

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A
20/01/2026) - IRSA 21 - ENERGY TRANSITION, EXTRACTIVISMS, AND
TERRITORIAL DYNAMICS IN RURAL AREAS

CONSENSUS ON ENERGY PROJECTS IN COLOMBIA'S EASTERN PLAINS

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This paper presents the case of a municipality in the Eastern Plains of Colombia where multiple energy-related projects—hydrocarbons, photovoltaic energy, electricity transmission, and oil palm plantations—have been developed, with a strong presence of transnational corporations for over two decades. Based on ethnographic research, the paper focuses on examining the process through which local communities have come to accept these projects. It discusses the factors that contribute to the construction of consensus between communities and companies regarding energy projects, as well as the role played by the state in these negotiations and its specific forms of participation within each community.

The central argument is that this consensus is neither stable nor harmonious; rather, it constitutes an ephemeral agreement built upon four main pillars—employment opportunities, social investment, references to protest, and the

presence of the state—which are constantly shifting and place the involved actors in a condition of ongoing negotiation. Drawing on the concept of consensus within a Gramscian theoretical framework on relations of power, the paper analyzes the practices and discourses deployed by the different actors throughout the negotiation process. This research contributes a novel perspective to rural studies of extractivism in Colombia by focusing on cases where there is no overt resistance to energy projects. Instead, it examines situations in which local populations choose to engage with these projects, mobilizing diverse strategies developed over more than twenty years of extractivist presence in their territories.

Palavras-chave: consensus; negotiation; relations of power; extractivism; energy.