



21 years

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Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública iudop

Vicerrectoría de proyección social

.The vast majority of those polled oppose mining activities in their municipality

.The majority of respondents consider El Salvador as unsuitable for mining.

.The majority of respondents believe that mining will contribute little or nothing to the economic development of their municipalities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Knowledge and perceptions of mining in areas affected by mining activities in El Salvador

According to a recent poll conducted by the University Institute of Public Opinion (IUDOP) of the University of Central America (UCA) in El Salvador, **a large majority of the population residing in areas affected by mining projects oppose this activity. Furthermore, the population considers that mining would not contribute in a significant way to the economic development of their communities.**

The survey was designed to probe people's perceptions and knowledge of mining projects in 24 municipalities in the northern part of the country where exploration licenses have been granted. Interviews were conducted with a sample of 1,256 adults between September 29 and October 10 of 2007.

Of those surveyed, 62.5% expressed the opinion that El Salvador is not an appropriate country for mining while 18.9% consider that it is appropriate and 18.6% are not sure. The reasons offered by those who stated that the country is not suitable for mining focused on the country's reduced geographical area (43.4%), contamination (21.9%), limited natural resources (6.0%) and overpopulation (4.3%).

¿Do you think El Salvador is a suitable country for mining?

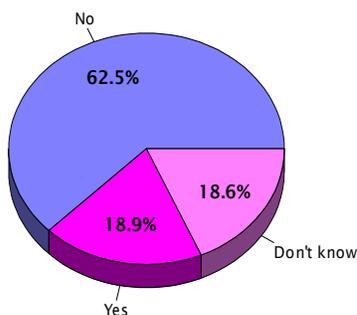


Fig. 1: Do you consider El Salvador as an appropriate country for metallic mining?

Given reasons for considering El Salvador unsuitable for mining

Reasons	Percentage
The country is very small	43.4%
Mining contaminates/harms the environment (water)	24.3%
The country has few resources/is poor	6.0%
It would not do any good	4.6%
The country is overpopulated	4.3%
Other reasons	17.4%

Fig. 2: Why do you think El Salvador is not an appropriate country for metallic mining?

Principal environmental impact of metallic mining

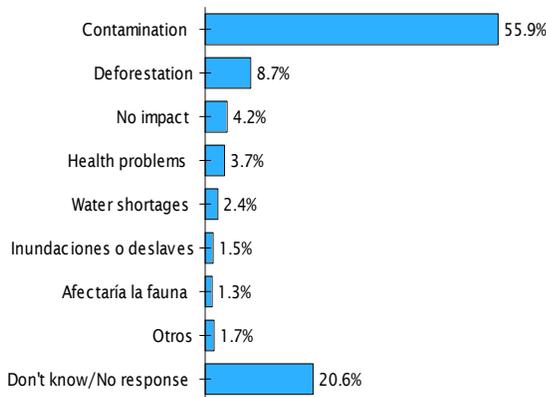


Fig. 3: What do you think would be the principal effect of metal mining on the environment?

Knowledge of mining activity in the municipality (percentage)

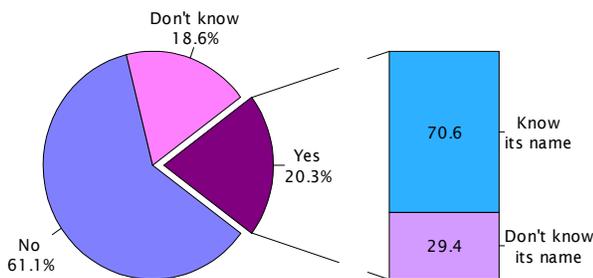


Fig. 4: Are you aware of the existence of mining projects in your municipality?

The most frequent reason given by those who think El Salvador is an appropriate country for mining is that «mining will create jobs» (31.9%) followed by «El Salvador has resources, minerals and metals that should be exploited» (23.1%). Only 11.8% of all those polled considers that "There are places, in the country, where mining could be done".

The Effects of Metal Mining

When asked about the principal impact of metal mining on the environment, **six out of ten people (55.9%) responded that the industry «will have some contaminating effect,»** either in general or on a particular resource such as water, soil or air. A more reduced percentage (8.7%) identified deforestation as the principal effect of mining while others pointed to the impacts on health, water, and wildlife. **Close to 80% of those surveyed mentioned specific impacts that the mining industry will have on the environment and natural resources.** Twenty percent did not respond or said that they were unaware of the environmental impact of metal mining.

It is important to highlight that **only 20.3% of respondents were aware of the existence of mining projects in their municipality.** The remaining 79.7% either responded negatively to the question about the existence of mining projects (61.1%) or answered that they did not know (18.3%). These figures reveal that in most cases, **the local population most affected by mining has not been informed, much less consulted, about the implementation of mining activities.**

Percentage of respondents who agree or disagree with initiating new mining projects in their municipality

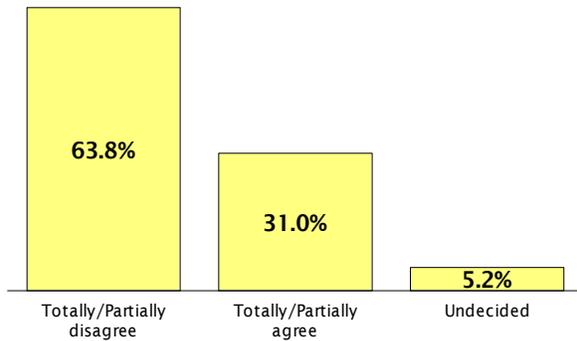


Fig. 5: Do you agree or disagree that new mining projects should be started in your municipality?

Degree to which mining would affect the lives of your children or grandchildren (in percentages)

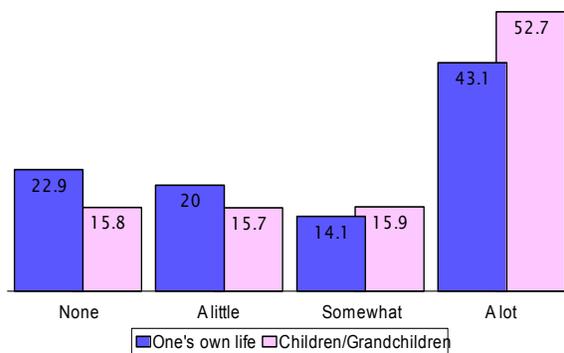


Fig. 6: How much would a new mining project started in your municipality affect your way of living or that of your children or grandchildren?

Degree to which mining would impact on agriculture and livestock (in percentages)

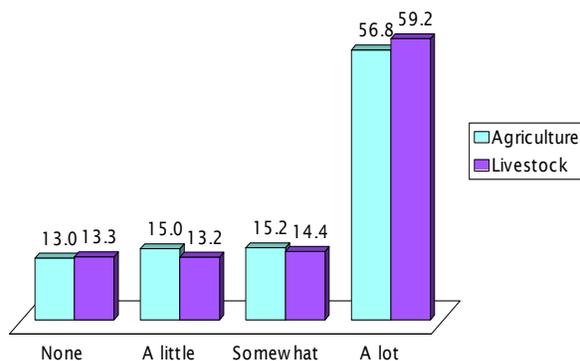


Fig.7: How much do you think mining will harm agriculture/livestock in your municipality?

People were also asked whether they approve or disapprove of new mining projects in their municipality, to which **two-thirds of those polled (63.8%) responded that they «totally» or «partially» disagree with the opening of new mining projects.** Thirty one percent said that they «totally» or «partially» agree with this idea and 5.2% had no opinion.

The Effects of Mining on People’s Lives

When the issue of mining’s impact on the lives of affected communities was raised, opinion was divided between those who think that mining will have little or no effect on them (42.9%) and those who think that the mining industry will affect their lives «somewhat» or «greatly» (57.2%). When asked the same question **in terms of the lives of children and grandchildren, however, two-thirds of the sample (68.6%) expressed the belief that mining would affect their lives «somewhat» or «greatly».** A third (31.4%) of those polled believes that mining will have «little» or «no» impact on the lives of their children and grandchildren.

When asked about the impact that mining would have on production in their municipality, two-thirds of respondents (68.3%) answered that it will have «little» or «no» effect, while only one in ten (12.9%) think that mining could greatly affect production. When asked about the impact that mining would have on specific areas of production, however, 56.8% agreed that it would have a significant effect on agriculture and 59.2% think that it will have a strong impact on cattle raising. The conclusion here is that **people perceive that mining will impact negatively on the key productive activities of rural areas.**

The IUDOP poll also surveyed public opinion on the effects that the mining industry would have on social factors, such as alcohol and drug use, crime, HIV/AIDS, and others. Six out of ten (61.4%) respondents believe that alcohol consumption will increase «somewhat» or «a lot». Five out of ten (51.0%) hold the same opinion with regard to crime and HIV infection. Slightly less than half of respondents said that street fighting and drug use will increase «somewhat» or «a lot». Four out of ten said that the presence of mining could also lead to violence against women and children.

Mining and Jobs

The survey also examined people’s interest in working on a mining project. The results showed that **84.9% of those surveyed are «slightly» or «not at all» interested, while only 15.1% said they were «somewhat» or «very» interested in getting a mining job.**

When asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement «I would like to work for a mining company,» 68.8% disagreed «totally» or «partially» while only 24.9% stated they «totally» or «partially» agreed. From this it is evident that, while nearly one-quarter of those surveyed would consider working for a mining project, **the great majority of residents in affected municipalities do not see mining as a potential job option.**

Opinions About Mining Companies

The survey explored perceptions and expectations related to the contribution that mining companies could make to local development and found that **67.6% of respondents believe that mining projects will contribute little or nothing to the economic development of their municipality.** When the focus of the question changed from mining projects to mining companies, however, opinions were mixed.

Percentage of respondents who think that mining will exacerbate the following social problems:

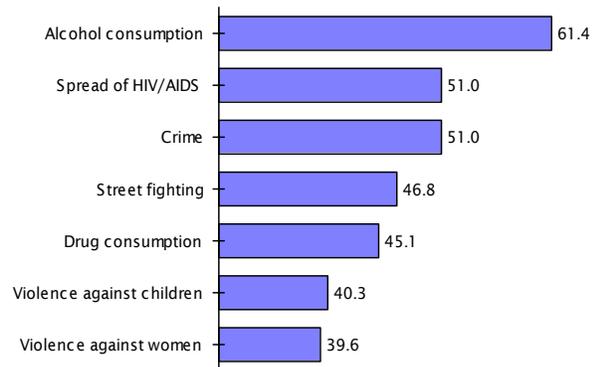


Fig. 8: Do you think that mining will affect (strongly, some, little, nothing) the following social problems?

¿How interested would you be in leaving your current job or occupation to work for a mining project?

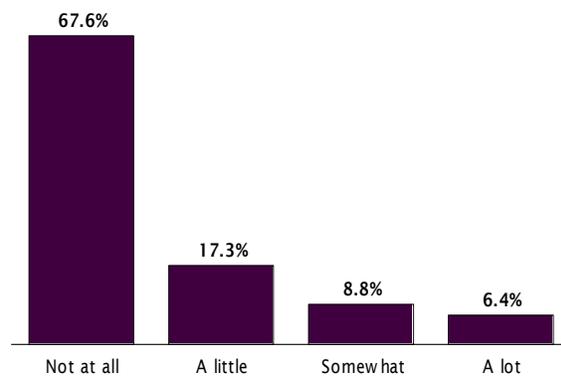


Fig. 9: How interested would you be in leaving your current job or occupation to work for a mining project?

Percentage of people who agree or disagree with the statement: “I would like to work in a mining company”

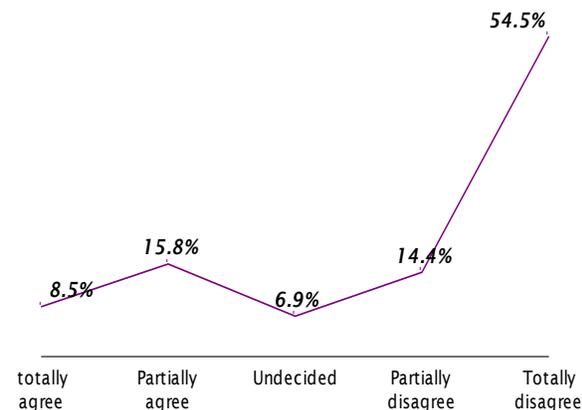


Fig. 10: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I would like to work in a mining company."

In response to the statement «mining companies help people,» slightly over half of respondents (51.5%) said they disagree «totally» or «partially», while 43.4% «totally» or «partially» agreed. Similar results were seen in response to the statement that «mining companies help municipal development,» with which 54.2% «partially» or «totally» disagree, and 40.2% «partially» or «totally» agree. These findings point to a lack of consensus among the population regarding the true contribution of mining companies to the municipality in general and to the population in particular.

When consulted about the damage of mining companies to the environment, the answers reflect greater consensus with **84.9% of respondents in agreement with the statement «mining companies harm the environment.»** This data suggests that the people surveyed have few positive expectations that mining industries will make a concrete contribution to economic development in their municipalities and that they are fully aware of the environmental costs that mining will create. However, the survey also shows that close to half the respondents feel that mining would generate some benefits for the municipality and for the population.

Publicity Campaign of Mining Companies

In an attempt to counter the negative image associated with mining among the majority of Salvadorans, transnational mining corporations have been conducting an intense publicity campaign that aims to create more favorable currents of public opinion. In this context, the IUDOP survey included questions related to public ads in the media promoting the benefits of mining with slogans like «green mining» (referring to new technology that supposedly renders mining environmentally friendly). The survey found that slightly over one-third (38.0%) of those polled had been exposed to pro-mining propaganda.

¿How much would mining contribute to the economic growth of the municipality?

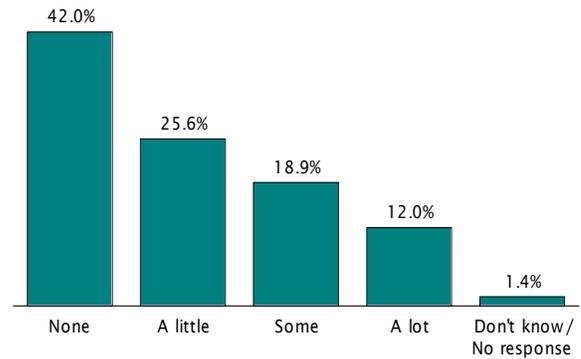


Fig. 11: How much do you think that a mining project would contribute to economic growth in the municipality?

Percentage of people who agree or disagree with the statement: «Mining companies harm environment»

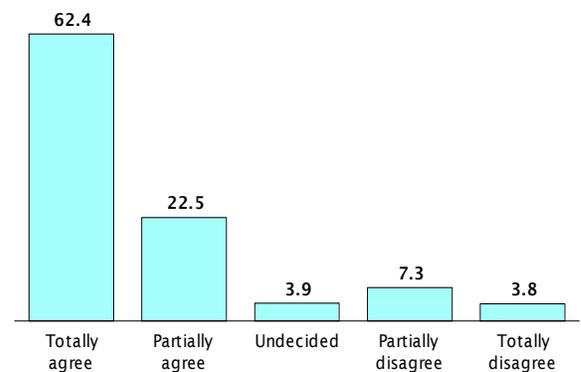


Fig. 12: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The mining companies harm the environment".

¿Have you heard mining-related messages in media?

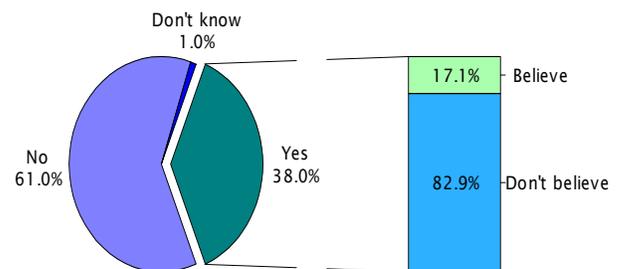


Fig. 13: Have you heard any messages related to mining in the media? Do you believe what mining companies say about green mining?

Of this percentage, (82.9%) said they disagreed with the message, while only 17.1% said they agreed. **In response to the question, should the country follow the example of other countries currently involved in mining, 78.6% think that it should not**, while only 15.1% think that the country should emulate other countries' mining experiences.

In Summary

The IUDOP survey among people living in areas where licenses for mining exploration have been approved, demonstrates that the majority of the population disapproves of metallic mining in their municipality. The majority also considers that El Salvador is not an appropriate country for metallic mining. One of the principal reasons leading people to oppose mining is the perception that it is harmful to the environment, and respondents clearly identified the impact mining would have on vital resources like water, air and soil.

The majority of the surveyed population is uninformed and unaware of mining projects in their municipality which shows that these projects were approved without consulting the population beforehand. This lack of knowledge reflects a political reality in El Salvador where public officials routinely make key policy and programmatic decisions affecting people's lives and natural resources without the public's active involvement. In the absence of a more participatory process, widespread investment in mining by transnational corporations could quickly return the country to a state of polarization and social conflict.

Regarding the impact that mining could have on the country's social fabric, the majority of those surveyed agree that the presence of mining would exacerbate social problems such as alcohol abuse, crime and the spread of HIV/AIDS in their communities.

Contrary to the discourse of mining corporations touting the contribution of this industry to jobs and local economic development, most of the population has little or no interest in leaving their current occupation to work for a mining project. Even among those without jobs, in a country marked by job insecurity, people do not view mining as an opportunity for employment that will improve their living conditions. Finally, the vast majority of those surveyed does not believe that mining will contribute to the economic and social development of their communities.

**San Salvador, El Salvador.
January 22, 2008.**

Technical data

Polling agency

Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública (IUDOP),
Universidad Centroamericana
"José Simeón Cañas" (UCA).

Valid Questionnaires:

1,256

Sampling:

Survey conducted in 24 municipalities where mining exploration licenses have been granted. Multistage sampling with municipality, sex and age stages quotas. Random selection of urban segments and directed in the selection of municipalities and rural areas. A distribution proportional to the population size (PPS) of geographical segments was followed.

Sampling error estimated:

± 0.0277

(Two point seventy seven percent).

Data collection method:

Personal household interviews.

Survey dates:

From September 29th to October 10th, 2007

Survey director:

Jeannette Aguilar