

1. Contestations over development

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Australia is a rich first world nation. In 2007–08 it had a \$1 trillion economy as measured by nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with per capita income of over \$A50 000. In recent years mining sector revenue has constituted a growing share of the national economy, reaching about 11 per cent of GDP in 2007–08 with a value of \$A119 billion (Reserve Bank of Australia 2009). The Minerals Council of Australia (2007) estimated that in 2007–08 the value of mineral exports would reach over \$A90 billion and constitute 40 per cent of Australia's commodity exports. Before the global financial crisis of late 2008, the Australian mining sector was in boom driven in large measure by the rapid industrialisation of China and India: employment in the sector had reached over 80 000 jobs by 2005–06 and was growing. Royalties paid to Commonwealth and State governments totalled \$A7 billion in 2007–08; gross operating surplus in that year was \$A63 billion; and in 2005–06 net profit return on average shareholder funds was 24 per cent. While some of this economic gloss may have declined in the last year, the overall significance of the mining sector to the world's fifteenth largest economy is likely to continue in the immediate future—it is as yet unclear if the current global recession is just a cyclical downturn of the business cycle or a more fundamental and structural change to economic liberalism and globalisation.

While this mining sector boom has been occurring, the share of the Australian continent owned by Indigenous Australians, what is termed the Indigenous estate, has grown to over 20 per cent of the continent (Altman, Buchanan and Larsen 2007). The areas 'owned' in various ways under land rights and native title laws are generally extremely remote and have low commercial value, except for mineral extraction. Restitution of land has come on the state's terms and excludes ownership of minerals. These lands are occupied by an estimated 20 per cent of the Indigenous population that was estimated to total just over 500 000 people in the 2006 Census.

Indigenous people, who constitute 2.5 per cent of the population, do not share equitably in the wealth of the mining sector, much of which is generated from their land in remote regions. The key issue raised in this monograph is why not?

This is a question that has also recently taxed the Minister for Indigenous Affairs the Hon. Jenny Macklin (2008) when she delivered the 2008 annual lecture to commemorate the 1992 Mabo No. 2 Australian High Court native title judgment titled 'Beyond Mabo: Native title and closing the gap'. Using language reminiscent of an earlier federal minister Amanda Vanstone she referred to 'the great

Australian paradox'. Vanstone (2007) has asked why lands-rich Aborigines were 'dirt poor' and pondered why traditional owners of land are the poorest people living on it.

Such terminology has been used in concerns raised elsewhere both internationally and with reference to Australia. For example, Karl (1997) examined 'the paradox of plenty' that haunts many mineral dependent states where production of enormous wealth coexists with extraordinary economic inequality. The paradox of plenty has similarity to the resource curse thesis (Auty 1993) that similarly queries the form of political economy (Ross 1999) that allows the existence of poverty in the midst of plenty especially during mining booms (see Langton and Mazel 2008). There is a significant literature that has explored the issue of mining and Indigenous peoples in Australia (see Cousins and Nieuwenhuysen 1984; Howitt, Connell and Hirsch 1996; Weiner and Glaskin 2007 among others, as well as Ballard and Banks 2003 for a broad anthropological sweep of the literature).

Like politicians before her, Macklin (2008) notes that 'native title is critical to economic development' and that 'properly structured property rights to land are a key component in expanding commercial and economic opportunity'. Her comments indicate she may be overlooking the issue of resource ownership under Australian law. She notes 'the potential for millions of dollars to be harnessed for economic and social advancement of native title holders, claimants and their communities', and states, 'we must not allow this potential to go unrealised'. Minister Macklin concludes: 'native title is a right which must be used as a tool to bring about positive change for social, cultural, economic purposes ... it must be part of our armoury to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians'. More recently, in late November 2008, her views have been echoed by a Native Title Payments Working Group (2008) with membership drawn from a diversity of interest groups. The Working Group was convened by the Australian Government to recommend ways to ensure that resource agreements optimise financial and non-financial benefits to ensure wealth creation for traditional owners of land and the wider Indigenous community for both this and future generations.

The Minister's concerns—shared by many—do not directly tackle the inability of land rights and native title, and mining activity on these lands over the last 30 years, to rapidly reduce the socioeconomic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, although there has been steady improvement in most socioeconomic outcomes (Altman, Biddle and Hunter 2008).

In August 2008 mining magnate Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest proposed the Australian Employment Covenant, a plan to provide opportunity for 50 000 Indigenous people to obtain full-time permanent work (not limited to the mining sector) within two years. The Australian Prime Minister threw his support behind

the plan committing to fund the pre-employment training for all potential workers; Aboriginal rights campaigner Noel Pearson referred to the plan as ‘a revolutionary breakthrough’; while Warren Mundine lauded the fact that mining companies have already come on board (‘Forrest Plan to create 50 000 jobs’, L. Shanahan, *The Age*, 4 August 2008). Commentators not only failed to observe that there are currently less than 50 000 Indigenous Australians in this employment category but also that only 2500 are employed Australia-wide in mining at present (Brereton and Parmenter 2008).

This monograph presents key findings from an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage project ‘Indigenous Community Organisations and Miners: Partnering Sustainable Regional Development?’ that was undertaken between 2002 and 2007 at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at The Australian National University. Industry partners for this research were Rio Tinto and the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA). The research was undertaken over a number of years and at a number of sites.

The key question the research sets out to address is whether major long-life extractive mines located on Aboriginal-owned land and near Aboriginal communities have the capacity to fundamentally alter the marginal socioeconomic status of Indigenous Australians in a sustainable manner. This is a question with much history both in Australia and internationally. There is considerable empirical evidence that Indigenous people rarely benefit equitably when major extractive activities occur on their customary land—indeed it is far more common for such activities to impact negatively on the livelihoods and cultures of Indigenous communities (Sawyer and Gomez 2008). Certainly in Australia there is considerable historical evidence that Aboriginal people residing in mine hinterlands in remote Australia have been socioeconomically disadvantaged (Cousins and Nieuwenhuysen 1984). At the heart of this volume is a significant policy and discourse contest between those who support the policy goal of addressing socioeconomic inequality via enhanced engagements between Indigenous Australians and miners, mediated by the state; and others who see inherent value in a livelihood approach that might be incompatible with mining, where Indigenous aspirations to live fundamentally different lifestyles play an ongoing role.

Central to this research is a growing national awareness of the dysfunction associated with inactivity and welfare dependence in remote Aboriginal communities (Pearson 2000a), and statistical evidence that the populations of remote Indigenous communities are growing quickly rather than declining (Taylor 2003). There is also growing awareness that the raft of national changes associated with ‘globalisation’ or ‘economic liberalisation’ has impacted adversely on regional Australia while simultaneously facilitating the role of corporations in providing government-like services (Gray and Lawrence 2001).

Associated with the restructuring of Australian capitalism in the late twentieth century, there has been some retreat of the state in terms of public investments in remote regions and a growing state view that profitable mining corporations have a responsibility to provide social services to remote communities, including Indigenous communities. Similarly, there has been a view expressed that Indigenous beneficiaries from agreements with mining companies should commit payments provided as compensation or benefit sharing to community purposes (Macklin 2008).

Also in the late twentieth century there were two waves of optimism that mining might provide a significant plank for what Li (2007) terms the state's 'project of improvement' in the cases examined here for remote-living Aboriginal people. The first wave was linked to the passage of land rights legislation especially the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cwlth) (ALRA), and the establishment of institutions to allow payment of mining monies both to people in areas affected by mining and, more broadly, to the Northern Territory Aboriginal community. It was anticipated that the leverage provided by free prior informed consent provisions, that constitute a de facto and weak form of property right in minerals because they can be traded for consent, might result in both beneficial agreements and beneficial development outcomes (Altman 1983; Industry Commission 1991). The second wave was linked to the passage of the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cwlth) (NTA) and anticipation that right to negotiate provisions in this law would similarly facilitate negotiation for development even though de facto rights in minerals were much weaker under the NTA (McKenna 1995).

A core question raised in this monograph is whether mining has delivered improvement as a consequence of three major agreements, spread across Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland, which are at the empirical heart of our investigations. Without pre-empting our more detailed findings presented in later chapters, the answer to this question seems to be that outcomes—at least as measured by standard social indicators from the five-yearly census—are disappointing. Dependence on the state remains high and indicators have improved marginally at best. This of course all depends on how one measures development. At present there is a hegemonic view of development favoured by the Australian state that narrowly construes development within the domain of the market: in accord with the strictures of neo-liberalism, development is measured with a focus on individual employment and wealth accumulation (Harvey 2007). This view is favoured by the Australian state with its focus on closing the gap in a variety of indicators including formal employment. There is an alternate view of development (Ferguson 1994; Li 2007; Scott 1998; among many others) that focuses more broadly on improvement in subjects' lives and livelihoods, but this view is currently subordinated in

Australian public discourse and policy narrative and receives limited attention. This alternate view receives considerable attention in this volume.

Part of the reason for disappointing development outcomes, whether defined in terms of social indicators or livelihoods, is linked to the limited capacity of many Indigenous organisations and communities to respond to the social impacts of mining while at the same time taking advantage of employment and other commercial opportunities. This, as we shall see, is linked in part to the ambivalence that many Aboriginal traditional owners have to mining on their land. In the three cases that we examine, land rights and/or native title laws have provided limited opportunity to actually control mining on Aboriginal lands and its social impacts on Aboriginal people. Instead, the leverage provided by new laws can best be exercised by opposing mining initially, something that is structurally facilitated by the right to negotiate provisions of the relatively new native title statutory regime. Whether opposition is fundamental or strategic (or in some cases both), when beneficial agreements are signed and mining goes ahead, relations of conflict suddenly need to transform to relations of cooperation. This switch can be difficult to manage on a community-wide or regional scale if agreements are to be beneficial (Altman 2001a).

Another reason for disappointing development outcomes is that mining companies and the Australian state (governments and bureaucracies) seem to have limited capacity to recognise the deeply-entrenched levels of disadvantage experienced by communities adjacent to remote mines and the strain on their social fabric created historically by settler or state colonisation and now, potentially, by mining. Both parties clearly see mine site engagement as providing opportunities for the state project of improvement of Indigenous people, but it is only when concerted action is taken by both parties in unison and in collaboration with Indigenous interests that positive outcomes are generated.

One of the central concerns of chapters in this monograph is the complex triangulated relationship between Indigenous people, mining companies and the state in the Australian context, an issue that has attracted some attention internationally (see Rumsey and Weiner 2004; Sawyer and Gomez 2008). Given the growing interdependence of the state and the mining sector—the former increasingly dependent on the mining sector for revenue, the latter needing licence to operate from the state—to what extent does the state operate as a neutral arbiter in its dealings with Indigenous people? This is of particular concern in situations where Indigenous people oppose mining, and the state operates as a ‘broker state’ (Urteaga-Crovetto 2008). Another key issue raised is the proper division of responsibility for funding the services needs of Aboriginal communities adjacent to major mines. As noted above, the particular logic of the Australian state is resulting in a reduction of public expenditures on the disadvantaged living in regional and remote areas and cost shifting onto

multinational corporations. While there is a growing recognition that good corporate citizenship requires major mining companies to act as catalysts for sustainable regional development, especially in the absence of other commercial options, one can also ask how far corporate social responsibility can and should stretch. Has economic liberalisation created new forms of competition for global shareholder capital that will only allow profit sharing to the minimum required to secure a licence to operate? Assuming that some share of profits can be secured for Indigenous groups, a central concern of several chapters in this monograph is what form such benefit sharing should take, and what are the mechanisms by which such benefits can be sustainably managed.

These are the sorts of questions that have animated the research reported here. This is a complex field of inquiry replete with paradoxes, like the 'paradox of plenty' referred to above and the triangulated political economy whereby the state allies with the most, rather than the least, powerful. Ultimately, this monograph seeks to address the paradox of disappointing sustainable improvement. Using the terminology of Ferguson (1994) and Li (2007) it appears that the quest for Indigenous improvement linked to mining has been 'rendered technical', as all parties have become bound up in legal agreements that are themselves frequently deficient (O'Faircheallaigh 2006). All too often as will be demonstrated, complicated social, cultural and political considerations that influence improvement have been rendered invisible. So we set out to ask what have mining companies, the state, and Indigenous regional organisations done to enhance community capacity to cope with the impacts of mining. What focus has there been on building institutional capacity to facilitate sustainable regional development and to ameliorate regional political division and conflict that is inevitably associated with mining? And what learnings have been adopted from evidence of key factors that might explain relative success or failure?

Theoretical framing

Chapters in this monograph take a variety of approaches that seek to integrate theory with detailed ethnography and local histories from the three case study sites associated with the Ranger Uranium Mine in the Northern Territory, the Yandicoogina Mine in Western Australia and the Century Mine in north Queensland.

In my view, the overarching framework of this volume is heavily influenced by the Foucauldian concept of 'governmentality' (Foucault 1991) although individual chapters do not explicitly engage with this high level theory. Governmentality is concerned with rationalities of government or as Dean (1999: 209) puts it 'how we think about governing others and ourselves in a wide variety of contexts'. The term government is used here in a broad sense which Foucault revived from the sixteenth century to denote 'any more or less calculated or rational activity ... that seeks to shape our conduct' (Dean

1999: 209). It highlights the fact that modern political power is not simply exercised by the state, even though the state looms very large in the lives of Indigenous Australians. As will become apparent in later chapters when different authors examine the empirical messiness of the three cases from a variety of perspectives, there is a network of other actors, organisations, and enterprises that seek to guide the behaviour and decision-making of individuals. As Sawyer and Gomez (2008: 5) observe there are multiple movements of governance, both state and non-state, that aspire to fashion the conduct of people, both individually and collectively, in connection to resource extraction using various strategies, tactics and authorities. However, because the state looms so large in the lives of Indigenous Australians it plays a central role in the project to constitute Aboriginal people in the vicinity of mines as what Lawrence (2005: 40) terms 'neoliberal and job ready subjects'. It is perhaps not surprising that neoliberal governmentality (see Dean 2002) seeks to use opportunities provided by mining to convert Indigenous subjects to autonomous, responsible, employed and entrepreneurial individuals, sometimes in a paternalistic, even coercive manner (Lawrence 2005: 42).

My analysis here is framed with reference to three Australian concepts that, in my view, provide some theoretical background to the chapters in this volume. The first is Merlan's (1998) notion of interculturality, recently updated in Hinkson and Smith's (2005) edited volume; the second is Altman's (2005b) notion of economic hybridity that is evident in the articulations (and emerging tensions) between capitalist and non-capitalist forms of production in situations where a state sector looms large; and the third is Wolfe's (1999) notion of 'repressive authenticity' and Povinelli's (2002) term 'cunning of recognition' that I have found especially useful to understand the historical processes that have marginalised Indigenous subjects.

I say little about interculturality and economic hybridity here. Readers of this monograph would most likely have little difficulty accepting the view that contemporary Aboriginal social norms, even in the remotest parts of Australia, comprise a mix of customary and western (global) social norms and values. In recent years, cultural analysis in Australia has increasingly rejected false essentialised distinctions between modernity and tradition. Instead, there is a recognition of the intercultural circumstances of contemporary Indigenous life everywhere (Hinkson and Smith 2005). Clearly the precise nature of this interculturality varies enormously across the continent. It has, however, been directly influenced by the need for the codification of custom required by land rights and native title laws. Importantly, because of interculturality the nature of relations between miners and Indigenous people cannot be predetermined—in some situations mining will be embraced, in others rejected, and in most cases there is a mixed and highly contested response.

A corresponding framework for understanding contemporary Indigenous economic relations in remote regions is evident in a distinct form of intercultural economy that includes the customary (that is non-market) alongside the market and state sectors as a core element of many Indigenous peoples' livelihoods (Altman, Buchanan and Biddle 2006). Elsewhere, I have termed this the 'hybrid economy' (Altman 2005b) and it has similarities to the community economy model developed by Gibson-Graham (2002, 2005). Just as interculturality varies from place to place, so does the significance of the customary non-market sector—it is clearly most evident where people retain a close association with their customary lands and least significant where people live in urban centres and engage fully with the market economy. Economic hybridity is highly variable and greatly influenced by colonial history, environmental factors and commercial options. What is significant about the hybrid economy is not so much the size of relative sectors, but their interactions and the distinctiveness of Aboriginal economic modes informed by an amalgam of Indigenous and western norms that motivate diverse aspirations.

The hybrid economy framework is an evolving construct that seeks to explain the articulations between capitalist or market-based and non-capitalist or kin-based forms of production in situations where there is a state sector (Altman 2005b). What is important to note is that while it is based on a model of the economy with state, market and customary non-market components, it emphasises that empirically these three sectors are not only highly interdependent but also that none actually exists in isolation in some 'pure form' the overlaps between sectors are where significant productive activity occurs. In a diagrammatic representation of the model (Altman 2005b), economic activity in the four segments of sectoral overlap are illustrated to be more significant than within any discrete sector (see Altman, Chapter 2). The model also reflects the reality of a high level of contemporary Indigenous spatial and occupational mobility in remote Australia. Just like interculturality, this model does not presuppose any particular form of production and so can readily accommodate any of a range of possibilities including mine site employment.

The processes for gaining *de jure* rights to land involve an institutional codification of 'traditions and customs' for making claims over unalienated Crown land. For example, s.3 of the ALRA requires that Aborigines demonstrate that they are a local descent group with primary spiritual responsibility for land and sacred sites and are entitled to 'a right to forage over the land claimed'. And s.223 of the NTA requires claimants to demonstrate continuity of rights and interests under traditional laws acknowledged and traditional customs observed, and to demonstrate the maintenance of connection with lands and waters since colonisation. Through these requirements Indigenous Australians have become trapped in a western legal definition of authenticity to gain formal title to their ancestral lands. The onus is on them to prove their 'authenticity'.

These processes can be explicated with reference to the work of Wolfe (1999) and his notion of 'repressive authenticity'. Wolfe provides a critical interpretation of the history of settler colonialism and its role in transforming Indigenous Australians. He notes that the Australian settler-colonial formation was premised on displacing Indigenous people from the land rather than on any need to extract surplus value from their labour (Wolfe 1999: 1). In settler-colonies like Australia, the colonisers came to stay and so invasion is a structure—an ongoing process and not an event that occurred in distant 1788. Settler colonial societies are premised, Wolfe argues (1999: 3), on the elimination of native societies.

Wolfe's view is that expropriation of land continues as a foundational characteristic of the settler colonial society. Without going into detail about the historical state policy phases of confrontation, incarceration (on specially designated reserves) and assimilation, the state preference in recent decades has been to move Indigenous people into the settler society by 'privileging' them with the same opportunities, in theory, as those available to non-Indigenous people and thus eliminating the Aboriginal 'problem'. What is of particular relevance to this monograph is how following historical moments of social justice progressiveness (born of the failure of the Gove land rights case as well as broader shifts in Australian attitudes) in 1972 and of High Court activism in the Mabo No. 2 judgment of 1992, the Australian state has sought to define and then delineate Aboriginal entitlements to land and resources. In both land rights and native title laws, while there is some recognition that traditions and customs change, claimants' entitlements to land have required conformity to a set authenticity, as if relatively untouched by colonial history. The state, however, never seriously countenanced the provision of commercially valuable resources to claimants mainly because this would constitute a form of sovereignty, an unfathomable challenge to the logic of settler-colonial society and the Australian nation state.

'Repressive authenticity' has seen the legal recognition of land rights for some, but it has been predicated on a particular reading of colonial history and a conceptual false binary. Either Indigenous claimants are frozen in some pre-contact fiction as 'tribal' or 'traditional' (that qualifies them to claim land where unalienated and available) or else they are modern and hence are insufficiently different from other Australians to qualify for land rights. Such categorisation is misplaced. Indigenous Australians today live in an intercultural manner that can be described neither in terms of some essentialised traditionality nor essentialised modernity. The lack of recognition of this interculturality—that Indigenous people who are traditional owners of land increasingly abide by two sets of values and have aspirations that comprise aspects of both—is at the heart of the highly problematic relationship between the state and mining companies, on the one hand, and Indigenous traditional owners of land, on the other, that is the focus of this monograph.

There is a growing legal and anthropological literature that highlights the problems associated with constraining Indigenous tradition and Law to mainly accord with western legal requirements (see for example Kolig 2005; Pearson 2004; Strelein 2006; Weiner and Glaskin 2006, 2007). Consequently, even in situations where people can demonstrate continuity of tradition and custom and continual connection to unalienated land, the restrictive definitions of traditional owners means that there are winners and losers and much contestation sometimes involving the mobilisation of 'repressive authenticity' by Indigenous actors themselves (Altman 2008). There is clear empirical evidence that attachment to land remains of fundamental importance to many Indigenous people for livelihood and/or reasons of symbolic politics and identity, hence the almost total coverage of the available parts of the Australian continent by registered native title claims. As Wolfe (1999: 206–7) demonstrates, the Australian state has been effective in limiting the category of native title beneficiaries. This has effectively excluded the majority of the Indigenous population living in settled Australia from 'land rights'. As chapters in this monograph will demonstrate at a more local level, even when land rights has been granted or native title claims successfully lodged or determined, there are tensions between traditional owners as recognised by western law as 'winners' and other Aboriginal people without land rights as 'losers'.

A similar point from a somewhat different perspective is made by Povinelli (2002) using the term 'cunning of recognition' in her exposition of how the multicultural legacy of settler colonialism perpetuates unequal systems of power. Povinelli suggests that the colonised subjects are not required to identify with colonizers—something that is increasingly contestable today—but that they must instead identify with a difficult standard of authentic tradition. On one hand legislation caricatures culture as static, bounded, homogeneous and uncontested, and so laws end up shaping what they seek to recognise—Aboriginal rights to land (see Weiner and Gaskin 2007). On the other hand the state looks to atone for its past misdeeds by transforming itself into the judge of the form of (inter)cultural authenticity needed to get back land. As Sawyer and Gomez (2008: 15) note in this process the state is 'bestowing, decertifying and negating a land rights based identity to aborigines depending on whether they demonstrate appropriate, insufficient or excessive indigenusness'. This is Povinelli's 'cunning' of liberal multiculturalism—it at once acknowledges difference while simultaneously disciplining, regulating and constraining otherness. It is not just the state that does this. Indigenous people too get caught up in self-monitoring and regulating who and what they are. Social struggles channelled through a discourse of identity-based rights and law can be highly problematic for 'the project of improvement' (Li 2007) as several chapters in this monograph demonstrate.

Conduct of research and the focus of contributions

The ARC Linkage project's initial aim was to look at six case studies where significant benefit sharing agreements have been signed for major extractive mines, but we ended up with only three cases, Yandicoogina, Ranger and Century. This demonstrates two things. First, the challenges that researchers face in successfully negotiating access for research purposes in what are often highly politicised environments. Second, it demonstrates the sensitivities that surround such issues at all levels—for Indigenous individuals and groups, mining corporations and the state. Our industry partner was Rio Tinto, a multinational corporation that has been at the forefront of efforts, at least in Australia and in recent times, to address how sustainable regional development might be delivered to Indigenous communities in its mine hinterlands. And yet even this powerful corporation was unable to facilitate our research in some locations like at the Argyle Diamond Mine in the East Kimberley or at the Comalco bauxite mine on western Cape York where agreements were respectively being renegotiated (see Doohan 2008) or recently implemented (see Crooke, Harvey and Langton 2006). We did not venture where unwelcome.

The resulting less ambitious focus on three major mines and associated mining agreements in three different State/Territory jurisdictions was fortuitous because, given the challenges inherent in multi-locale research, it allowed for more dense analysis. While the obvious proviso must be made that we are only examining three situations, these are nevertheless iconic sites of development contestation in the Australian context. In the chapters that follow a diversity of social sciences perspectives on these places is provided although not all authors focus on all mine sites. Nevertheless, what is provided here is unusual in the Australian context: a detailed analysis of different aspects of the economic and social impacts of mining at three different places. Such an approach has historically been undertaken by, for example, the Social Impact of Uranium Mining study (Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies 1984) in relation to only one region (the Alligator Rivers region) but two mines (the Ranger and Nabarlek uranium mines) and two agreements.

The contributors to this volume were all involved as members of the ARC Linkage project team at various stages between 2002 and 2007; the chapters were completed at different times over the past two years and can be read either as individual essays or as part of a coherent volume. The unifying feature is that all chapters seek to provide ethnographically-grounded perspectives that complement and problematise theoretical perspectives, some of which have been outlined above.

Chapters 2 and 3 are overview chapters. In Chapter 2, Jon Altman provides analysis of the development situation of Indigenous people in Australia and their relations with the state and miners. The chapter teases out some of the structural

tensions in this triangulated relationship before outlining development outcomes at the three mining regions assessed using official statistics, on one hand, and local perspectives, on the other. The chapter highlights how outcomes are differentially interpreted and contested and seeks to offer a possible solution to this problem by reconciling differing culturally-informed views of development, using case material. Rather than privileging one view of development over another, Altman optimistically argues that a model of development that can accommodate hybridity and diversity is likely to generate outcomes that are more acceptable to all parties in agreement making.

In Chapter 3, John Taylor outlines approaches to the collection of statistical data and conceptual issues that are essential to profiling the socioeconomic situation of Indigenous populations living in the vicinity of major resource extraction projects. Such data are essential to demarcate and document Indigenous populations that might be impacted by major mines, but also for ensuring that goals for Indigenous engagement with mine sites in employment and enterprise are based on a degree of statistical rigour. Most importantly, Taylor highlights that if the development impacts of mines are to be measured in any meaningful way over time, then a statistical base line is needed for comparative purposes. Ultimately, Taylor asks two crucial questions: What sustainable regional development outcomes, however measured, can be linked to a major mine, or what are the limits of mining as a driver of regional development? And what body of statistics might be needed to assess possibilities and achievements?

In Chapters 4 and 5, Robert Levitus and David Martin provide perspectives on the role of Aboriginal organisations as agents for development and as the managers of mining agreements. Both ask how a more favourable engagement between Indigenous community organisations and miners can be facilitated from different perspectives. In his contribution, Levitus considers the important role of Aboriginal organisations in their intended role as agents of development at the point of articulation between external agencies and the Aboriginal domain. In Chapter 5, Martin focuses on the governance of mining agreements and their ability to effectively deliver outcomes sustainably. In particular he highlights that agreements need to be governed as systems; that agreements need to be understood as transformative; and finally that agreements need to be seen as intercultural. Martin makes the crucially important point that governance capacity, both for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parties to an agreement, including governments, need to be strategically developed well ahead of agreement signing and implementation, as the transformation is made from adversarial negotiation to cooperation and collaboration after mine start-up.

In Chapter 6, Katherine Trebeck examines an aspect of her doctoral research that explores the relationship between corporate social responsibility and social sustainability, assuming that an important aspect of the latter is the capacity of

Indigenous communities to influence decisions that impact on them. She looks at four cases: the Century mine negotiations and 'sit in' (civil unrest); the Hammersley (now Pilbara) Iron's Marandoo dispute; Rio Tinto's adoption of corporate social responsibility; and the campaign to stop the Jabiluka uranium mine where community vigilance has resulted in corporate responsiveness. Trebeck's analysis focuses on agency, both within corporations where key individuals influence corporate responsiveness to community demands utilising the language of 'business case'; and within Indigenous organisations where key individuals provide crucial strategic leadership in sometimes protracted campaigns. Trebeck provides advice to corporations to assist in understanding the processes whereby Indigenous organisations represent their usually diverse constituencies, while concurrently arguing that levers can be mobilised at the community level to influence and even alter corporate behaviour.

In Chapter 7, Sarah Holcombe focuses on the nature and the diversity of Indigenous entrepreneurialism and the engagement of Indigenous entrepreneurs with mining company interests. Her focus is very specifically on Aboriginal organisations and trusts set up to manage the Yandicoogina Land Use Agreement in the Pilbara. Holcombe relates the lived experiences of a number of individuals using biographical case material and raises the crucially important issues of constraints embedded in agreements that might over-emphasise the interests of future generations over current generations thus limiting opportunities now; and also the tensions that invariably arise between individual access to benefits over group access, issues that have been at the heart of agreement making in the post-land rights era (Altman 1983). Her research highlights that Indigenous livelihood initiatives arising from mining agreements do not need to be limited to mine site employment and enterprise, there are many other ways that the finances provided in land use agreements can be mobilised to build regional social, cultural, and political capital and associated economic opportunities.

In Chapter 8, Benedict Scambary provides a summary of his doctoral research that focuses on Indigenous organisations, and specifically on the perspectives of the members of these organisational 'carapaces', in relation to mining and its potential for sustainable local development. Scambary is particularly interested in the impacts of beneficial mining agreements on Indigenous livelihoods in mine hinterlands and focuses on three, the Ranger Uranium Mine Agreement, the Yandicoogina Land Use Agreement and the Century Mine Agreement across three jurisdictions. He provides a critique of the efficacy of such agreements, arguing that a combination of the depth of Indigenous disadvantage and the mainstream terms of the agreements themselves hamper their potential to deliver sustainable outcomes for Indigenous people associated with all three agreements. In his chapter he argues that a fundamental limitation of these mining agreements is their incapacity to engage with and augment the diverse livelihood objectives of Indigenous people which results in ambivalent responses to mining on their

part. Scambray suggests that successful engagement between the mining industry and local Indigenous people who reside in mine hinterlands is dependent on accommodation of existing Indigenous skills and knowledge. Examples abound from across all three locales he studies of Indigenous people successfully striving to engage in multifaceted ways with the mainstream economy, and the mine economy, whilst not compromising their cultural identity and aspirations.

Conclusion

As this monograph is completed, Australia is in the grips of the global financial crisis and an associated global economic recession. These events might encourage, one might imagine, a more critical thinking about the role that mining might play in ensuring sustainable Indigenous development. But there seems to be little evidence of a healthy scepticism about the risks that a development pathway closely linked to mining might entail. The Rudd Government has made Closing the Gap its key Indigenous affairs policy focus, with a halving of the employment gap in the next 10 years one of its key aims (Council of Australian Governments 2008). There is no doubt that a greater engagement of remote-living Indigenous people in mine economies is seen as a central plank of this goal that will require 100 000 new jobs in the next decade.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the Australian Employment Covenant is the brainchild of mining magnate Andrew Forrest. It is also of no surprise—but of some disappointment, as noted at the outset—that Minister Macklin (2008) focuses primarily on how Indigenous people should spend their agreement payments on community benefit without any engagement with the issue of whether such payments are adequate or equitable—arguably *the* crucial politico-economic question—or whether traditional owners of land should be required to quarantine their negotiated compensatory payments for damage to their land for wider community benefits. These are issues that have had a long history in Indigenous affairs policy debates (see for example Altman 1983; Cousins and Nieuwenhuysen 1984; O’Faircheallaigh 2004a, 2006; Trigger 2005).

Mining is fundamental to the wealth of Australia and as the Indigenous estate has expanded to cover over 20 per cent of the continent there is no doubt that more and more exploration and mining will occur on Aboriginal land. However development outcomes are defined—narrowly as conforming to a mainstream ideal or more broadly to focus on a livelihood—there is no doubt that for decades now these outcomes have been disappointing from Indigenous, corporate and state perspectives. It has been surprising just how little rigorous research is undertaken around Australia on the socioeconomic impacts of mining. While there are numerous ‘top-down’ statements about the benefits that mining should deliver, grounded Indigenous viewpoints are under-reported or unheard; pressure is mounting on Indigenous representative organisations to view mining as the panacea for regional and Indigenous development.

Yet even within the three cases on which chapters in this volume focus there are some clear variations in engagement with, and the impacts of, the mining sector that are heavily influenced by history, the nature of the local Indigenous polity and land ownership, and the diversity of Indigenous responses. This in turn has been greatly shaped by provisions in Australian land rights and native title laws that play a crucial role in (predictably) creating regional Indigenous diversity and political conflict by differentiating traditional owners or native title groups from others living in the region.

Chapters in this volume do not assume that mining is either positive or negative—there is no advocacy for any particular outcomes in situations where mining occurs on Aboriginal-owned land—but rather they set out to explore what has happened at three mine sites from a diversity of perspectives. It is recognised, though, that mining will be a site for contestation and that development, however defined, will only occur if Indigenous organisations are empowered and have capacity to negotiate and manage beneficial agreements in accord with local and regional Indigenous aspirations which may themselves, as we shall see, differ. These aspirations will, in all probability, be diverse so that not all Aboriginal people will seek employment opportunity at mine sites. Indeed, in some situations Indigenous people might actually seek mining employment so as to earn incomes to enhance opportunities for futures on country. In other situations even massive long-life mines with heavy Indigenous mine site engagements will generate insufficient opportunity to solve Aboriginal development problems, even if mining were a sustainable regional prospect.

An important question that is raised in this monograph from a social sciences perspective is whether there is too much collusion between the state and mining companies that offers a development pathway—concentrated mine dependence—that is too risky and too divorced from the preferences of many Indigenous subjects. At the current historical moment, perhaps the choice offered to remote living Indigenous people is too influenced by the dominant logic of neo-liberalism: engage with the mainstream as individual subjects or miss out. Such a stark choice seems to be at loggerheads with other more flexible options that are essential for sustainable livelihoods for people living on their lands and in accord with contemporary diverse, but intercultural, preferences. One such option is encapsulated in the notion of ‘economic hybridity’. The simplistic choice, modern or customary, that so dominates Australian public and intellectual debates and that ignores the intercultural needs to be challenged by a combination of grounded realism and engagement with a subordinate development discourse that is all too rarely articulated in Australia today. The essays in this volume ultimately aim to broaden this development debate, while also providing some insights into how, when mining does occur, one might look to better outcomes for all parties.