discursive, legal, political, economic, and ecological gains. In addition, the effectiveness of local contestation should be traced over longer time periods, as a temporary success might vanish over time. For instance, with regard to the cases covered in this article, it would be important to scrutinize whether local populations were able to fend off undesired projects definitively or whether they just secured delays to planned projects. Similarly, it will be crucial to investigate whether the adoption of the Law on the Right to Prior Consultation actually is helping affected populations to have their concerns addressed. The prior consultation processes that have been implemented in the past few years seem to reflect a similar ambiguity in terms of the interplay between depoliticizing and repoliticizing practices like the participatory events analyzed in this article (Flemmer, forthcoming; Flemmer & Schilling-Vacaflor, 2016).

In conclusion, irrespective of the long-term success of extraction opposition, the instances of local contestation analyzed here provide clear evidence of their (re)politicizing effects. These dynamics contradict the insight that "environmental politics has clearly metamorphosed from a highly political and politicizing terrain into a largely depoliticized and post-political issue" (Blühdorn, 2014, p. 149). Rather, they shed light on the dysfunctionality of postpolitics and its repeated failure to achieve the closure it desires (Wilson, & Swyngedouw, 2014, pp. 300–301). Hence, the implications of this article's findings are likely to go far beyond the stalling of specific large-scale resource projects and might rather point to a more fundamental crisis of current energy politics, which have

largely been based on expanding the extractive frontiers in the Global South.

Conflict of interest

None.

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Contribution

The first author, Almut Schilling-Vacaflor, coordinated and led the third-party funded projects in the framework of which this article was developed. She coordinated the data collection and analysis and formulated the different versions of the submitted manuscript.

The second author, Riccarda Flemmer, collected the data material used for carrying out the paper's analysis during fieldwork in Peru. She co-led the data's analysis, later she revised and complemented the paper's drafts that were prepared by the first author.

The third author, Anna Hujber, supported the establishment of this paper as a student assistant. Among her tasks were the coding and systematic analysis of the paper's empirical data and the elaboration of the geo-referential map used in the paper (Map 1).

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.03.019.

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