



## Going for Gold : Newsletter 6

Crawford School for Public Policy  
ANU College of Asia and The Pacific

**March 2015**

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We are proud to announce the confirmation of major speakers for our forthcoming International conference: **'Between the plough and the pick: Informal mining in the contemporary world'** to be held on 5-6 November this year at The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

Millions of poor people all over mineral tracts of economically poor countries are engaged in mineral extractive practices. Neither these people, nor their practices, have been at the forefront of debates on mining. Collectively, these informal extractive practices have been described as artisanal and small-scale mining (or ASM in short). We are, however, using the term 'informal mining' primarily because such mining practices, even when licensed but carried out on a smaller scale, comprise a part of the informal sector of these countries. Those who engage in these practices are often the poorest and most exploited labourers, erstwhile peasants caught in the global vortex of change, and performing the most insecure and dangerous tasks. Located at the margins of the mainstream mining economy, they produce enormous amounts of mineral resources and find a livelihood (and often a path out of poverty).

It is important to understand the diversity within their extractive practices, the forces driving such mining, the creative agency and capacities of these miners, as well as the human and environmental costs of such mining. These informal, artisanal and small-scale miners are inextricably engaged with, or bound to, global commodity values and supply chains, are intimately involved in the production of new extractive territories and rural economies, and their labour re-shapes agrarian communities and landscapes of resource access and control. Collectively, these miners have also been redefining our understanding of the political economies, political ecologies, and resource geographies of commodity extraction. This social and economic milieu also holds significant implications for scholarly understandings of contemporary mineral-dependent livelihoods, agrarian transitions, informality, and the social meanings of destitution and poverty.

The *primary purposes of the conference* are to engage with the scholarly understandings of contemporary agrarian transition, the political ecology of mineral extraction, the global processes driving the informalisation of mining, the roles played by local social-political-historical context, and aspects of labour processes. The conference would also disseminate the results of two research projects: 'Beyond the Resource Curse' (ARC Discovery Project, CI Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt), and 'Going for Gold' (ARC Linkage Project held by Drs Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt and Keith Barney). We are hoping to publish an edited book from the conference.

### **Confirmed Keynote Speakers:**

- Professor Saleem Ali (Author, *Treasures of the Earth*, Yale University Press), Director, CSRM, University of Queensland: 'The Social Ecology of Artisanal Mining: Between Romanticism and Anathema'. Further details about Professor Ali can be seen at: <https://www.csrn.uq.edu.au/people/saleem-ali>

- Professor Nancy Peluso, Distinguished Professor of forest policy, University of Berkeley: 'Gold territory in oil palm country: Agrarian transition and smallholder territories in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Further details about Professor Peluso can be seen at: [http://ourenvironment.berkeley.edu/people\\_profiles/nancy-lee-peluso/](http://ourenvironment.berkeley.edu/people_profiles/nancy-lee-peluso/)
- Professor Gavin Hilson, Chair of Sustainability in Business, University of Surrey and Editor-in-Chief, *Extractive Industries and Society* journal: "Entrepreneurship, Poverty and Household Sustenance: Critical Reflections on the Changing Role of Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Sub-Saharan Africa". Further details about Professor Hilson can be seen at: [http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sbs/people/gavin\\_hilson/](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sbs/people/gavin_hilson/)
- Dr Deborah Fahy Bryceson, Honorary Research Fellow, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh. Tentative topic: 'Artisanal gold mining, the global market and frontier democracy: Paradoxical transitions in America, Australia, Africa and Asia'. Further details about Professor Bryceson can be seen at: <http://www.africanstudies.ox.ac.uk/dr-deborah-bryceson>

#### **Other confirmed presenters**

- Dr Rachel Perkes, Mining Specialist, The World Bank: 'Alternative financing for miners in ASM: Evidence from Rwanda'.
- Dr Roy Maconachie, Director of Studies in International Development, University of Bath
- Dr Sam Spiegel, University of Edinburgh
- Professor Ciaran O'Faircheallaigh and Dr Anthony Reagan, Griffith University and ANU: "Risk, Reward and Regulation: Small Scale Mining in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea".
- Professor Katherine C. Donahue, Department of Anthropology, Plymouth State University. Tentative topic: 'Tanzanite: Commodity Fiction or Commodity Nightmare?'
- Dr Marieke Heemskerck, University of Gainesville, USA
- Professor Molly Chattopadhyay, Associate Professor at Sociological Research Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, India
- Dr Nesar Ahmad, Head, Budget Analysis in Rajasthan Centre (BARC), India
- Danellie Lynas, Research Fellow and PhD candidate, Minerals Industry Safety and Health Centre (MISHC), University of Queensland

#### **National Research Partners on ARC Projects who will be presenting their research:**

- Professor Erwiza Erman, LIPI, Indonesia
- Dr Rini Soemarwoto, Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia
- Professor Amalendu Jyotishi, Amrita University, Bangalore, India
- Ms Chansouk Insouvanh, Social Development Expert, Lao PDR

There will be a session devoted to **labour in India's informal economy**. Speakers in this session include:

- Professor Jans Lerche, Reader in Agrarian and Labour studies, Department of Development Studies, SOAS, University of London
- Professor Ranabir Samaddar, Director, Calcutta Research Group

We would also like to share a few links on informal mining around the world, with a special focus on the Asia and the Pacific:

- <http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/1862887/37d617639e/545608533/30672802ae/>  
For more information on ASM in Mongolia please visit SAM Project website [www.sam.mn](http://www.sam.mn)
- <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-sight/wp/2015/03/09/to-find-their-own-el-dorado-indonesian-gold-miners-risk-mercury-exposure-mud-slides>
- A youtube video on informal mining of gold in Indus river in Gilgit area of Pakistan, carried out seasonally by 'Jalwans' who pan for gold in the river. Please note that the documentary is in French language.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZcQuBzN9jI>