



Mining and Natural Hazard Vulnerability in the Philippines: Digging to Development or Digging to Disaster? (Anthem Environmental Studies)

William N. Holden, R. Daniel Jacobson

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The archipelago of the Philippines is well endowed with nonferrous mineral resources, and in recent years the Philippine government, acting under the influence of the dominant and seemingly ubiquitous neoliberal development paradigm, has liberalized its mining laws in order to accelerate economic development. Yet the Philippines is also a country highly prone to a variety of natural hazards that have the ability to interact adversely with mining's potential for environmental degradation. Thus there are great dangers inherent in pursuing such a development paradigm: earthquakes can destabilize tailings storage facilities, typhoons can flood tailings ponds, and mine-pit dewatering can enhance the competition for groundwater resources during droughts. This study explores how these hazards amplify the environmental harm prevalent in mining, and reveals the substantial threat posed to the livelihoods of the archipelago's poor, as well as the inadequacies of the very institutions designed to protect their environment.

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