

CONFLICTING PERSPECTIVES:
NEOLIBERAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, AND
MODERN CANADIAN IMPERIALISM IN GUATEMALA

by

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous communities in post-authoritarian states are actively resisting foreign-driven resource development on their territories. Resource companies are increasingly encroaching upon the traditional territories of indigenous peoples as these lands hold significant natural resources. Large-scale resource development is driven by the global processes of globalisation, neoliberalism, and democratisation, all of which affect local land rights. Indigenous rights are actively repressed in post-authoritarian states where governments often pursue economic development at the detriment of social well being. Canadian companies are among the world's leading resource companies and, as a result, are involved in the active repression of indigenous rights, including in Guatemala. Four weeks of fieldwork in Guatemala in 2004 and a literature review demonstrate that indigenous communities in Guatemala are demanding to be consulted prior to any development on their territories. As economic pursuits supersede indigenous rights in many post-authoritarian states, indigenous peoples are rarely consulted about resource development and, as a result, these peoples are increasingly resisting imposed development schemes on a worldwide scale.