

Rosemont Mine Project: from Global to Local Perspectives

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Introduction

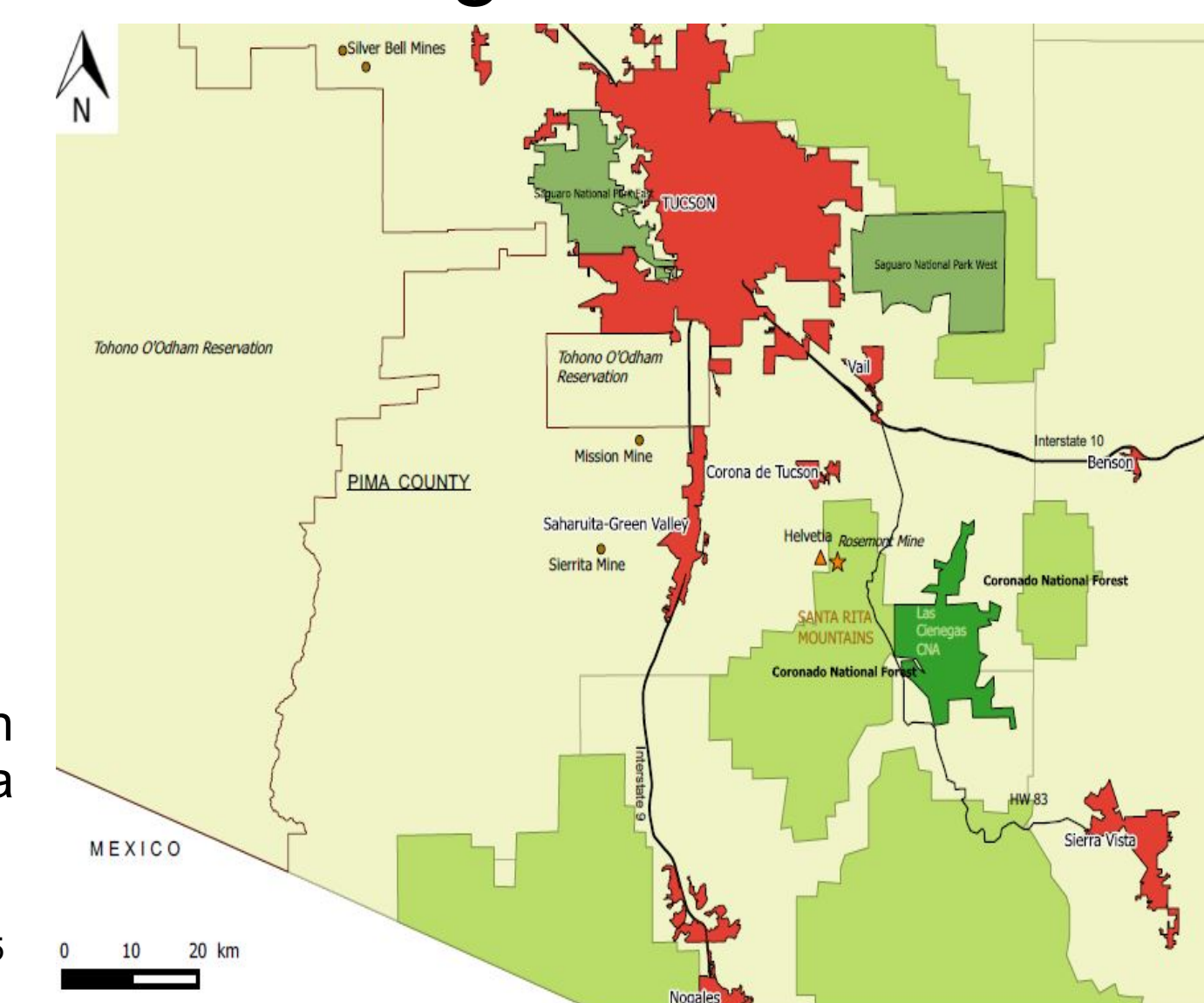
The Rosemont copper project, in Pima County, is particularly representative of the evolution of mining controversies, from social struggles to environmental regulation. The multi-scale articulation between local to global interests is central to the re-composition of the stakes around mining issues.

Objects

How is it possible to understand a local conflict in multi-scale governance?

Methodology :

- Analysis of the participation process
- Analysis of the firm's strategies
- Relation of the Rosemont case to the global copper market

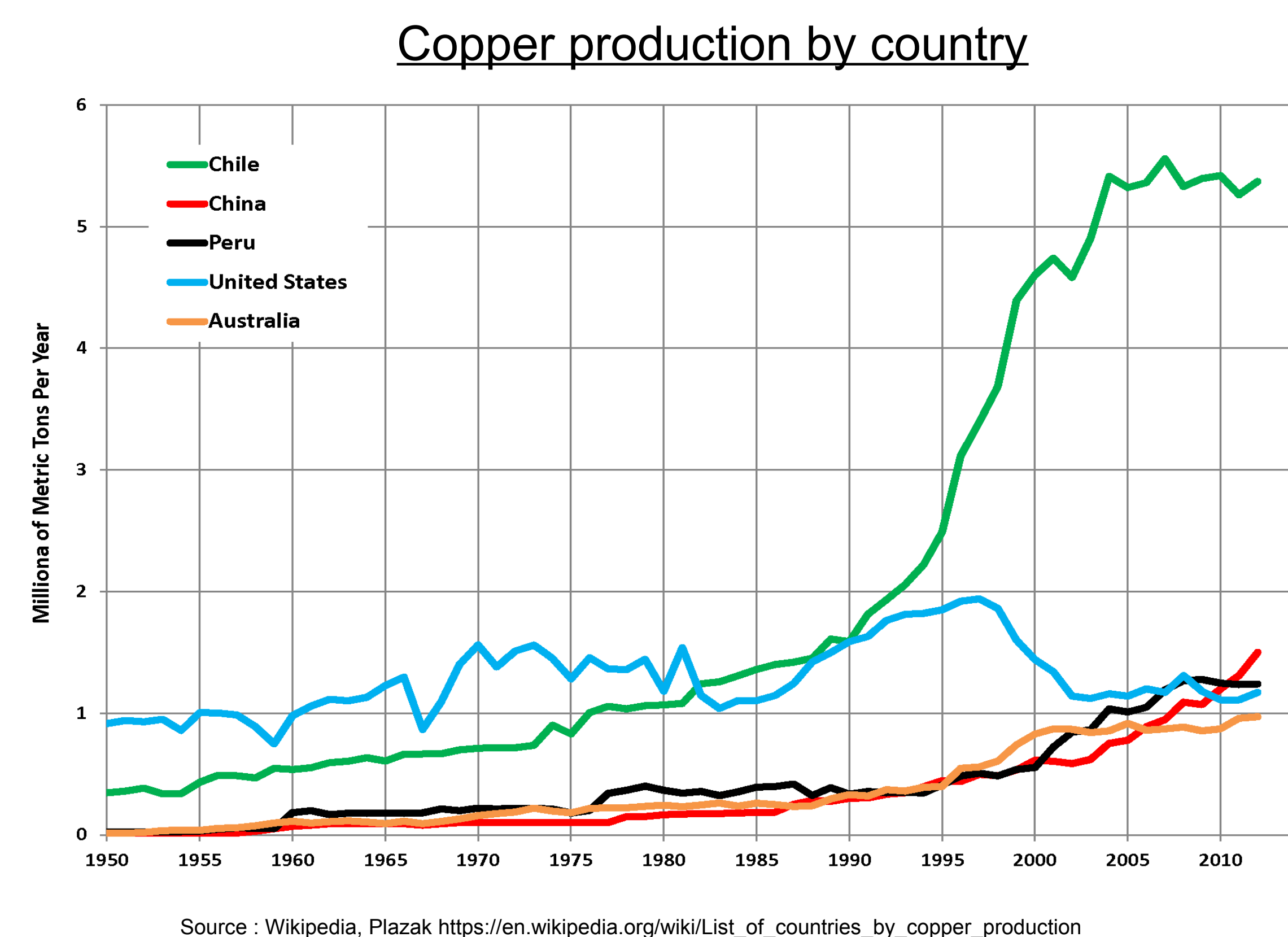


The Rosemont Mine, 50km South from Tucson, in the Santa Rita Mountains.

Map: Anne-Lise Boyer, 2015

Global Copper Market Perspectives

U.S. copper production dominated the world copper industry. Starting in the 19th century in the Michigan mines, and continuing in Montana and Arizona, **represented 61 percent of the world copper production in 1918**. After the 1920s, the U.S. Copper industry declined to the benefit of low-cost producers like Chile and Peru.



Source : Wikipedia, Plazak https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_copper_production

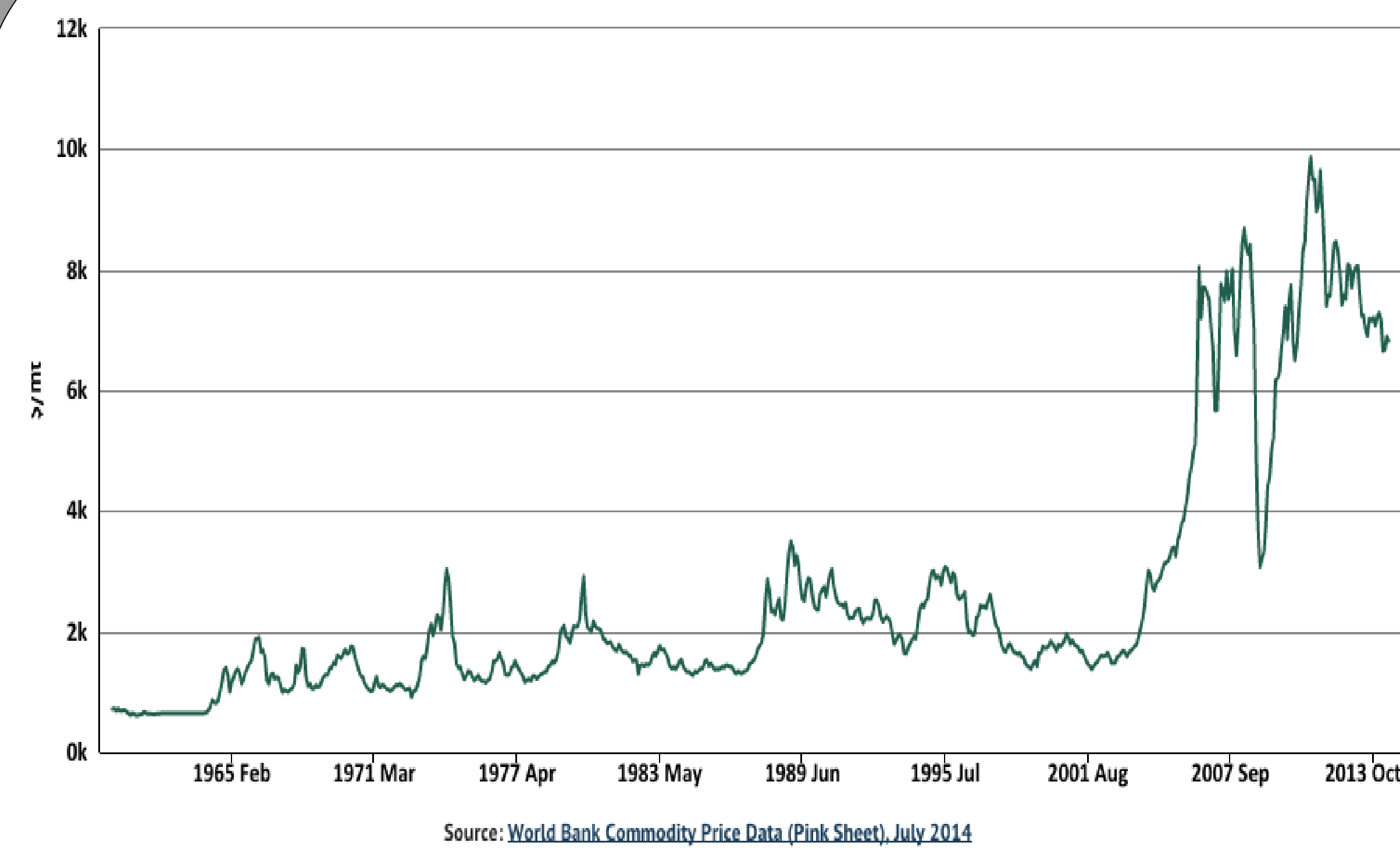
Reasons of the decline -U.S. Copper industry::

- Sluggish growth of domestic demand
- Decline of copper prices
- Higher production cost in U.S.
- Conservative strategies of the firms
- Failure to develop new mines in U.S.
- Firms' dependence on the low-cost copper of Southern countries



Picture : ASARCO Mission, Claude Le Guill

Copper price evolution



Source : World Bank Commodity Price Data (Pink Sheet), July 2014

In the early 21st century, the copper industry created a new dynamic with the growth of China's economy. Increasing copper prices permitted the firms to invest in new mining projects, not simply in the Southern countries like the early 20th century, but in the North too. During the copper price boom, Augusta Ressource Corp bought Rosemont mine. In 2013, HudBay from Canada acquired Rosemont mine.

National Level

The General Mining Act (1872)

The federal statute that governs hardrock mining on federal lands, without tax, to encourage Western development. This Act allowed Arizona to realize important mining developments at the end of the 19th century, with the famous deposits of Clifton, Morenci, Bisbee, Globe



The traditional disputes between mining companies and workers have come to be replaced by socio-environmental conflicts, revolving around the implementation of extractive projects.

The National Environmental Policy Act (1969)

Requires Federal agencies to prepare an environmental impact statement and citizen participation prior to undertaking a major action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

Picture : Patagonia Area Resource Alliance



Research Perspectives

The analysis of 24,000 comments sent to the USFS by the public showed the **limits of a participatory method in:**

- number of participants
- consideration of its results

The analysis of the company strategy showed:

- **lobbying strategies** destined more for the economic sectors than real consultation of citizens
- **technical discourse** not accessible for the citizens

The analysis of local conflict showed:

- **Tensions for the control of local development** between economic sectors and citizens mobilized for the **access to water resources**

Environmental and participation discourses become a **strategy of justification** in the **struggles** between different actors in competition, fighting for the definition and the application of these concepts for the control of natural resources and local development.

Rosemont: a Sustainable Project?



Mining lobby framework

To face these new environmental constraints, mining firms adopt a "sustainable mining" strategy:

- High technology for mitigating environmental damage
- Policy of social and economic responsibility to improve local development
- Participation of the citizens
- Construction of a framework of corporate responsibility by the international mining lobby and consulting agencies