

IFoU25 Lisbon | Future Living

International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU)

Book of Abstracts

#### EDITION

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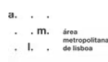
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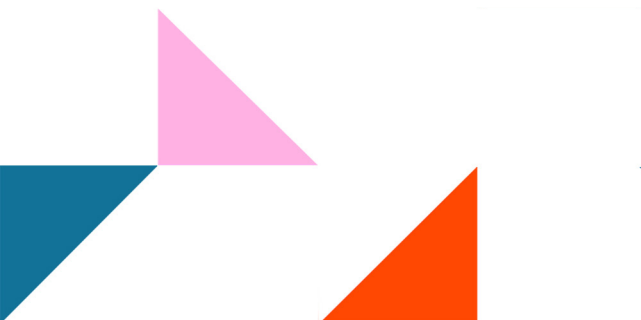
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## Is there a future for the sacrifice zone? Understanding Mining Conflicts and Local Community Engagement in Bor and Majdanpek, Serbia

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This paper explores the key theoretical concepts that best explain local community engagement in the mining areas of Bor and Majdanpek, Serbia. In post-socialist, semi-peripheral countries like Serbia, where economic development relies on direct foreign investment—including speculative mining projects that transform lively areas into sacrifice zones (Scott & Smith, 2017)—and where the anti-mining environmental movement is still emerging, it is essential to critically reassess concepts such as participatory, professional, and transactional activism (Petrova & Tarrow, 2007). It is also important to examine the deeper causes of local community engagement beyond institutional public participation and its various forms, given that residents' activities in Bor and Majdanpek are often individual, small-scale, sporadic, and primarily directed against the negative externalities of mining—such as environmental degradation, involuntary resettlement, health issues, mono-functional economy, etc.—rather than against mining activities themselves, but may contribute to the rise of the broader anti-extractivism movement and help create space for reimagining alternative futures (Rodriguez, Walter & Temper, 2024). The analysis is based on secondary sources on the ecological activism in Bor and Majdanpek and examines the specific dynamics of community engagement in these local contexts. Additionally, the paper explores a theoretical framework for understanding small-scale grassroots participation, offering insights into the environmental activism in mining-affected areas. The research has been developed within the MINIPART project supported by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, grant #7598.

### **Keywords**

Sacrifice zone, mining conflicts, participation

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