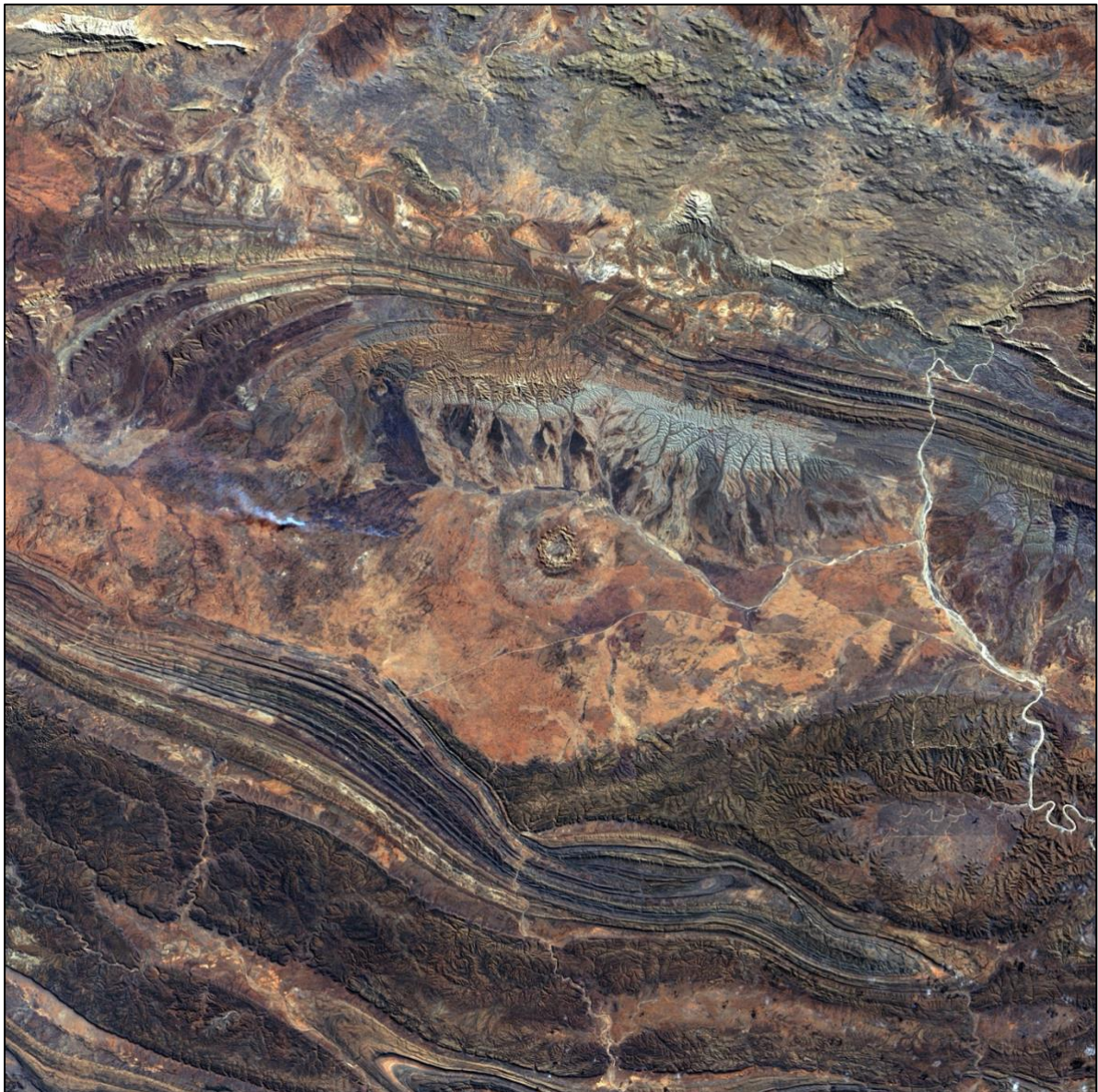


# Commodity Frontiers

Capitalism, Contestation,  
and the Transformation of the Global Countryside

---

The Journal of the Commodity Frontiers Initiative



**Mineral Frontiers**

Issue 1, Fall 2020

# Commodity Frontiers Editorial Board

Mindi Schneider, Senior Editor

## Editors-in-Chief

Sven Beckert, Ulbe Bosma, Mindi Schneider, Eric Vanhaute

## Section Editors

### Feature Article

Kristina Dietz

Bettina Engels

### Studying Commodity Frontiers

Samuël Coghe

Shaohua Zhan

### Teaching Commodity Frontiers

Gayatri A. Menon

Elisabet Rasch

### Historians take on the Present

Pim de Zwart

Mamoudou Sy

Simon Jackson

### Commodity Frontier Political Ecology

Andrew Curley

Mattias Borg Rasmussen

### Conflicts, Frictions, and Counternarratives

Katie Sandwell

Serena Stein

### Creative Frontiers

Maarten Vanden Eynde

Marjolein Dijkman

### From the Field

Hanne Cottyn

Sthandiwe Yeni

### Publications

Ernst Langthaler

Rafael Marquese

### Op-Eds

Mindi Schneider

### Events and Announcements

Claudia Bernardi

For further information about the Editorial Board, see the CFI website at:

<https://commodityfrontiers.com/aboutus/>.

# Table of Contents

All articles are posted online at [Commodity Frontiers](https://www.commodityfrontiers.com), or our website, [commodityfrontiers.com](https://www.commodityfrontiers.com).

## Editorial Introduction

Mindi Schneider ..... i

## Feature Article

Gold is not for Eating: Conflicts Related to Gold Mining in Burkina Faso  
Bettina Engels ..... 1

## Studying Commodity Frontiers

Making Sense of Global Gold Mining  
Boris Verbrugge and Maria Eugenia Robles Mengoa ..... 7

## Teaching Commodity Frontiers

Teaching Extraction and its Discontents: A Conversation with Anna Zalik  
Gayatri Menon ..... 12

## Historians take on the Present

Copper, Llamas and a Virus: A Tale of Historically Entangled Frontiers  
Hanne Cottyn ..... 16

## Commodity Frontier Political Ecology

Frontiers of the Green Energy Transition: An Interview about Lithium Mining in South America  
Maria Cariola ..... 22

## Conflicts, Frictions, and Counternarratives

Anti-Mining Conflicts and Degrowth  
Julien-François Gerber ..... 28

## Creative Frontiers

On-Trade-Off: Countering Extractivism by Transnational Artist's Collaborations  
Lotte Arndt and Oulimata Gueye in close exchange with the members of *On-Trade-Off* ..... 32

## From the Field

"COVID-19 has Crippled Our Struggle": An Interview with Pinky Langa  
Sithandiwe Yeni ..... 43

## Publications

Mining and Historical Capitalism: Book Reviews  
Leonardo Marques ..... 48

## Op-Eds

WWF's "Living Planet Report 2020" and the Long History of Capitalism  
Ulbe Bosma ..... 53

The End of Naïve Europe, The Rise of Green Imperialism  
Alberto Vázquez Ruiz ..... 56

## Events and Announcements

Claudia Bernardi ..... 60





*Llamas grazing behind the old signboard of the “Cuprita” copper mine, Bolivia. Source: Hanne Cottyn, 2018.*

### **Mission Statement**

*Commodity Frontiers* is the Journal of the Commodity Frontiers Initiative (CFI). Edited by a group of scholars and researchers from various disciplines and organizations in the CFI Network, *Commodity Frontiers* explores the history and present of capitalism, contestation, and ecological transformation in the global countryside. Each themed issue includes articles and interviews with experts about studying and teaching commodity frontiers in theory and in practice. The Journal features reflections and reviews on the dynamics of capitalist expansion, social change, and ecological transformation on global as well local scales, in the past and at the present. Contributors include historians, social scientists, (political) ecologists, artists, and activists who work on global commodity production and circulation, rural societies, labor history, the history of capitalism, social metabolism, and contemporary politics, conflicts, and counternarratives in the countryside. *Commodity Frontiers* endeavors to carry out one of the central goals of the CFI: to provide long historical perspectives on problems that are often assumed to be modern, and to link historical and contemporary research to recast our thinking about sustainability, resilience, and crisis.

*Commodity Frontiers* is a biannual open-access publication housed at [commodityfrontiers.com](http://commodityfrontiers.com), through *Commodity Frontiers* in the Open Journal System at Wageningen University, and distributed through email subscriptions. Its editorial collective is committed to inclusive, anti-racist, anti-sexist, decolonial scholarship and politics.

### **Objectives**

*Commodity Frontiers* aims to provide accessible content from diverse perspectives on the past, present, and future of commodity frontiers and their dynamics. We feature research and educational activities undertaken by academics, artists, activists, and other civil society actors. By soliciting short contributions from our multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral networks, and distributing the open-access Journal through our website and the Open Journal System, we aim to reach a broader audience than typical academic publishing allows. We strive for “real-time” reports and reflections on contemporary issues, as well as contributions that link the past and present.

### **Editorial Process**

The articles in *Commodity Frontiers* are not double-blind peer reviewed. Rather, Section Editors purposely solicit contributions related to the theme of each issue from experts in respective fields. All articles are reviewed by Section Editors and at least one Editor-in-Chief.