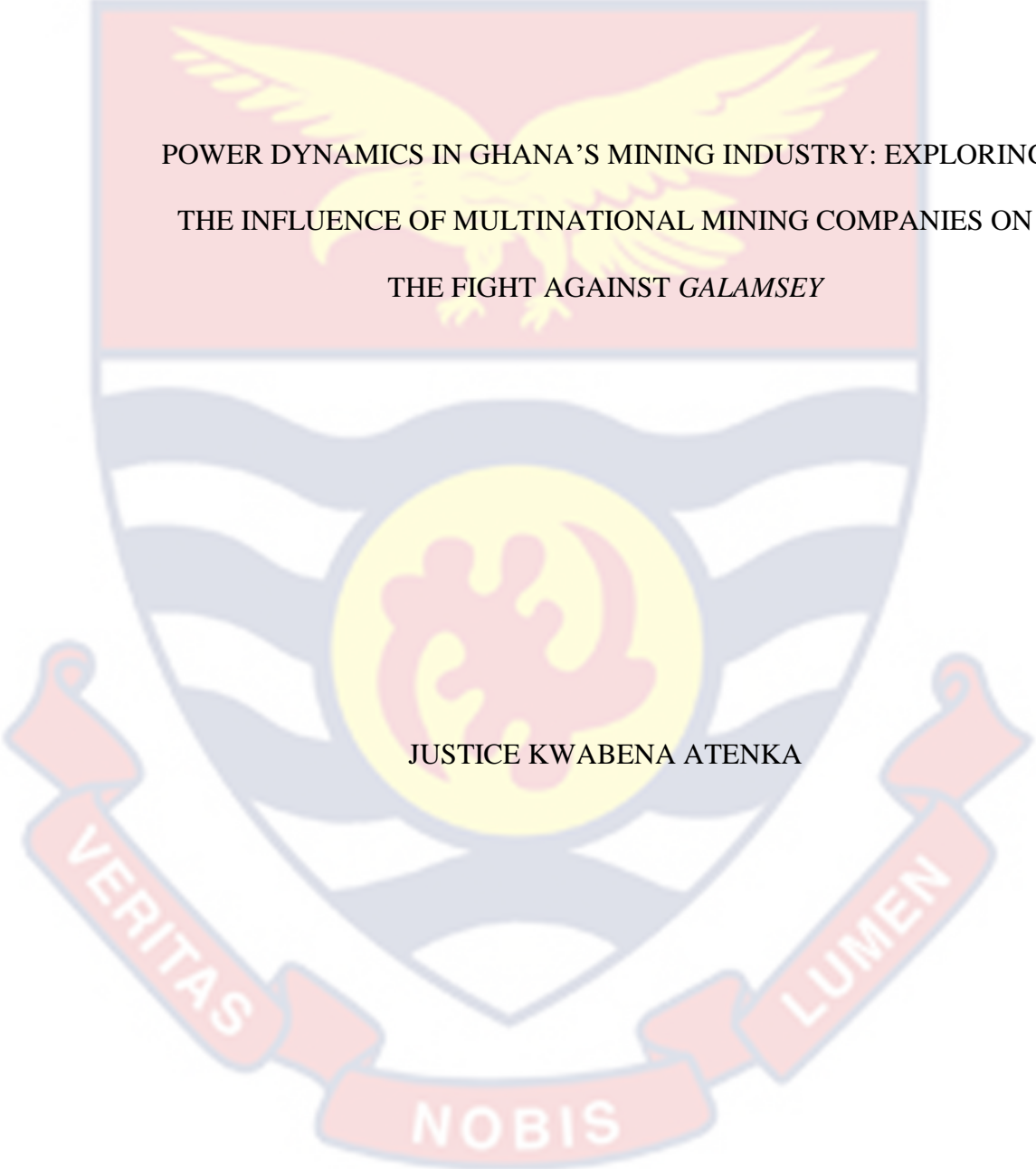


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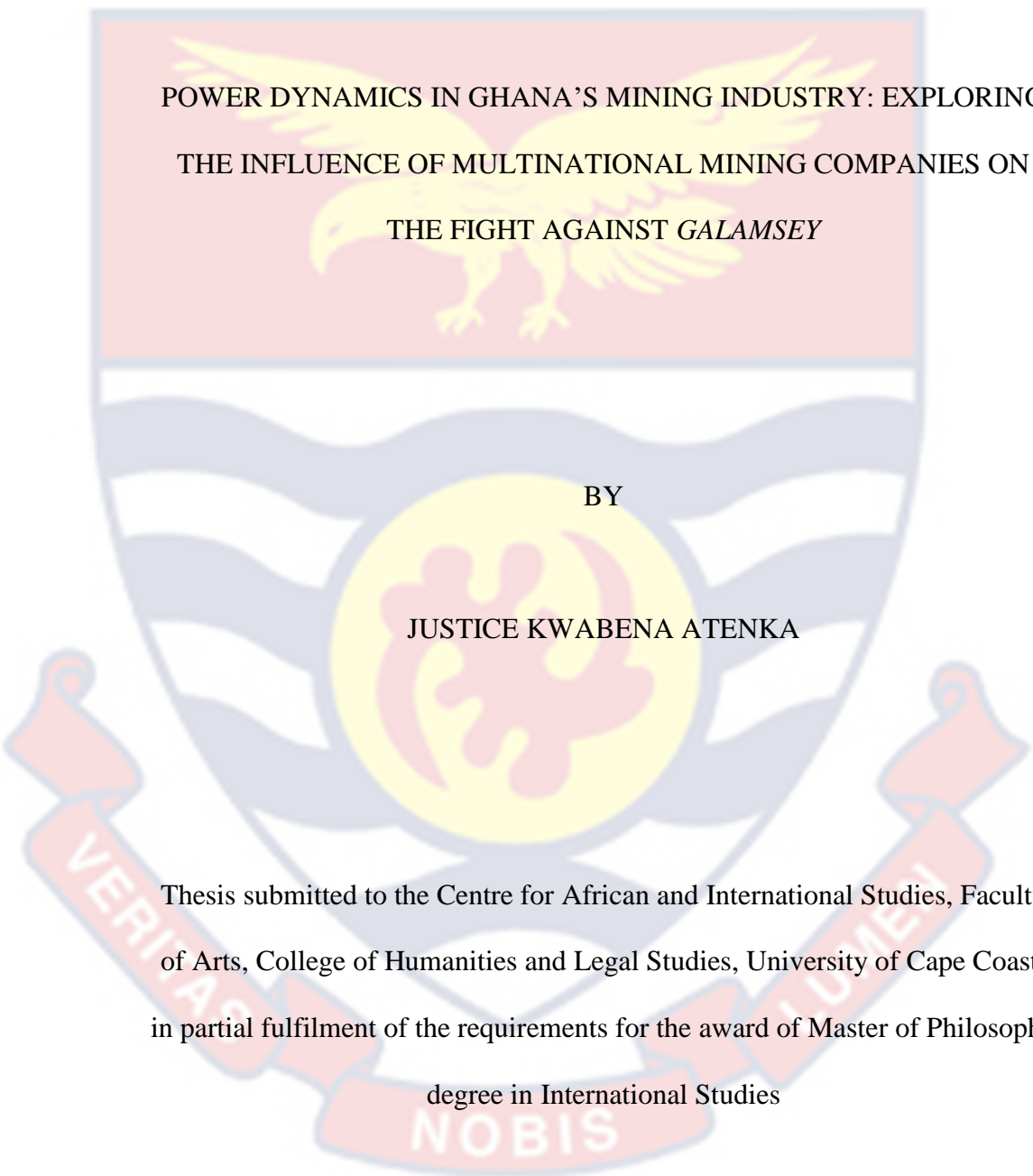


POWER DYNAMICS IN GHANA'S MINING INDUSTRY: EXPLORING  
THE INFLUENCE OF MULTINATIONAL MINING COMPANIES ON  
THE FIGHT AGAINST *GALAMSEY*

JUSTICE KWABENA ATENKA

2023

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

The background of the page features a large, faint watermark of the University of Cape Coast crest. The crest is a shield-shaped emblem. At the top is a red horizontal band containing a yellow eagle with its wings spread. Below this is a white band with blue wavy lines. The center of the shield is a yellow circle containing a red stylized human figure with arms raised. At the bottom is a red banner with the Latin motto 'VERITAS LIBERABIT VOS' written in white capital letters. The text of the thesis title is overlaid on the upper portion of this watermark.

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THE INFLUENCE OF MULTINATIONAL MINING COMPANIES ON  
THE FIGHT AGAINST *GALAMSEY*

BY

JUSTICE KWABENA ATENKA

Thesis submitted to the Centre for African and International Studies, Faculty  
of Arts, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast,  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy  
degree in International Studies

AUGUST 2023

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree at this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature ..... Date .....

Name: Justice Kwabena Atenka

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of the thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Prof. Edward Marfo-Yiadom

## ABSTRACT

In Ghana, the extractive industry is vital in generating significant revenue. Nonetheless, the extractive industry has amounted to severe environmental hazards to the country's ecology. As a result, the state has developed diverse measures to contain the crisis and maintain the state's ecological integrity. However, these measures appear counter-productive due to biases in the mining industry regarding the fight against *galamsey* associated with the small-scale mining sector vis-à-vis the activities of the multinational mining companies in the industry. This study sought to investigate the intricacies and power relations within Ghana's mining industry. The study employed a qualitative approach and purposive sampling technique to select participants. Semi-structured interview protocols were used for the data collection, and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected. The study revealed that existing laws and actions of the regulatory bodies and other stakeholders tend to favour multinational mining companies while impeding the growth of the small-scale mining sector. Also, unrestricted land acquisition by large-scale mining companies and limited land availability demarcated for small-scale mining has resulted in rampant illegal activities in the industry. The study recommends that the state engage in inclusive consultations with key stakeholders to revise the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) and develop alternative solutions for the effective regulation and growth of the small-scale sector. Additionally, the regulatory bodies should refrain from granting forest reserves to large-scale mining firms and influential individuals and provide adequate geo-scientific information on demarcated land areas for small-scale mining to discourage mining in restricted areas.

## KEYWORDS

*Galamsey* Fight

Large-Scale Mining

Mining Industry

Multinational Companies

Power Dynamics

Small-Scale Mining



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am immensely thankful to God for giving me the strength, wisdom, insight, good health, and ability to complete my thesis. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Edward Marfo-Yiadom, for his guidance and mentorship. His expertise, insightful feedback, and continuous encouragement were invaluable in shaping the direction and quality of my research. Also, I thank Professor Emmanuel Saboro, Director of the Centre for African and International Studies at the University of Cape Coast, and all my International Studies lecturers, especially Dr. Isaac Nunoo and Dr. Charles Asante, for their support and encouragement.

I am highly indebted and helmed in all humbleness to all colleagues and every individual who sacrificed their time to proofread my thesis at all levels. My sincere appreciation goes to all persons who trusted, encouraged and supported me in one way or the other in this journey. I would also like to thank my parent (Mr. and Mrs. Atenka), my siblings, and Ms. Linda Adwoa Yeboah for their unconditional love, unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding throughout this academic journey.

I am deeply grateful to the participants who took the time to share their experiences and insights with me. It is my great honour to also express my sincere gratitude to Samuel and Emelia Brew-Butler – SSG/GRASAG, UCC Research Grant, for their invaluable financial assistance, which made my fieldwork and data collection possible. Finally, I am grateful to the University of Cape Coast for allowing me to earn my first and second degrees.



## DEDICATION

To God Almighty, who has started a good work in me and will complete it,  
and also to my parent, Mr. and Mrs. Atenka



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
KEYWORDS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
LISTS OF ACRONYMS	xiv
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Research Objectives	8
Research Questions	9
Significance of the Study	9
Delimitation	10
Limitation	11
Definition of Terms	12
The Organisation of the Study	12
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
Introduction	13
The Concept of Power Relations	13
The Concept of Multinational Companies	15

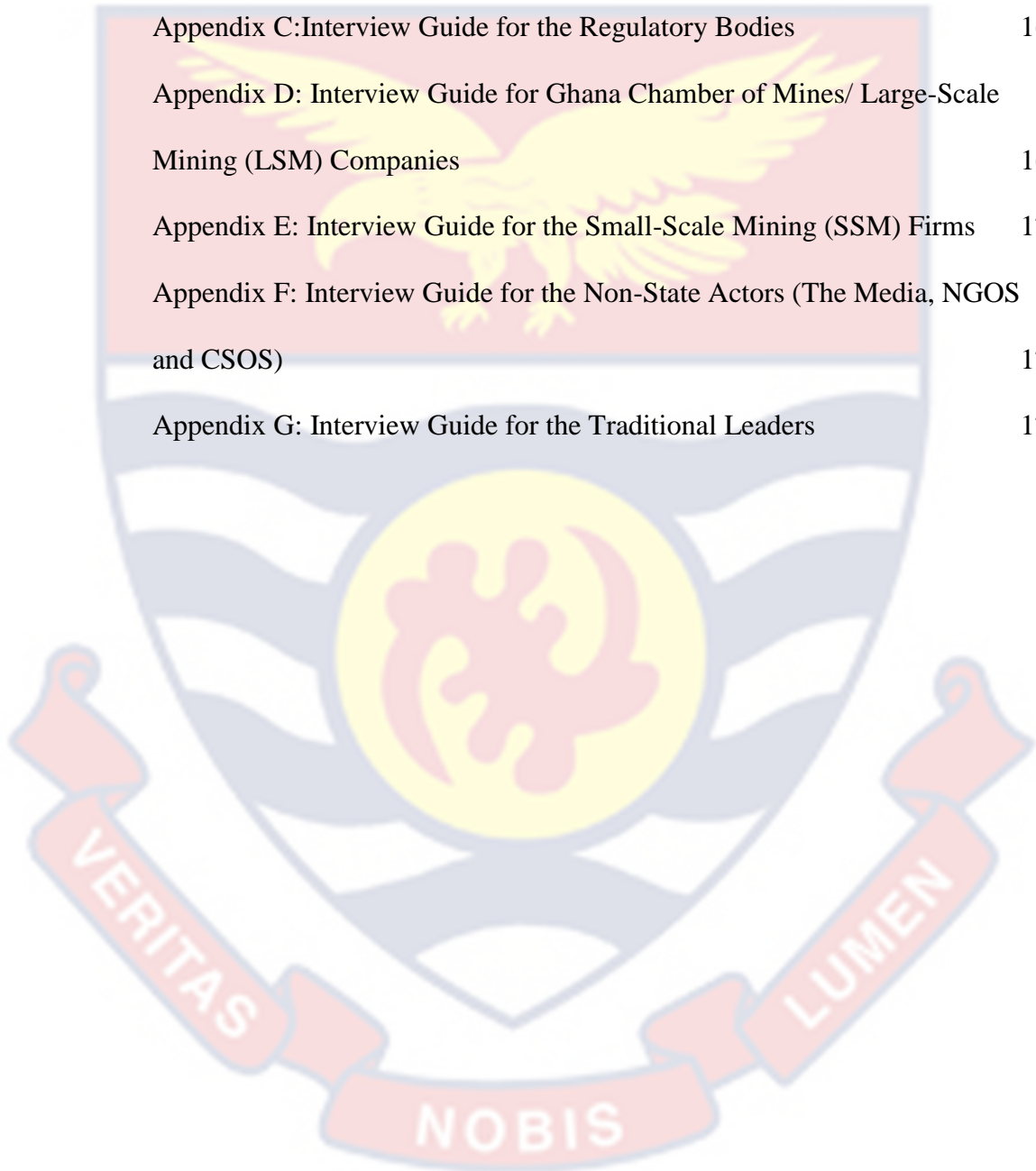


Theoretical Framework	16
<i>The world system theory</i>	17
<i>The neo-Marxist theory</i>	21
<i>Justification for using the two theories</i>	26
Conceptual Framework	27
Multinational Companies' Influence on Host Countries	30
MNCs' Exploitation of Africa's Mining Industry and Ecological Ramifications	35
Traditional Acquisition of Land in Ghana	38
The Mining Development of Ghana	39
Mining Implication on Ghana's Ecology	44
Perceived Bias in the Mining Industry	46
The 'Supposed' Fight against <i>Galamsey</i> Activities	49
Chapter Summary	54
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS</b>	
Introduction	55
Research Approach	55
Research Design	57
Study Area	58
Sampling Procedure	60
Source of Data	64
Data Collection Instruments	64
Data Collection Procedures	66
Data Processing and Analysis	67
Ethical Consideration	68

Chapter Summary	69
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
Introduction	70
Governance Issues: Contextualising the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703)	70
Multinational Mining Companies' Influence on Ghana's Mining Policies and the Fight against <i>Galamsey</i>	77
Techniques LSMs Employ to Influence Mining Policies of the State	77
<i>The use of experts</i>	77
<i>The use of threat and resistance</i>	79
<i>The use of financial aid</i>	82
Engagement with state authorities	83
The issue of illegal mining and the LSM's influence in the fight	84
How Power Relations in Land Acquisition for Mining Contribute to Illegal Mining Activities	88
Legal provisions of lands for mining activities	88
Power play in land acquisition: the immediate cause of <i>galamsey</i>	91
<i>Regulatory failure</i>	91
<i>Livelihood issue</i>	93
<i>Lack of mineable land for the SSMs triggers illegal mining</i>	98
Conflicts and confrontations between community members and LSMs	100
Checking the Activities of LSMs and SSMs to Ensure Ecosystem Protection: The role of regulatory bodies	105
Environmental effects of gold extraction in mining communities	105

Ensuring environmentally friendly mining: The role of the state's regulating bodies	107
<i>Structural supervision</i>	107
<i>Posting of Reclamation Bond</i>	109
<i>The Akoben Rating Program</i>	110
The role of the non-state actors: the one side story	115
Using the poor as scapegoats, shielding the Chinese and the “bigmen”	119
Perceived Influence: The root of biases towards LSMs	122
The Pros and Cons of the Mining Industry to the State	125
The Pros: Contributions of LSM and SSM to the country	125
<i>International Relations: Promoting Ghana's international recognition</i>	125
<i>Employment and economic contribution</i>	127
<i>Community support</i>	130
The negative impacts of mining on economic development of the mining communities and the country	132
<i>Environmental cost of surface mining</i>	132
<i>Collapse of local industry</i>	133
<i>The exploitation of the state's mineral resources</i>	135
Chapter Summary	138
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Summary of Research Findings	139
Conclusion	142
Recommendations	145
Recommendation for Further Research	147

REFERENCES	148
APPENDICES	166
Appendix A: Introductory Letter	166
Appendix B: Ethical Clearance	167
Appendix C: Interview Guide for the Regulatory Bodies	168
Appendix D: Interview Guide for Ghana Chamber of Mines/ Large-Scale Mining (LSM) Companies	169
Appendix E: Interview Guide for the Small-Scale Mining (SSM) Firms	170
Appendix F: Interview Guide for the Non-State Actors (The Media, NGOS and CSOS)	171
Appendix G: Interview Guide for the Traditional Leaders	172



## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Summary of the Mining Regulation Policies of Ghana	39
2	Targeted Sample and the Number of People Interviewed	63
3	Comparative gold production between LSM and SSM from 2006-2021	129



**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure		Page
1	A diagram illustrating power dynamics among the three bodies	29
2	Map showing the Western Region with Districts and Capitals	60
3	Showing the Akoben Rating System	112





**LISTS OF ACRONYMS**

<b>ALP</b>	Alternative Livelihood Program
<b>ARPS</b>	Aborigines Rights Protection Society
<b>BoG</b>	Bank of Ghana
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DCE</b>	District Chief Executive
<b>EITI</b>	Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
<b>EFEDCOM</b>	ECOWAS Federation of Chamber of Mines
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investment
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Agency
<b>EPR</b>	Economic Recovery Program
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GHEITI</b>	Ghana Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
<b>GNASSM</b>	Ghana National Association of Small-Scale Miners
<b>GoG</b>	Government of Ghana
<b>ICMM</b>	International Council on Mining and Metals
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>MLNR</b>	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
<b>MNC</b>	Multinational Companies
<b>MNMC</b>	Multinational Mining Company
<b>MinCom</b>	Minerals Commission
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>LSM</b>	Large-Scale Mining
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**PMMC** Precious Metals and Minerals Commission

**PNDCL** Provisional National Defence Council Law

**SSM** Small-Scale Mining

**SAP** Structural Adjustment Program

**WAMPEX** West African Mining and Power Expo



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

Mineral resources are valuable commodities. For centuries, revenue generated from their extraction has contributed significantly to the socioeconomic development of many countries across the globe. Minerals such as gold, diamond, manganese, and bauxite, among others, are “hot commodities” on the global market. Hilson (2002) and Edwards et al. (2014) indicate that globally, Africa possesses the largest mineral reserves. International Finance Corporation (IFC) Report 2015 states that Africa holds over 30% of the world’s mineral reserves. With enormous exploration and production potential, over 60 distinct metals and minerals are produced on the continent. Africa, for that matter, is recognised as a key producer of mineral resources on the world market (Akudugu et al., 2013).

Specifically, Africa holds 42% of the world’s bauxite and gold deposits, 38% of the world’s uranium, 88% of the world’s diamonds, and other significant fossils, metals, and non-metal raw material reserves (Bush, 2008; Engels, 2016). Hence, it is unsurprising that the mining sector is the principal source of exports for 69 percent of African countries (Darimani et al., 2013). These rich mineral resources have attracted several multinational companies (MNCs) and have played a significant role in the development of Africa’s extractive industry; however, with dire consequences on the environment of the African people (Muigua, 2018).

For this reason, Ferdausy and Rahman (2009) accuse MNCs in the extractive industry of being the major polluters of the environment. The

scholars mentioned that the MNCs' performance in terms of pollution is dismal. Critics like Stopford (1998, cited in Ferdausy & Rahman, 2009) indict MNCs for seriously harming the environment in developing nations, partly because of their enormous scale in the extractive industry. According to these scholars, MNCs' operations in mining have resulted in substantial environmental damage and pollution. These detrimental effects include the discharge of toxic substances into streams and rivers, disposal of massive volumes of waste, improper disposal of dangerous materials, and other violations in developing countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Congo, and other parts of Africa and Caspian regions (Ferdausy & Rahman, 2009).

Ghana, a giant in mineral production, is noted for its colossal contribution to extractive resource development in the global market before, during, and after colonisation. Out of its enormous mineral resources, the name "Gold Coast" was conferred on the territory by the first Europeans who arrived in the country (Ayee et al., 2011, p. 6). Ghana's mineral wealth includes salt, bauxite, manganese, gold, diamonds, and oil. However, gold dominates Ghana's extractive industry (Anyidoho & Crawford, 2014; Ghana Extractives Industries Transparency Initiatives (GHEITI) 2015 Mining Report). It accounts for more than 95 percent of the country's overall mining revenues (ICMM, 2015, cited in McQuilken & Hilson, 2016), with total exports of USD 5.64 billion in 2012.

Furthermore, the Ghana Chamber of Mines 2020 report indicates that gold revenue to Ghana increased from USD 6.229 billion in 2019 to USD 6.799 billion in 2020. The industry generates 41% of the country's foreign exchange and is the country's most significant foreign exchange earner; it also

accounts for 14% of total tax revenue and 9.6% of Ghana's gross domestic product (GDP) (Ayee et al., 2011; Hira & Busumtwi-Sam, 2018). Ghana is one of Africa's leading producers of gold and sixth in global production, with 138.7 metric tonnes annually (Ghana Chamber of Mines, 2020).

In most African countries, the industry is explored by both multinational and domestic firms (Antwi, 2014; Engels, 2016). Like many other countries, Ghana's mineral exploration and mine development depend on two key players: multinational mining firms and domestic firms (Antwi, 2014). Multinational mining firms largely dominate the large-scale mining (LSM) sector, and domestic firms dominate the small-scale mining (SSM) sector. Both sectors' increasing role in Ghana's mining development cannot be downplayed. Mineral exploration is carried out in Ghana by approximately 17 large-scale mining firms from developed countries such as Canada, the USA, South Africa, Britain, Australia, and China, and over 300 recognised small-scale mining groups (Mensah et al., 2015). In terms of employment, the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) (2015, as cited in McQuilken & Hilson, 2016) indicates that the LSM sector directly employs roughly 16,000 and indirectly 66,000 people. On the other hand, the SSM sector provides direct employment to over one million individuals and indirectly supports up to an additional five million people in downstream businesses and markets.

Nonetheless, the benefits of the industry in terms of increased investment, employment, and revenue to the state come at a high environmental, health, and social cost to the people. These have sparked a wave of public outrage against mining companies (large and small scales) in



Ghana, who have yet to openly admit that their investments are intrinsically responsible for significant pollution and social conflict. According to Awudi (2002), the environmental and health costs of mineral extraction outweigh the advantages. Despite encouraging signs of revenue generation and foreign investment, the author believes that the mining industry's contribution to Ghana's economic progress is questionable.

Mining has great ecological and health effects. Most of the environmental issues stemming from mining activities arise from the degradation of the natural landscape and problems associated with pollution. Toukuu et al. (2018) outline some health and environmental issues relating to mining: They contend that mining has resulted in mass deforestation, chronic impoverishment, noise pollution, and modifications of the physical landscape. Scholars such as Serfor-Armah et al. (2006), Emmanuel et al. (2018), and Obeng et al. (2019), among other studies, pointed out that the LSM firms, dominated by multinational mining companies (MNMCS) and the small-scale mining sector cause severe environmental destruction in the process of their mining activities.

Regarding the dangers mining activities pose to the environment, Ghana's government has launched vigorous campaigns and measures in the mining industry over the years to ensure environmental sustainability (Crawford & Botchwey, 2016). However, the small-scale mining sector has been marginalised in pursuit of checking and ensuring ecosystem protection. Recent actions by the state and non-state actors suggest that all or most of the stiff actions taken from 2006 to date to preserve the environment are more directed to the SSM sector. Thus, the regulatory bodies and non-state actors



are more interested in exposing and fighting small-scale mining firms for environmental hazards than MNCs in the mining industry.

Given the actions and inactions of the state and some non-state actors in ensuring sustainable and healthy mining practices, there is an obvious indication of discrimination against the SSM sector. This study, therefore, postulates that there is a deliberate attempt by multinational mining companies, through the government and some non-state actors, to make the SSM sector unattractive or suppress their activities through the fight against *galamsey*. It is argued in this study that the state prioritises and shields foreign firms (LSMs) in the mining industry regarding ecosystem protection. This has given these firms the strength to hide behind the state and some non-state agencies to downgrade the SSM sector in the industry through the prism of the *galamsey* fight by ascribing all the environmental-related issues to them. Hence, the study seeks to uncover the influence of multinational mining companies and the power relations in Ghana's mining industry on the fight against *galamsey*.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The multinational companies' support for Ghana's extractive development cannot be underestimated. The mining industry has contributed significantly to the country's socioeconomic growth in the past three decades regarding revenue generation, job creation, and increased foreign direct investment (FDI) (Tuokuu et al., 2018). The industry is one of the country's economic cornerstones (Usman-Kaku et al., 2021). However, Bell and Donnelly (2006) noted that mining, mineral processing, and beneficiation processes, whether done on a small scale with rudimentary equipment or on a

large scale with sophisticated equipment, use toxic chemicals that, when released into the environment, become harmful to the ecosystem. Affirming the above argument, Mensah et al. (2015) opined that mining in all its forms causes damage to the environment. They argue that toxic chemicals such as cyanide (potassium cyanide) are used to extract gold from the ore. Hence, some spillages throughout the operation result in cyanide drainage into surrounding streams and rivers. These chemical compounds are exceedingly harmful, resulting in the extinction of aquatic life.

Mensah et al. (2015) further contend that dynamite used to blast huge rocks to aid in excavating gold extraction by mining firms causes high noise and vibration, which has profound environmental and health consequences for the nearby populations. Thus, nearby houses develop cracks, and those who live close to the mining sites have a lot of broken glass and other glassware in their homes. Toukuu et al. (2018) also argue that mining activities such as surface mining have resulted in deforestation, water pollution, and farmland destruction. These hazardous activities have depleted the ecosystem in most mining communities and affected livelihood. Usman-Kaku et al. (2021) subscribed to the above assertion that lands used for agricultural purposes are being degraded and becoming increasingly scarce due to mining activities. They further stated that “large-scale gold mining activities have threatened the agricultural sector, which serves as the economic backbone for Ghana’s development” (Usman-Kaku et al., 2021, p. 2).

These dangerous threats from the mining sector have triggered a series of reactions from the government of Ghana over the last two decades in an attempt to curtail the situation and protect its ecological integrity. However,

these measures appear counter-productive since they are directed towards the small-scale mining sector, which does not employ more toxins and sophisticated equipment than the large-scale mining sector. The recent operation led to a blanket ban on small-scale activities in 2017, which resulted in the destruction and seizure of mining equipment belonging to SSM firms by national task forces and physical assault on some small-scale operators (Arkorful et al., 2019). Again, campaigns of media and civic groups have demonised the SSM sector's operations of causing looming environmental destruction (Ayelazuno & Mawuko-Yevugah, 2019).

Scholars such as Babic et al. (2017), and Narula (2018) posit that MNCs usually possess the power to influence state policies to obtain legitimacy and capacity for regulatory capture. Also, multinational mining firms leverage their financial power and international political clout to escape punishment. Inversely, most developing states often weigh the potential loss of jobs and revenue; hence, state institutions responsible for the environment overlook the environmental damage caused by MNCs' extractive activities (Oyier, 2017). Despite the environmental damage they cause in Ghana, multinational mining companies (MNMCS) operate without vigorous punitive reactions from the government or the general public. Most of the public outcry and criticisms are directed towards the SSMs.

Scholarships over the years have focused on small-scale mining and its regulations, Chinese and other foreigners' infiltration of the sector, and environmental and health implications related to the sector's activities. Less attention has been given to the environmental destruction caused by the LSM firms and how bias in the industry has contributed to the overwhelming illegal

mining activities. Fewer studies, such as Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah (2019) and Usman-Kaku et al. (2021), focused on LSMs activities and their effects on the ecosystem. However, these studies did not consider the power relations in the mining industry regarding large-scale and small-scale operations. That notwithstanding, Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah's (2019) work, *Large-scale mining and ecological imperialism in Africa*, is the closest to the current inquiry, which sets a good foundation for this research to fill the gap by concentrating on the power play in the mining industry and its implications on Ghana's ecological protection and economic development. The study interrogates how multinational mining companies influence mining policies and the recent fight against illegal mining.

### **Research Objectives**

This research aims to investigate and provide empirical evidence on the power relations within the mining industry through the prism of the *galamsey* fight (illicit gold mining) to suppress the small-scale sectors. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine the challenges of Ghana's policy framework in the mining industry
- ii. Examine how LSM companies influence the fight against illegal mining activities and mining policies of Ghana
- iii. Examine how power relations in land acquisition for mining contribute to illegal mining activities
- iv. Explore how the state and non-state actors check the mining activities of both LSM and SSM to ensure sustainable mining practices



- v. Examine the pros and cons of both LSMs and SSMs activities to the economic development of mining communities and the country.

### Research Questions

- i. What are some of the governance issues in Ghana's mining Industry?
- ii. What support have multinational mining companies made to state mining authorities, and how has it influenced the fight against illegal mining activities and mining policies?
- iii. How do power relations in acquiring land for mining contribute to illegal mining activities?
- iv. How do state and non-state actors check LSM and SSM mining activities to ensure environmentally friendly mining and ecosystem protection?
- v. What are the essential contributions and negative impacts of LSMs and SSMs activities on the economic development of mining communities and the country?

### Significance of the Study

The study offers valuable insights into Ghana's mining industry and the *galamsey* issues. It adds to the corpus of knowledge on natural resources management, the implications of mining on the environment, and the ongoing discussions on the fight against *galamsey*. It shows how Ghana's mining industry's power relations are a key contributor to *galamsey* activities. It reveals how MNCs in the mining industry influence Ghana's mining policies and fight against illegal mining activities.

The study additionally enhances theory development by providing further support to strengthen theoretical arguments. The study's findings

support the arguments made by the world-system theory and the neo-Marxist theory on how political officials and state structures support the capital accumulation of developed states. It highlights the broader issue of resource governance in developing countries, where Ghana is a major gold producer and exporter. Also, it gives empirical evidence of how MNCs utilise their economic muscles and political clout to influence states' domestic policies, especially developing nations.

More importantly, the study adds to the little literature that does not only blame the environmental destruction of Ghana on SSMs' activities but also focuses on the ecological ramifications of LSMs' activities on the environment. Knowledge of the ecological ramifications of both sectors will serve as a guide and relevant tool for policymakers in revising existing policies that will holistically address ecological challenges related to the mining industry. Lastly, the study serves as reference material for further studies relating to the development of Ghana's mining industry.

### **Delimitation**

The research is limited to the years 2006 through 2021. During this period, the mining industry underwent significant structural and policy modifications. In 2006, the old Minerals and Mining Law (PNDC Law 153) was replaced by the Minerals and Mining Act of 2006 (Act 703). Also, the first national task force to combat *galamsey* was established (*Fight against Illegal Mining*) in 2006. Following that, in 2013, *Operation Flash Out* was launched, and in 2017, *Operation Vanguard* was launched. In 2021, the war against *galamsey* became more intense and is still ongoing. This period helps to understand what has happened in the mining industry, the current



happenings in the industry, what is anticipated to happen after the new policy (the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703)), and the numerous measures and task forces to combat illicit activities in the industry to protect the ecology.

The study further focuses on how the activities of multinational mining companies influence mining policies, state mining authorities for policy implementation, and non-state actors to check environmentally friendly mining. The study considers the operations of SSM firms and their role at the decision-making level. However, it pays less attention to the infiltration of Chinese and other foreigners into the sector, which affects Ghana's mining policies. The study was conducted in three districts in the Western region of Ghana: Mponohor, Tarkwa-Nsuaem, and Ellembelle. These areas are endowed with mineral deposits, hence attracting mining investments.

### **Limitation**

The study faced certain hurdles, the key among them being the unwillingness of the large-scale mining companies to grant access and an interview to the researcher. However, this did not affect the quality of the work because some officials with managerial positions in these LSMs who possessed valuable insight into the mining field volunteered to share information regarding the study with the assurance of anonymity. Also, most of the information needed from these firms was obtained from the Ghana Chamber of Mines (GCM), the organisation representing the collective interests of the large-scale mining companies in Ghana. Again, both GCM and LSM companies' websites provided vital information sufficient to address the research questions.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Multinational company:* Multinational Company is a business organisation located in more than two countries and is the organisational form defining foreign direct investment.

*Power dynamics:* This term describes the politics that influence a relationship between two or more actors, allowing one to manipulate or dominate the other.

*Galamsey:* This local Ghanaian name refers to illegal small-scale gold mining. It is derived from the phrase “gather them and sell.”

*Non-state actors:* Non-state actors include non-sovereign entities such as organisations or individuals that are not affiliated with, directed by, or funded by the government that exercise significant influence on the state’s economic, political, and social power issues. In the context of this study, non-state actors include the media, NGOs, CSOs, and other civic groups.

### **The Organisation of the Study**

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter covers the introduction, which includes the study’s background, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance, delimitations and limitations, definitions of key terms, and study organisation. Chapter two of the study contains the theoretical and conceptual framework and the empirical literature review, while the study’s methodology is addressed in chapter three. This includes the research approach, study design, study area description, population and sampling techniques, data collection procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations. The results and discussions are presented in the fourth chapter, and the summary, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in the last chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the literature that is crucial for understanding the dynamics of power relations and multinational companies' influence on host nations. It delves into the concept of power, the role of multinational companies (MNCs), the conceptual and theoretical framework, MNCs' impact on host nations, and the development of mining in Ghana. It also scrutinises the legislative framework governing Ghana's mining industry, the perceived bias in mining policies, the environmental consequences of mining, and the measures taken to mitigate these issues.

#### The Concept of Power Relations

Power typically refers to one's ability to get or influence another to do something to the former's advantage but not in the latter's interests (Basu, 2003). According to Foucault, "power is the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation" (1978:92, cited in Christensen, 2023). For him, power must be analysed as something that circulates, or rather as something that only functions in the form of a chain.

The power distribution in a community impacts the parameters of choice and the attractiveness of options, and it may also significantly influence patterns and trade outcomes (White, 1993). Gaventa (2006) points out that "power" is frequently combined with other evocative adjectives. According to the author, the ability to influence the thoughts and behaviours of the helpless is referred to as "power over". Also, "power to", as stated by the author, is

used when acting, exercising agency, or realising the potential of rights, citizenship, or voice. Further, gaining the sense of self-identity, confidence, and knowledge that are prerequisites for action is frequently referred to as having “power within.” Lastly, power “with” is the synergy that can arise through relationships and teamwork with others and mass mobilisation and alliance formation processes.

In order to understand how socio-political structures and economic processes interact to shape poverty outcomes and the wealth accumulation of various actors coexisting in the same community, a political economy analysis must closely examine power and power relationships within the production system. Fuchs (2007, as cited in Ruggie, 2018) defined three types of political power that multinational companies could use to achieve dominance over a state. The first is “instrumental power,” of which commercial lobbying is the most established. This is achieved through contributions to political campaigns and the information inequity and preferential access to decision-making that businesses may have, mainly where standards are defined by private entities or “clubs” of government officials.

The second is “structural power,” which can include a company’s locational choice options, its capacity to transfer risks to suppliers, and generally how business moves issues onto or off the policy agenda. The third is referred to as “discursive power,” which denotes the capacity of companies and business groups to shape and define matters of public concern in their favour. That is, to mould their ideas so that they later become accepted as things should be done, even by non-business entities like governments.



Companies accomplish these goals by holding focus groups and paying for media sponsorships to encourage idea-setting.

### **The Concept of Multinational Companies**

The concept of a multinational company (MNC) has been expressed in various ways by academics. Different definitions are adopted with the understanding that each researcher has unique goals and functions. Vernon (1971), who took on the issue of studying MNC operations, finally became the most significant. According to him, MNCs are a group of connected businesses located in many nations that share ownership, access a common resource pool, and have a similar strategy. His definition emphasises the collaboration and integration of different units of a firm's operation from different countries.

Buckley and Casson (1976) also posit that a multinational company is a business that uses foreign direct investment to bridge international borders without using a market exchange to coordinate production. The focus here is on what constitutes a multinational, which is defined as having legal ownership of operations in a minimum of two distinct countries. Similarly, Dunning and Lundan (2008) describe a multinational or transnational company as an organisation or business that engages in foreign direct investment (FDI) and is responsible for owning and managing value-enhancing operations across multiple countries. Thus, MNCs are complex entities that may be analysed from various angles, including ownership, management, business strategy, structure, and more. In other words, a multinational company is a group of businesses or other organisations with

operations in multiple countries but are related enough to coordinate them differently.

While the previous scholars focused on ownership and management as defining characteristics of MNCs, Dicken (1998) offers a different perspective. He argues that a multinational company is a business that, even if it does not own the operations, has the authority to coordinate and manage them in multiple countries. This viewpoint challenges the traditional understanding of MNCs, suggesting that they can exercise influence without investing in foreign production assets, but through international legal partnerships.

From the above definitions and viewpoints of the scholars, there is a trend toward a firm operating in more than one geographical territory and being controlled by a powerful headquarters. Hence, it is justifiable to state that a multinational company must include geographically varied operations and ownership, management, and employees worldwide. In other words, multinational companies operate in several countries, but management and operations are overseen from the companies' headquarters, which are primarily based in industrialised nations. This study adopts Dunning and Lundan's (2008) definition of a multinational company as "an organisation or business that engages in foreign direct investment (FDI) and is responsible for the ownership and management of value-enhancing operations across multiple countries."

### **Theoretical Framework**

Various theories in the discipline of International Relations explain multinational companies' and capitalists' inequality activities. This study uses



the world system theory and the neo-Marxist theory. These theories were adopted to explain the inequalities and power dynamics that exist among the state, multinational mining companies (MNCs), and local communities that dominate the small-scale mining sector.

### *The world system theory*

The world-system theory has its roots in Vladimir Lenin's writings. In his pamphlet, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin advanced most of Marx's ideas in his understanding of how capitalism had changed since Marx's time. According to Lenin (1999, as cited in Martinez-Vela, 2001), the 1920 prologue to imperialism saw the emergence of capitalism as a global system of colonial repression and financial strangulation of the vast majority of the world's population by a small number of "advanced" nations. That is, capitalism, which had outgrown national borders, had divided the world into oppressors and oppressed.

In 1974, Immanuel Wallerstein developed the World-System Theory, aimed at elucidating the dynamics of the "capitalist world economy" as a comprehensive social structure. The theory asserts that there exists a structural interdependence between the global north and south, highlighting their interconnectedness and interactions (Martinez-Vela, 2001). According to Wallenstein's original hypothesis, a country's degree of economic growth depends on how well it is integrated into the world capitalist economy. The premise of world-systems theory, which is similar to dependency theory, is that wealthy countries exploit and capitalise on the resources of less developed countries. In contrast to dependency theory, this model recognises the limited advantages gained by countries with low status within the global system.

Wallerstein refers to a world system as a “world economy,” a globally interconnected network driven by market dynamics rather than a central political authority. In this system, multiple regions rely on each other for essential resources such as food, fuel, and protection. In contrast, multiple political entities vie for power without a permanent single dominant centre emerging (Martinez-Vela, 2001). According to Wallerstein (1974, referenced in Griffiths & Imre, 2013), the world system is a multicultural territorial division of labour where the production and exchange of essential commodities and raw materials play a pivotal role in the daily sustenance of its inhabitants. The core and periphery of the global economy represent two interconnected regions that rely on each other due to the division of labour, which encompasses the production forces and relations across the entire global economy. These regions are characterised by physical and cultural distinctions, emphasising labour and capital-intensive production (Martinez-Vela, 2001).

The power structure between the core and the periphery, whereby wealthy and powerful “core” civilisations control and take advantage of weak and poor peripheral nations, is one of the most significant characteristics of the present global order. According to Skocpol (1977, as cited in Martinez-Vela, 2001), strong states enhance and heighten the differential flow of surplus to the core zone. This leads to the global accumulation of capital, which inexorably calls for the expropriation and transformation of peripheral surplus. Wallerstein refers to this practice as “unequal trade” since it involves the regular transfer of surplus from semi-proletarian industries in the periphery to the high-tech, industrialised centre (Goldfrank, 2000).

Through this structural setup, the core countries are given the means to dominate and cheaply exploit the peripheral countries for labour and raw materials (Martinez-Vela, 2001). The affluent or privileged individuals in less developed countries benefit from the work performed by low-paid workers and their economic transactions with capitalists in the more advanced nations. They can also determine export prices for agricultural goods and other raw materials from peripheral nations independent of market prices. This compels artisanal workers to relinquish their subsistence activities since they lack the resources to operate effectively.

Wallerstein referred to the core states as the “hegemonic powers” that comprise the modern world system. According to Wallerstein (2004: 57), “What permits us to term them hegemonic powers is that for a certain while, they were able to construct the cultural vocabulary with which we discussed the world, to dominate the world economy, to have their way politically with a minimum use of military force.” Following the Second World War, the “hegemonic powers” set the rules for the interstate system, and these rules were designed to serve their interests of dominating the rest of the world. Wallerstein contends that this results in a procedure of capital accumulation on a global scale and necessitates the appropriation and transformation of peripheral surplus (Wallerstein, 2004). This makes the peripheral countries more dependent on the core countries for capital, eventually resulting in global inequality between the core and the peripheral.

Wallerstein’s world systems theory has faced some criticism. According to Bergesen (1990), a critical examination of world-systems theory discloses that the capitalist world economy is a phenomenon that occurs

outside of political structures. Without state boundaries as an impediment, the global economy prospers. That is, the exchange of goods and services in the world market does not recognise the importance of state boundaries. In his view, political structures and power relations that indisputably restrict the movement of goods and services across state borders are considered external to the global economy. Bergesen contends that Wallerstein's world system theory undermines the legitimacy of politics in the global economy. The theory cannot integrate the systems' political and economic relations, even though these relations are crucial for understanding how commodities move within the interstate system.

McCormik (1990, cited in Martinez-Vela, 2001) also criticised Wallerstein's theory for underestimating the importance of political-military power and other players who have long played a role in influencing the global environment. According to his argument based on world-systems analysis, economic power is the dominant force, reducing political-military power and other actors to subordinate roles. In this view, the capitalist world economy diminishes the significance of nation-state actors. Despite these drawbacks, the world-systems theory retains the core ideologies of Marxism in world politics, such as discrimination and a hierarchical global structure. Additionally, because it emphasises economic relationships as the cornerstone of social order and the global economy, it aligns with Marxist conceptual frameworks to examine the power relations within Ghana's mining industry between the MNC dominating the LSM and the SSM sectors.



### *The neo-Marxist theory*

The term “neo-Marxism” describes a modification of the conventional Marxist theory of international relations (ir), incorporating numerous intellectual progressions made by Marxism during the latter part of the twentieth century. According to Barrow (1993), the term “neo-Marxism” does not apply to any specific ideology or method of handling global politics. Instead, it refers to a synthesis of several schools of thought. It approaches from the twentieth century, including the Gramscian concept of “hegemony,” world system theory, dependency theory, and critical theory, which has roots in the ideas of Kant, Hegel, and Marx. It examines the extensive social and cultural factors that sustain the subjugation of the working class and expands its analysis from the national to the global level to address concerns regarding exploitation, dominance, and marginalisation (Barrow, 1993). Neo-Marxism, as a school of thought, emerged from an effort to confront issues that traditional Marxist philosophers did not address. For neo-Marxist scholars, the class divide in capitalism is more important than other divisions based on sex, gender, race, and ethnicity.

The neo-Marxist thinkers also consider political and cultural spheres in addition to the economic determinism arguments made by classical Marxist theorists (Barrow, 1993). Antonio Gramsci attempted to explain “why the working classes continued to support a capitalism system that appeared to be impoverishing them?” Why did the working class refuse to participate in a revolution that could have resulted in the toppling of an exploitative regime? Why has everyone accepted capitalism as the finest economic system? “Why



is it difficult to bring the revolution to Western societies?" (Sutch & Elias, 2007, p. 117).

Gramsci maintained that Western and Central European countries have relied on both force and consent to retain their hegemony in the international system. He asserts that early Marxists focused solely on the use of force and state capacities, but to maintain their position in world politics, he argued that the ruling class must also have the agreement of the oppressed class. Hegemony, according to Gramsci, is an instrument that allows the oppressed class to accept the ruling class's moral, political, and economic power. The oppressed class accepts the ruling class's cultural perspectives and values as their own, as seen in civil society institutions like the media, educational institutions, churches, and other non-governmental organisations (Sutch & Elias, 2007). In other words, Gramsci argues that capitalist countries around the world exercised cultural hegemony and affected the mentality of oppressed classes by obtaining assent through domestic institutions to facilitate their exploitation goal.

In the 1970s, the seemingly intractable conflict between instrumentalists, as represented by Milliband's work (1973), and structuralists, represented by Poulantzas' work (1978), all cited in (Howlett, 2010), generated more neo-Marxist state theorising (1973, 1978). Miliband's instrumentalism viewed state elites as active agents working to safeguard the process of capital accumulation and maintain the dominant power of the capitalist ruling class. Miliband asserts that capitalists, specifically those who hold significant control over major economic institutions, possess substantial and consistent political advantages due to their privileged positions both within and outside the state.

Officials who tend to hail from capitalist backgrounds or have significant professional or personal relationships with capitalists are called “inside the state.” These officials generally believe that a capitalist economy is inevitable and legitimate.

Furthermore, Miliband indicated that business has a vast supremacy outside the state structure as well, in terms of the more immense pressures it can exert in pursuit of its goals compared to labour or any other interest. Because capitalists have disproportionate access to organisational resources, they can convincingly clothe their policy demands in the public interest while threatening economic or political disruption (Miliband, 1973, cited in Howlett, 2010).

Poulantzas’ structuralism, on the other hand, maintained that the underlying features of a capitalist economy, not the state or state elites, ensure capitalism’s dominance. According to Poulantzas, the state serves as a factor of cohesiveness between the stages of social formation, acting not always in a particular capitalist’s best interests but always for the benefit of capitalists over a long period. (Poulantzas, 1978 in Howlett, 2010). Recent neo-Marxist theorists have attempted to transcend the structuralist-instrumentalist dispute.

Block’s work (2012), *Varieties of what? Should we still be using the concept of capitalism?*, is influential in contemporary neo-Marxist state theory advancements. Block, like Poulantzas, began his effort to construct a theory of the capitalist state by criticising instrumentalism. His work argued that capitalists do not directly control the state; instead, the state is directed by “state managers,” who are characterised as the highest-ranking civil workforce and appointed and elected politicians from the legislative and executive

branches. Block acknowledges capitalist influence in politics but believes Marxists must reject “the idea of a class-conscious ruling class” in favour of “a division of labour between those who accumulate capital and those who manage the state apparatus” (Block, 2012). According to Block, capitalists know the specific, short-term economic interests of their companies or sectors within this division of labour. However, in a broader sense, they lack awareness of the requirements for sustaining the social structure amidst evolving circumstances.

Block argues that the primary objective of the theory is to elucidate the mechanism through which the state invariably promotes the interests of the capitalist class, even in the presence of labour division. Block (2012) states that capitalism would be unsustainable if free-market capitalist ideology reigned supreme without state intervention. However, he explains that the structural mechanisms maintain capitalism’s dominance and that these structural mechanisms function regardless of the ruling class’ political consciousness. Instead, the state managers’ structural position in a capitalist society pushes them to develop an awareness of what is required to keep capitalism viable. Even without assuming that class-conscious capitalists rule the state, Block posits that it is pretty simple to explain why state managers hesitate to act against capitalist interests.

Although the state does not directly oversee economic production in a capitalist society, state managers rely on a robust economy for their political power and security in office (Block, 2012). The government must tax and borrow, and politicians must seek re-election from constituents who will hold

them accountable if the economy fails. Hence, state officials go out of their way to make capital accumulation easier.

Since private capitalists control most economic investment decisions, state officials know the overall level of “business confidence” or the capitalist’s assessment of the general political/economic climate. According to Block (2012), each company’s investment decisions are influenced by factors of “business confidence” such as “Is society stable; is the working class under control; are taxes likely to rise; do government agencies obstruct corporate freedom; will the economy grow?” Block defines the degree of business confidence as the sum of all these assessments across a country’s economy. Therefore, instead of pursuing social reforms or striving to extend the state’s involvement in the economy, state managers typically restrict themselves to adopting policies that generally facilitate capital accumulation and not particularly unacceptable to any significant sector of the capitalist class. Hence, states are wary of upsetting corporate confidence because they understand the importance of capitalism’s survival. Likewise, their power and positions are dependent on the continuance of the existing capitalist system. Therefore, it is in their (state officials) best interests for the capitalist system to be maintained.

Over the past two or three decades, David Harvey’s work, which Marx influenced, has played a significant role in developing neo-Marxist theory. Harvey’s alteration of Marx’s idea of “primitive accumulation,” which Marx considered a crucial aspect of how capitalism functions, is one example. The concept refers to the historical progression of separating the producers from the means of production through the privatisation of commonly shared



resources (Svarstad et al., 2018). According to Harvey (2003:149, as cited in Svarstad et al., 2018), the concept of primitive accumulation, as explained by Marx, involved the process of acquiring land, enclosing it, displacing the existing population to form a landless proletariat, and subsequently integrating the land into the privatised mainstream of capital accumulation.

The theoretical insight guides the researcher to critically investigate the power dynamics in Ghana's mining industry, considering the players involved. The theory helps in analysing the bias provisions toward the LSMs and how actors in the mining industry equally check the mining activities of both the LSM and SSM sectors to ensure that the country's ecological integrity is protected.

#### *Justification for using the two theories*

The study employs the above theories to ensure that all the research questions are answered theoretically. The world system theory and neo-Marxist theory's fundamental principles emphasise the inequality structure in international politics. In this study, the world-system theory offered the theoretical grounds for the researcher to explain the unfair treatment and inequalities between the core, represented by the multinational mining companies (MNNMC), and the peripheral, represented by the Artisanal and small-scale mining firms. The world system theory sheds light on how the continent's mineral resources are exploited within the global economic hierarchy. Also, the world system theory provides a lens to analyse the unequal power dynamics between multinational companies, governments, and local communities in the mining sector.



However, the world-system theory does not explain how the state machinery protects capitalist accumulation. Thus, the world-system theory is silent on the actors facilitating capitalist interests. Therefore, the study adopted the neo-Marxist theory to demonstrate how the state machinery, structures, and non-state actors (such as the media and civil society groups) protect the capitalist agenda against SSM activities in ensuring environmentally friendly mining. In other words, the neo-Marxist theory explains how the state, through the regulatory authorities, accepts the powers of multinational companies to influence decisions in the mining industry of Ghana. Thus, the theory helps analyse the collusion between MNCs in the mining industry and the Government of Ghana through regulatory bodies and why these institutions tend to serve the interests of the capitalist (MNCs) rather than the local communities.

These two advanced interlinking theories, with their critical perspectives, offer profound insights into the dynamics at play in Ghana's mining industry, highlighting the exploitation and inequalities inherent in the global capitalist system. Adopting these theories provides a powerful lens to critically examine the data collected, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics in Ghana's extractive industry.

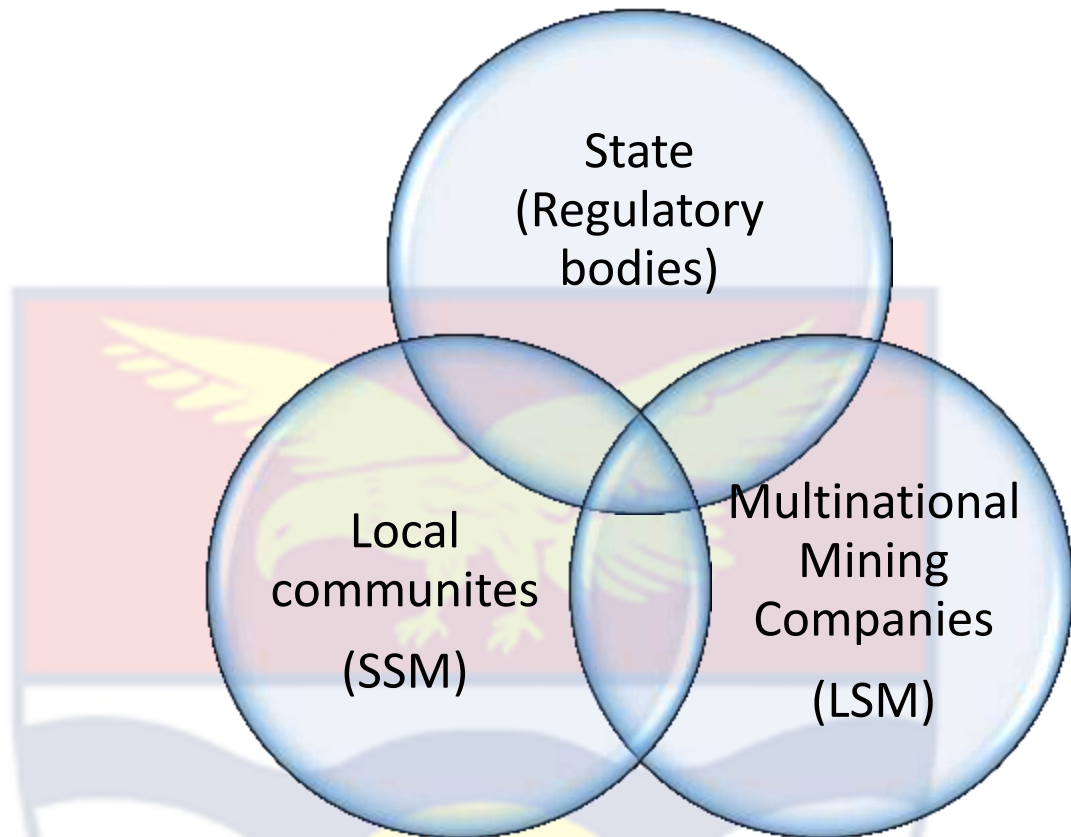
### **Conceptual Framework**

The complexity of power relations within the mining sector is widely recognised in the developing world, particularly in Africa. To delve into the nuances of power dynamics within Ghana's mining industry, I utilised a qualitative analysis to examine the profound insights of Foucault's concept of power and its dynamics. Foucault articulated that "power is the

multiplicity of force relations that are present in the domain in which they operate and that define their own structure” (1978:92, as mentioned in Christensen, 2023). He argued that power is not an asset to be obtained, captured, or divided, as it is inherently present in the milieu where humans function both as subjects and actors.

For Foucault, power should be perceived as a circulating entity or a chain in action. It is not anchored in one spot, held by anyone, nor is it a tangible asset or wealth to be possessed. Power manifests and is exerted within a network-like organisation. Individuals navigate through its crevices, constantly experiencing and exercising power. Foucault’s seminal insight on power suggests that it does not exist as a tangible object or capacity that the State, a social class, or individuals can own. Instead, power is a relational dynamic that comes into existence through its enactment among different individuals and groups.

The survival of the State fundamentally hinges on myriad intricate micro-power relations permeating all levels of the societal structure. The overarching strategies of the State are underpinned by the collaboration of a vast array of localised and individualised power tactics, with participation from every societal quarter. Power relations at various strata operate in tandem and in opposition, evolving in constant configurations. Within the scope of this research, I have embraced this concept of power to explore the dynamic interplay among the State, multinational mining companies, and indigenous communities regarding the operations in the extractive industry. The diagram below is adapted to illustrate the concept of power and how it circulates, as Foucault advocates.



*Figure 1: A diagram illustrating power dynamics among the three bodies*  
*Source: designed by the researcher, 2023.*

The diagram visually represents how power is distributed among the State, multinational mining companies, and local communities. Each circle in the diagram represents the power held by an actor. The State, viewed as a sovereign entity with the power to enact laws governing its internal affairs, is intentionally placed at the top of the diagram to signify its supreme authority. In this study, the State is modified to be represented by mining regulatory bodies such as the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Minerals Commission, and the Environmental Agency, which are responsible for formulating and enforcing laws and policies in the mining industry.

The second represents multinational mining companies operating in Ghana's mining industry. Studies such as Narula (2018), Ruggie (2018) and Kim and Milner (2019), among others, established that multinationals can

influence government decisions based on their ability to leverage their financial capability and political clout with global powers. Also, they possess the power to frequently engage in lobbying efforts and political manoeuvring to shape regulatory frameworks and secure favourable terms for their operations. Again, they are able to dictate to a host country what they want with threat and resistance and also possess the power for regulatory capture.

The local communities are represented in the other circle to demonstrate their influence on both the state and mining companies. Though they are often marginalised in decision and policy formulation, local communities are able to exert their powers through protest and other means to influence state decisions on an issue (Kirsch, 2014; Waetjen, 2004).

The overlapped circles represent the collaborative nature of power relations, which underscores the interconnectedness of all actors in the mining industry. It shows that power exercised by an entity may directly or indirectly affect others. This also illustrates Foucault's explanation of how power circulates and is exercised in a chain or network-like manner. This framework provides the lens to analyse the objectives of the study on how multinational mining companies influence the government on mining-related policies and fight against *galamsey*; and also provides the ground for discussing power dynamics in land acquisition between the local communities and multinational mining companies, which usually leads to conflicts and confrontations, and equally informs the government to intervention.

### **Multinational Companies' Influence on Host Countries**

Multinational companies (MNCs) shape the global economy and international politics. In the era of globalisation, the actions carried out by



multinational companies (MNCs) across borders have fundamentally changed the nature of international trade, investments, and the transfer of technology. Furthermore, the decisions of multinational companies have extensive implications for various policy issues in numerous countries, such as taxation, safeguarding investments, and immigration, all of which have distinct political and economic frameworks (Kim & Milner, 2019).

Liberal writers such as Norberg-Hodge (2003) and Cohen (2007), among others, see MNCs as catalysts for development, job creation, environmental sustainability, and improving underprivileged rural regions by adhering to ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities. According to Norberg-Hodge (2003), liberals favour countries that adopt their economic system and integrate into the global market. He pointed out that Taiwan, once an agricultural-based economy and even less affluent than many Sub-Saharan African countries, has undergone a remarkable transformation into a prosperous nation comparable in wealth and prosperity to Spain within fifty years due to its association with the capitalist system. Writing through the capitalist lens, liberalists such as Norberg-Hodge (2003) and Cohen (2007) believe that embracing MNCs aids the development of less developed countries.

On the contrary, anti-globalisation activists contend that contemporary globalisation has empowered multinational companies to grow in strength, power, and wealth at the expense of many host nations, especially developing countries. Anti-globalist writers such as Wilks and Nordhaug (2013) argue that MNCs' operations in their respective host nations have resulted in negative consequences. These include economic underdevelopment, high



unemployment rates, widespread suffering, human rights violations, environmental degradation, capital outflow, tax evasion, and unconstitutional regime changes. In their views, some individuals (opinion leaders) conspire with the MNCs to loot the state's resources, which leads to the underdevelopment of most resource-rich states. Thus, MNC officials and corrupt politicians perpetuate "rule-keeping and rule-breaking" corruption (Amusan, 2018).

Walters (1972 cited in Kapfer, 2006) claims that the MNCs are frequently considered instruments employed by a dominant nation (the developed state) to pursue its self-serving objectives through infiltrating and achieving "effective economic and political control" over the less developed state. Scholars such as Amin (2003), Toussaint (2008) and Chang (2010), all cited in (Amusan, 2018), stress that MNCs gain the support of international institutions such as the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank which are affiliated with the capitalist states, to exploit most host countries, especially African nations. This is congruent to the above argument made by the anti-globalists on how the developed states, through globalisation and MNCs, exploit the resources of less developed nations to achieve their "economic dominance agenda," in other words, to remain powerful over the developing states.

Recent worldwide political changes have brought multinational firms' influence in most host countries into sharp perspective. According to Kapfer (2006), multinational companies (MNCs) possess the knowledge to capitalise on changing political circumstances within the global framework and exert influence over governmental policies to gain legitimacy. The author adds that

MNCs play states against each other, compelling states to fight for investment that produces jobs and tax income.

Kim and Milner (2019) support the above assertion by arguing that the ability of MNCs to be the most significant exporters, the largest employers of highly qualified workers, and the most significant revenue generators gives them an advantageous position in any economy. This certainly gives MNCs tremendous leverage because it allows them to dictate to countries what they want. If a country does not respond positively, a multinational firm can pull out and invest in the next lowest-cost state. Babic et al. (2017) also argue that due to the advantage MNCs have in most host countries, they use states as a springboard to advance their profiteering and monopolistic goals. On neutral grounds, Vernon (2011, cited in Babic et al., 2017) points out that MNCs and states are potentially valuable to each other, yet each contains features of power and is antagonistic to the other.

Scholars such as Ruggie (2018), Narula (2018), Kim and Milner (2019) identified some key ways or channels through which MNCs exert their power and influence on the decision-making body of a host nation. These channels include direct influence through lobbying, indirect influence as an instrument of the state, and unintentional influence via their agenda-setting power. Ruggie (2018) characterised direct influence as multinational firms participating in political acts such as lobbying and making campaign contributions to enable their influence on government agencies or persuade politicians to comply with their demands. MNCs also partner with industry counterparts and political action committees to advance their objectives. The author stressed that MNCs possess the capability to leverage their negotiating

skills through the presentation of “inducements”, such as commitments to further investments, as well as “deprivations”, such as warnings of potential divestment. Kim and Milner (2019) affirm the above position by averring that there is “outside lobbying,” which entails MNCs contacting journalists, sending news releases, launching public campaigns, and organising protest demonstrations rather than engaging in face-to-face discussions with political elites.

According to Narula (2018), there is also an unintentional role in which governments use MNCs to promote national interests. The MNCs possess the capacity to dominate most host countries’ economies, especially the developing nations. Hence, governments leverage MNC production networks to amplify the impact of sanctions, use MNCs as conduits for capital transfers to strengthen monetary policies, and enlist foreign affiliates of MNCs to aid in intelligence gathering. With these engagements, MNCs are able to influence state decision-making bodies to meet their demand.

Thirdly, the presence of MNCs overseas grants them significant influence in setting agendas. Nye (1974 cited in Kim and Millner, 2019) advances that firms’ “privileged position” in the view of governments assists political leaders in defining problems, devising policies, and prioritising objectives, and through their service of assistance, they propose policies that are not in the interest of the state but favourable to their investment or agenda-setting. This implies that when governments allocate work among many departments to develop policy effectively. These agencies then engage panels and private experts from MNCs to develop policies. However, these private panels frequently include lobbyists and special interest groups with their

agendas, so what is represented in the formation of policies is not the interests of the society in question but rather those of the interest groups and lobbyists.

## **MNCs' Exploitation of Africa's Mining Industry and Ecological**

### **Ramifications**

The growing significance of multinational companies (MNCs) in the mining development of Africa cannot be underestimated. MNCs have played a vital role in extracting mineral resources in Africa, often with little concern for the consequences their activities have on the African population (Muigua, 2018). Africa possesses over 30% of the world's mineral reserves, 10% of the world's oil, and 8% of the world's natural gas (Edwards et al., 2014; Oyier, 2017). Disappointingly, the richness of mineral resources has yet to translate into national prosperity for most African countries. It appears that foreigners are enjoying the continent's rich resources. Hence, it is tempting to point fingers squarely at the multinational companies that dominate Africa's extractive industries. It is not arguable that if the extractive industries are handled well, transparently, and with concern for community needs and the environment, the issue of poverty crippling the African continent can be drastically reduced, increasing shared wealth.

Muigua (2018) contends that MNCs usually enter into contracts with states to extract mineral resources after negotiations. When entering into these discussions, multinational firms usually attempt to make the most cost-effective decisions from the projects, often done to the detriment of the host nation. The author reveals that concession contracts are usually written so that the firms have unrestricted access to natural resources, with no room for future revisions by the host state. As a result, MNCs have been indicted for taking



advantage of developing nations' frail legal systems to evade punishment when they breach laws. Hence, it can be argued that MNCs' "unrestricted" access to the host nations' natural resources makes them exploitative actors.

The preceding argument supports Oyier's (2017) opinion that multinational firms leverage their financial power and collaborate with some state officials to thwart judicial processes filed against them, ensuring that they are not held accountable for crimes they are responsible for. It is therefore unsurprising that multinational companies are growing powerfully in most developing countries and gaining popularity internationally; while resource-rich countries, particularly African states, remain impoverished and underdeveloped. This is consistent with Axford (2013), among other scholars, who state that MNCs aid Africa's underdevelopment through the unequal exchange embedded in the arrangement pushed forward by advanced economies. Thus, the net outcome of multinational operations in raw material extraction and manufacture is the accumulation of "excess" earnings that multinationals repatriate to their home countries, which has a detrimental effect on the balance of payments of the host country. To put it differently, the ability of a country to create a local capital market, foster indigenous firms, and develop an autonomous technological foundation is undermined by the outflow of national wealth by the MNCs.

Again, Oyier (2017) recounted how MNCs' operations in Africa's extractive industry have led to numerous environmental pollution. He backed his claims by stating that Shell (a multinational company) has been accused of spilling over 6.4 million gallons of oil in the Niger Delta over the last 30 years. To support this argument, Mensah et al. (2015) and Usman-Kaku et al.



(2021) demonstrate that large-scale exploitation of mineral resources through sophisticated machinery in operations such as clearing sites, drilling, and blasting has resulted in environmental degradation. These include deforestation and desertification, air pollution, and water contamination. Such activities and their outcomes have led to the loss of arable lands for agricultural use and habitat loss for animals. These have resulted in profound health and livelihood implications for indigenes and environmental deformation.

Kamunda et al. (2016) indicate that mining activities in South Africa's Witwatersrand basin cause heavy metal contamination in the ecosystem, negatively influencing the human food chain. The writers specified that mining is linked to various health issues in children, including tuberculosis, itchy skin, coughing, and diarrhoea. Hagos et al. (2016) concurred with the above findings by averring that mining activities in Asgede Tsimbla, Ethiopia's Tigray regional state, have reduced river surface water flows, evaporation of groundwater, and river siltation in the region. Again, mining activities have led to the depletion of agricultural lands in locations such as the Indian state of Orissa, which used to be the primary source of income. Hence, delisting MNCs for environmental violations becomes challenging since most African governments are disadvantaged in negotiating. He alleges that most African states often weigh the potential loss of jobs and revenue, and in most circumstances, state institutions responsible for the environment overlook the environmental damage caused by MNCs' extractive activities.

## Traditional Acquisition of Land in Ghana

As far as mining involves the acquisition of a sizeable land area for operation, it is necessary for the study to give a brief insight into traditional ownership and acquisition of land. In most African countries, large-scale land acquisitions for commercial purposes have become a point of contention between the state and traditional leaders of resource-rich societies. About 80% of Ghana's land is held in traditional ownership (Abubakari et al., 2016). Most African societies view customary ownership of the land as a way to maintain communal harmony and as a significant spiritual entity that all people, including the dead, the living, and the unborn, have a right to own (Abubakari et al., 2016). The customary land system comprises various interests, including allodial, usufructuary, share tenancy, and leasing (Ahmed et al., 2018).

The allodial interests in traditional lands are held by chiefs, clan leaders, and family heads as trustees (Acheampong, 2014, cited in Ahmed et al., 2018). This position is found in chiefdoms and is distinguished by a strong central political structure with a hierarchy that extends from the king to paramount chiefs, divisional chiefs, and even caretaker chiefs. Among the Akans of Ghana, these caretaker chiefs are locally known as *Odikro* (Abubakari et al., 2016).

During the colonial era, the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS), founded by an alliance of chiefs, intellectual elites, and businesses in Ghana in 1897, played a crucial role in defending African land rights from the British Crown. This alliance, along with the development of the Native Administration system, led to the emergence of a 'neo-traditional elite' in the Gold Coast. Chiefs, in particular, took on the responsibility of supervising land

distribution for various purposes, demonstrating their resilience and adaptability in the face of colonial pressures (Amanor, 2009).

However, during the decolonisation process, Nkrumah's attempt to outlaw the institution of chieftaincy in the late 1950s disrupted the powers of the chiefs. That notwithstanding, subsequent governments following Nkrumah's era maintained the traditional system of land ownership and tenure established during colonial times. This upheld the authority of chiefs and their traditional councils to control land access and further strengthened their authority (Bebbington et al., 2017). Given their position within their communities, chiefs have been entrusted with the responsibility of being custodians of the land, as dictated by customary and statutory laws. As incorporated in Article 267 (1) of the 1992 Constitution, all stool lands in Ghana shall be owned by the respective stools on behalf of and in trust for the subjects of the stool, in accordance with customary law and practices. Hence, chiefs effectively serve as stewards of the land and have a duty to make decisions on behalf of their subjects following the local traditions and customs.

### **The Mining Development of Ghana**

Ghana's Minerals and Mining Policy (2014) chronicled the country's mining development. The practice of mining, particularly for gold, can be traced back to the fifteenth century. During the pre-independence era, when mining policy was generally aimed at supporting and advancing the extraction of minerals to serve the interests of colonial powers, the industry was thriving. Subsequently, between 1493 and 1600, Ghana witnessed the operation of over thirty gold mines, which resulted in the country contributing 36 percent of the

global gold production, totalling 8,153,426 fine ounces. Despite not directly intervening in land management, the colonial administration successfully monopolised and controlled the gold resources by forbidding small-scale gold mining in 1905 and granting exclusive rights to foreign mining companies (Amanor, 2009).

During the post-independence period, state ownership of mineral resources dominated. However, except for a few instances of growth immediately after independence and in the early 1970s, the industry remained stagnant until 1983. The underperformance in production, specifically in the gold sector, can be attributed to various factors such as unfavourable global market conditions, investor apprehension regarding the security of their investments during Ghanaian self-governance, and the deterioration of equipment caused by the unavailability of foreign exchange to procure essential spare parts for mining machinery, among other reasons (Ghana's Minerals and Mining Policy, 2014).

The 1980s saw the structural and legal development of Ghana's mining industry. During the World Bank/IMF-directed Economic Recovery Program (ERP) (1983–1986), the Ghana government allowed foreign direct investment into the mining sector (Anyidoho & Crawford, 2014). The ERP was a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) that called upon the government to instil confidence in foreign investors by reforming the economy's institutional and legal framework, including the mining sector, as it had been done in several African nations during that period (Bourgouin, 2011). As a result of the program, the mining industry underwent liberalisation and privatisation, along with other state-owned enterprises (Hilson, 2004). Subsequently, the



government privatised its gold mines, which had previously been nationalised after gaining independence (Tsuma, 2010).

Consequently, the Minerals and Mining Law (PNDC Law 153) was enacted in 1986 to facilitate and regulate the systematic expansion of the mining industry (Mineral Commission, 2015). The PNDC Law 153 was acknowledged as one of the best models of mining practices, and it eventually became the primary mining legislation in Sub-Saharan Africa. The development led to the creation of the Minerals Commission in 1986, serving as a mining investment hub to attract and streamline foreign investment (Akabzaa, 2009). The Minerals Commission is specifically endowed with constitutional authority to regulate, supervise, and guide the government on natural resource usage and coordinate mineral policies. It also aims to provide a one-stop shop for mineral investors, reducing the hassles of complex transactions (Addison & Roe, 2018).

From the mid-1980s on, foreign mining companies from South Africa, the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, among others, flocked to Ghana, gaining more land concessions for large-scale gold mining (Anyidoho & Crawford, 2014). These firms are mostly privately held (largely foreign companies), with the government holding a 10% free share and a 20% option (Jenkins & Obara, 2006, p. 23).

In furtherance, the Small-Scale Gold Mining Law (PNDC Law 218), Mercury Law (PNDC Law 217), and Precious Minerals Marketing Company Law (PNDC Law 219) were all passed in 1989 to regulate and streamline small-scale gold mining as well as create formal marketing channels for gold generated by small-scale miners (Hilson & Potter, 2005; Mineral Commission,



2015). The initiative was taken after the state discovered that the small-scale mining sector, which existed centuries ago, generates more employment for the citizens, foreign exchange, and exports in Ghana (Hilson, 2003). This restricted the small-scale mining sector to Ghanaians only (Faanu, 2017). The decision resulted in massive investments and a significant increase in gold production in the country.

The PNDCL 153 was subsequently revised in 2006 to the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703). The motivation was to improve the economic incentive of mining for the state (Antwi, 2014). Under the current legislative framework (Act 703), the president of Ghana holds all minerals on behalf of and in trust for the people of Ghana. Thus, all minerals found within Ghana's territorial boundaries, encompassing both land and sea areas, including its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), are regarded as national assets, irrespective of the ownership of the land or subsoil where they are located. This is backed by *Article 257* of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. In addition, the exercise of any mineral right requires a licence from the government's mining minister, who acts as the state's agent in issuing mineral rights. As stipulated in Act 703, although the sector minister has the authority to issue, transfer, revise, extend, cancel, or define licenses, the Minerals Commission advises and influences his decision.

Ghana's current existing legislative framework for the mining industry is made up of the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) (amended in 2010 (Act 794) and 2015 (Act 900)), the Minerals and Mining Law of 1986 (PNDC Law 153) as revised by the Minerals and Mining Act of 1994 (Act 475), and the 1992 Constitution (Arkorful et al., 2018). Ghana's mining industry is

overseen by the Minerals Commission, which operates within the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. The Commission was founded under the 1992 Constitution and the Minerals Commissions Act of 1993 (Act 450) (Hira & Busumtwi-Sam, 2018). The Environmental Protection Agency, which focuses on the environmental implications of mining, also supports the Minerals Commission.

Scholars like Ofori-Mensah and Rutherford (2011) have criticised some provisions in Act 703. Key among them is the abolishment of the additional tax. According to them, eliminating additional taxes in the new Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) is detrimental to the state because Ghana will miss out on a share of the investor's extraordinary profits when global commodities prices boom. This criticism arose following the 2008 IMF assessment, which revealed that the country's revised mining policy had decreased reserves and budgetary revenues. This decline was attributed to the excessively favourable incentives offered to investors to stimulate investment. Similarly, the Africa Centre for Energy Policy report (2016) describes Ghana's mining fiscal system as a "regressive" one. According to the report, mining firms (LSMs) enjoy more tax incentives, which are disadvantage to the state. The table below gives the summary of the various mining laws in Ghana's extractive industry cited in the study.

**Table 1: Summary of the Mining Regulation Policies of Ghana**

Regulative policy	Date	Objective
Mineral and Mining Act (PNDC Law 153)	1986	It was enacted to promote and regulate the orderly development of the mining sector.
Mercury Law (PNDC Law 217)	1989	To regulate the purchase and use of mercury by small-scale gold miners.
The Small-Scale Gold Mining Law (PNDC Law 218)	1989	It was sanctioned to regularise and streamline or give legal credence to small-scale gold mining.
Precious Minerals Marketing Corporation Law (PNDC Law 219)	1989	The law was legislated to promote the development of small-scale gold and diamond mining in Ghana and for purchasing the output of such mining, either directly or through licensed buyers.
Mineral and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703)	2006	The new Act was enacted to improve the economic incentives of mining for the state.

*Source:* Compiled by the researcher (2022)

### **Mining Implication on Ghana's Ecology**

Mining activities, in general, significantly impact ecosystem destruction, regardless of the size of the operating sector (large or small scale, legal or illegal). Scholars such as Awudi (2002) and Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah (2019) have argued that mining activities have destroyed most of the country's vegetation. These studies revealed that large-scale surface mines have degraded vast swaths of land, seriously threatening local agriculture and economic existence. In other words, the massive size of the excavations has resulted in a complete transformation of the land, making it unsuitable for agricultural use and other forms of subsistence. They discovered that in the Tarkwa area alone, surface mining concessions have taken up 70% of the land.

Subsequently the situation depopulated over 14 settlements with a combined population of nearly 30,000 between 1990 and 1998. This indicates the seriousness of the environmental consequences mining poses to various mining communities.

Similarly, Okyere et al. (2021) state that large-scale mining operations are destroying and reducing the forest and agricultural lands in the Bogoso-Prestea, Tarkwa, and Damang areas. Again, Obeng et al. (2019) note that the forest ecology in the Bibiani Forest Reserve has been greatly affected by both large-scale and small-scale mining activities in the Bibiani Municipality. Boadi et al. (2016) also observed that mining activities had resulted in the loss of 2.5 km sq of the Offin shelterbelt forest reserve, accounting for 4.4 percent of the overall forest reserve. They found that the forest reserve is expected to degrade at a rate of 0.88 percent yearly due to mining activities. These studies show that mining activities have played a significant role in the rapid degradation of the reserve. Intriguingly, mining companies have drained almost 86 percent of the forest cover and farmlands in other parts of Ghana, such as the Ahafo region (Kumi et al., 2021).

Emmanuel et al. (2018) did a comprehensive assessment of the impact of mining on water bodies. They found that the impact of mining operations on Ghana's water sources has been increasing due to heavy metal contamination, leaching, erosion, and sedimentation. They noted that mining activities have severely contaminated the water quality of the river Offin and its tributaries, which serve as a major water source for the communities around. The assertion above confirms Serfor-Armah et al.'s (2006) findings, which revealed that in Prestea and its environs, there are high arsenic and



antimony concentrations of 0.90–8.25 ppm and 0.09–0.75 ppm, respectively. According to Serfor-Armah et al. (2006), these exceed the levels the World Health Organisation recommends of 0.01 and 0.005 ppm, respectively. Again, several cases of spillage in water bodies were caused by large mining firms such as Newmont Ghana, Golden Star Resources Bogoso/Prestea Limited, and others (Singh et al., 2007). These have majorly contributed to the country's continuous pollution of rivers and water bodies.

The literature reveals that mining depletes the environment, which affects host populations. Extraction activities by both LSMs and SSMS have contributed to the contamination of major rivers and the destruction of farms and virgin lands in mining areas and across the country. These environmental damages persist in most mining communities and have significant implications on the health and livelihood of these communities and largely on the state. Therefore, the state authorities responsible for mining activities need to deal with the environmental situations associated with mining holistically, devoid of partiality.

### **Perceived Bias in the Mining Industry**

Hilson (2017) argues that there is a prevalent bias towards large-scale mining in the government's approach to policy concerning the artisanal and small-scale mining sector. He indicated that the World Bank's Strategy for African Mining report advocated against providing preferential treatment to the small-scale mining sector, which employs both skilled and unskilled workers. Thus, they have no reason to accord the sector differential access to mineral rights. This aligns with Alhassan's (2014) assertion that there is a consistent pattern worldwide, where many governments view the small-scale



sector as illegal and actively seek to outlaw it through legislative measures and other approaches. As a result, there is a lack of proper regulation and often complete neglect of the subsector. It is evident from the above assertions that there is an attempt by the leaders of the African states to make the SSM sector unattractive to the general public based on the directives from the World Bank. It also explains the rationale behind the generous tax incentives given to the LSM sector under the Minerals and Mining Acts (PNDC Law 153 and Act 703) and the unformalised nature of the small-scale mining sector.

Given this, Hilson (2017) advances that governments in the Sub-Saharan African region, which have adopted such an approach, have created regulatory instruments and policy frameworks that hinder rather than promote the growth or formalisation of small-scale mining firms. This affirms Amanor's (2009) observation that many informal sector gold miners faced criminalising their livelihoods as gold-mining concessions, which they had been exploiting, had been assigned to large-scale mining companies.

Unsurprisingly, artisanal and small-scale mining firms in Ghana and other African states lack the incentive to abandon the traditional system and participate in a licensing process that is considered arduous, time-consuming, and costly (Sauerwein, 2023). The government's licencing procedure for SSMs involves a tedious bureaucratic process to complete several forms and obtain final approval from government officials (Hilson, 2001; Van Bockstael, 2019; Sauerwein, 2020). The above claims make it obvious that the state mining authorities prioritise or give urgent attention to the LSM firms. This prioritisation in the industry is gradually amounting to the monopolisation of the mining industry by multinational mining companies (MNMCS).

Engels (2016) posits that the mining laws in most African mining states distinguish between exploration permits and concessions granted for industrial mining, as well as concessions for semi-industrial and artisanal mining extraction. Engels (2016) used examples from Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Tanzania to illustrate how state policies, whether directly or indirectly, favouring large-scale mining have significantly restricted access to land for small-scale mining. Additionally, the rights of small-scale miners are frequently not explicitly stated in mining and land legislation. As a result, conflicts are frequently sparked by forced relocation and poor remuneration (Engels, 2016).

Also, his work demonstrates the poor representation of local indigenes and land users in the procedures for obtaining exploration licences and mining concessions. The absence of institutional channels for the artisanal workers and indigenes illustrates the politics and favouritism of the state agencies against the SSM sector. However, the work failed to recognise how the MNCs in the mining field influence powerful actors to act in their favour. This study fills that gap by unearthing how the MNCs influence state and non-state actors to rally behind their exploitative agenda.

Akabzaa (2009) advances that Ghana's mining legislative framework was created with the World Bank's "technical assistance" and under the Bank's continent-wide mining strategy. The legislation and policy framework incorporates various incentives favourable to foreign mining companies (LSM firms), such as reduced taxes and royalty payments, low import duties on equipment, the ability to retain high revenue, and the freedom to repatriate profits (Akabzaa, 2009; Akabzaa & Darimani, 2001; Aryee, 2001; Tsikata,

1997). The World Bank provided significant “financial and technical assistance” in the drafting of the Minerals and Mining Act (Act 703) of 2006, which revised and replaced the 1986 PNDCL 153 (Akabzaa, 2009). In general, the fiscal provisions outlined in the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) were more advantageous for foreign mining companies. These provisions encompassed several changes, including a decrease in corporate income tax from 35 percent to 25 per cent, a revision in royalties from a range of 3 to 12 percent to a range of 3 to 6 per cent, and the elimination of the additional profit tax of 25 percent (Akabzaa, 2009, p. 40).

These tax incentives given to multinational companies in the mining field indicate how the Minerals and Mining Acts (PNDC Law 153, updated to Act 703) were designed to milk the country’s extractive minerals by the powerful states through the World Bank, IMF, and other international financial institutions and some elites of the state. Again, the fact that little or no such incentives were extended to the SSM sector indicates how the state prioritised the LSM over the SSM. With the above premise, it is fair to conclude that such prioritisation is an agenda to eliminate or reduce the relevancy of the domestic players (SSM) in the industry. The policy structure directed by the World Bank in the mining industry in favour of the LSM sector illustrates the politics and capitalist dominance detrimental to the SSM firms and mining communities.

### **The ‘Supposed’ Fight against *Galamsey* Activities**

The escalating environmental degradation caused by mining operations has triggered a series of reactions from the government of Ghana over the last two decades in an attempt to curtail the situation and protect its ecological

integrity. These reactions have received a commendation from a large section of the public. However, the blame for environmental destruction in the mining sector appears to have shifted to the artisanal and small-scale mining sector's activities. State and non-state actors are heavily involved in the fight against illicit mining. State actors include security agencies, an inter-ministerial committee, and the Minerals Commission. Non-state actors, on the other hand, comprise the media, civil society organisations (CSOs), and other social groups. This section discusses the fight against SSMs' (*galamsey*) activities under the pretext of ensuring environmental protection.

According to Anyidoho and Crawford (2014), Hilson (2017), and Eduful et al. (2020), the Ghana Chamber of Mines funded the national government to launch the first anti-*galamsey* taskforce, *Fight against Illegal Mining*, in 2006. Similarly, *Operation Flush-Out* and *Operation Vanguard* (a special task force comprising the police and army) were instituted in 2013 and 2017, respectively. The latter operation led to a blanket ban on the SSM sector and clamped down on their activities. During the initial phase of the ban, approximately 4,000 military officers were mobilised to visit all *galamsey* sites across the country, with a strong focus on enforcing the prohibition of small-scale mining (SSM) activities. Both recognised and unrecognised SSM firms were stopped from operating. To some extent, SSM workers were physically abused, and the task force seized or destroyed properties (mining equipment) of small-scale mining firms.

Ironically, the sponsors of the first task force and probably the subsequent "operations" (Ghana Chamber of Mines) are the body of the large-scale firms in the mining industry. As pointed out by Serfor-Armah et al.



(2006), Emmanuel et al. (2018), and Obeng et al. (2019), among other studies, the LSM firms cause severe environmental destruction in the process of their mining activities. Nevertheless, they sponsored the fight against SSMs pretending to protect the ecosystem. This illustrates how multinational mining companies that dominate the LSM sector, through their “perceived generosity to the state”, covered up the ecological destructions they cause. The authors were silent on how sponsorships and other benefits from the LSMs to the state are used as a powerful tool to influence effective checks and balances to ensure ecosystem protection. This study fills the gap by demonstrating how MNMCs use their financial might and expertise to influence the formulation and implementation of mining policies and the fight against illicit gold mining in the industry.

In other aspects, Ayelazuno (2011) and Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah (2019) argue that there has been a series of media campaigns and state biases against the SSM sector. They explained this bias by stressing that over the years, SSM has been regarded as a threat that must be confronted and defeated for the sake of society. While LSM firms, which are viewed as a source of FDI and revenue for the government, must be supported and enticed to invest in the country through lucrative incentives. Agobzo and Spassov (2019) substantiate the aforesaid claim that in 2017, there was a culmination effort by members of the public spearheaded by the media with the hashtag #StopGalamseyNow, putting pressure on the Ghanaian government to address the environmental issues associated with the SSMs activities due to the rampant destruction of the ecology.



However, there is no such pressure from the public and the media about the massive destruction caused by the LSM firms. The state, private individuals, and groups ascribe almost all the ecological destruction to SSMs' activities. This confirms the earlier submissions that both state and non-state agencies capitalise on the activities of the SSMs but remain silent regarding the environmental catastrophes caused by the LSM sector. It also raises the question of the effectiveness of bodies responsible for checking the mining activities of both sectors to ensure ecosystem protection.

Afriyie et al. (2016) noted that the activities of small-scale miners (SSMs) are frequently regarded as more environmentally damaging due to heightened scrutiny from both the media and the public. In contrast, large-scale mining (LSM) companies limit access to their operations, thereby concealing the environmental harm they inflict. Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah (2019) confirmed this assertion by stating that rather than implementing similar strict measures against LSMs, the government opted to deploy soldiers to protect the security checkpoints of LSM companies, thereby guaranteeing continuous security for their operations. This makes it difficult for the media and other civil groups to assess the activities of the LSM's operations. The above claims make it evident that the multinational mining firms in the industry do not open themselves up for criticism due to the support from both state machinery and non-state actors. This makes it difficult to reveal and question the environmental hazards the LSMs cause to the ecosystem.

Nyame and Blocher's (2010) work focuses on the relationships between artisanal and small-scale miners, large-scale miners, and local

communities. They found that the main issues between SSM and LSM companies arise from the marginalisation and criminalisation of SSM due to their lack of unrestricted access to mineralised land. Their submission emphasises the competition between the LSM and SSM firms over land to operate.

As indicated in a paper presented by George Awudi to the OECD in 2002, he highlighted that the efforts of small-scale miners to coexist with large-scale companies frequently lead to violent clashes between the local population and the major mining companies. The paper argues that though the LSMs perform their corporate social responsibilities (CSR) to mining communities, the local population sees it as inadequate compared to the benefit they derive from small-scale mining (Awudi, 2002). As part of the study's objectives, it critically examines the developmental impact of mining firms on mining communities.

Akabzaa and Darimani (2001) observe that over the years, the Ghanaian government has expropriated specific lands from indigenous communities and granted them as concessions to multinational mining companies, with minimal or no compensation for the original landowners, leading to impoverishment among the affected individuals. Similarly, Engels (2016) gives empirical evidence from Burkina Faso on how the state seized lands or concessions belonging to the artisanal miners and given to large-scale mining companies. In most cases, the situation leads to the displacement of small-scale mining operators and agricultural and land-based activities, resulting in livelihood issues and eventually leading to illegal mining in most mining communities. The literature failed to illustrate how the acquisition of

land by mining companies contributes to *galamsey* activities. Hence, this study fills the gap by examining how the acquisition of land and power play in the industry contribute to illegal gold mining.

### Chapter Summary

The chapter examined the theories underpinning the study and discussed the concept of power dynamics, multinational companies, and their influence on host nations. It explained multinational companies and mineral resource exploitation in Africa. Again, the chapter highlighted Ghana's mining development, the mining industry's legislative instruments, and the measures taken to protect the environment. The literature reviewed indicates that the government's measures to protect the ecosystem appear to be counter-productive because they are directed toward the small-scale mining sector, which does not employ more toxins and sophisticated equipment than the large-scale mining sector. Also, most of the literature on the study focuses on the SSM sector, while less or no attention is given to the environmental damage caused by the LSMs' mining activities. Hence, the study fills the gap by unearthing the power relations within the mining industry as the state fights illegal mining and makes an effort to ensure the protection of the ecosystem.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

The methods and procedures employed for the investigation are described in this chapter. Various topics covered in this chapter include the research approach, research design, the study area, sampling technique, data collection tools, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### Research Approach

The major research approaches in social research are quantitative and qualitative methodology. The quantitative approach focuses on determining and analysing causal relationships between variables rather than processes (Neuman, 2000). It makes use of numerical data and statistical instruments in its analysis. Quantitative researchers follow a straight line and are likelier to utilise explicit, standardised methodologies and a causal explanation.

The quantitative research approach necessitates the utilisation of a pre-existing standardised tool, which classifies participants' diverse viewpoints and experiences into pre-determined response categories (Yilmaz, 2013). This approach enables researchers to obtain a comprehensive and generalisable collection of results and present them concisely and efficiently. Nevertheless, these methods do not provide insights into the participants' personal experiences because they rely on a deductive approach and pre-determined standardised responses based on theory. The quantitative approach restricts respondents from expressing their emotions, thoughts, perspectives, and experiences using their own languages (Yilmaz, 2013).



In contrast, Creswell (2012) defines qualitative research as a method for investigating and understanding the meanings individuals or groups attribute to a social problem within human interactions. Shank (2002:5) also states that qualitative research is “a systematic empirical inquiry into meaning.” That is the order and organised way a researcher follows to investigate a situation based on personal experience. Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach concerns process, context, interpreting meaning, or understanding through inductive reasoning when investigating a phenomenon.

Yilmaz (2013) asserts that qualitative research methods aim to understand the meaning of a phenomenon by collecting and analysing data in its natural context. This is done through observation, interviews, and other methods that allow researchers to document and present participants’ experiences in their own words. This supports Denzin and Lincoln’s (2011) position that a qualitative method enables the researcher to investigate objects in their natural context while striving to understand or interpret occurrences in terms of the meanings they bring to them. It is worth emphasising that qualitative research seeks to comprehend the research topic through the lens of the interviewees, examining how and why they arrived at specific conclusions or concentrated on particular problems within specific contexts (Cropley, 2015; Stake, 1994). Based on this objective, qualitative approaches require an in-depth study of a phenomenon or people in their natural settings, avoiding standardisation and pre-determined categories of analysis (Yilmaz, 2013). Therefore, the open-ended response from the participants in qualitative research allows the researcher to comprehend and present issues as seen and



experienced by the participants without pre-determining those standpoints.

Given the nature and objective of this study, the researcher considered the qualitative method more suitable than the quantitative method. Therefore, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach for the study. This is because the researcher aimed to engage the respondents face-to-face to conduct an in-depth interview to extract information on how multinational firms influence the mining authorities regarding policies, regulations, and implementation to determine the power relations in the industry. Because the information gathered through qualitative research was drawn from the interviewees' statements, it aided the researcher in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Qualitative methods allowed for a richer and more detailed understanding of interpreting phenomena and permitted a deeper data analysis (Stake, 1994). Per the study's objectives, the researcher deemed the qualitative approach appropriate to explore and extract relevant information from participants to ascertain the power dynamic in the mining industry.

### **Research Design**

The study employed a case study research design. According to Simons (2009:21), a case study involves thoroughly investigating the intricacies and distinctiveness of a specific project, policy, institution, program, or system, considering multiple perspectives within a "real-life" context. Furthermore, Creswell (2009) describes a case study as a method where the researcher examines one or multiple cases over time, collecting detailed and comprehensive data from various sources, and presenting a description of the case along with the themes derived from it. As Yin (2009)

indicated, a case study permits multiple data sources, including interviews, observation, newspapers, journals, publications, and other relevant materials. Therefore, adopting a case study design for this research enabled the researcher to investigate multinational mining companies' influence on mining policies and the power relations in the mining industry by relying on multiple sources of information. Thus, the case study design aided the researcher in exploring rich information from multiple sources. The multiple data sources, such as interviews and secondary materials, equipped the researcher to understand the influences and power relations in the mining industry. This validates the credibility and reliability of the final work.

Despite some drawbacks, such as time limitations, a small sample size, and the potential for biased interpretation, the researcher considered the case study design the most suitable for this study. This choice was made because the design offered a robust framework for exploring ideas and variables for data analysis. As Spicer (2004) indicated, employing the case study design allowed the researcher to be more flexible and adapt to changes as the research progressed.

### **Study Area**

The Western Region is situated in the southwestern part of Ghana, sharing borders with the Central Region to the east, Côte d'Ivoire to the west, the Western North Region to the north, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. It covers approximately 2,391 square kilometres, accounting for about 10% of Ghana's total land area. The Western Region has a tropical climate with high humidity and average temperatures ranging from 25 to 30 degrees Celsius. The region receives an average annual rainfall of 1,600 millimetres. The

vegetation in the region is mostly made up of high forest, which covers about 75% of the region (PHC, 2010). The 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) established that the region has a population of 2,060,585. Of this population, 1,045,227 (52.3%) are females, and 1,015,358 (47.7%) are males. Ages under 15 constitute 39.6%, 15-64 constitute 57.0%, and the remaining 3.4% are persons 65 and above.

The region possesses abundant natural resources, such as cocoa, rubber, coconuts, and oil palm, making it the country's leading producer of these crops. Additionally, the region's tropical forests contribute significantly to producing raw and processed wood products, including a substantial amount of sawn timber. These natural resources serve as a significant economic driver for the region and the country. Likewise, the region is endowed with various minerals, such as gold, bauxite, iron, diamonds, and manganese, which are either currently being exploited or hold potential for future exploitation. The Western Region stands as the country's second-largest gold producer, following the Ashanti Region, and holds the potential to become the leading producer in this sector. The region's geological profile and untapped mineral potential are yet to be fully determined.

The region was purposely selected due to its mineral richness and several mining activities. The study focused on three of the fourteen districts: Tarkwa-Nsuaem, Mpohor, and Ellembelle. These areas are home to several LSM and SSM companies because of abundant mineral resource deposits. More importantly, the region's fights against *galamsey* are becoming more intense due to overwhelming illegal mining activities. Hence, relying on the region for data to examine power dynamics in the mining industry is

appropriate. The figure below shows the geographical location of the study areas.

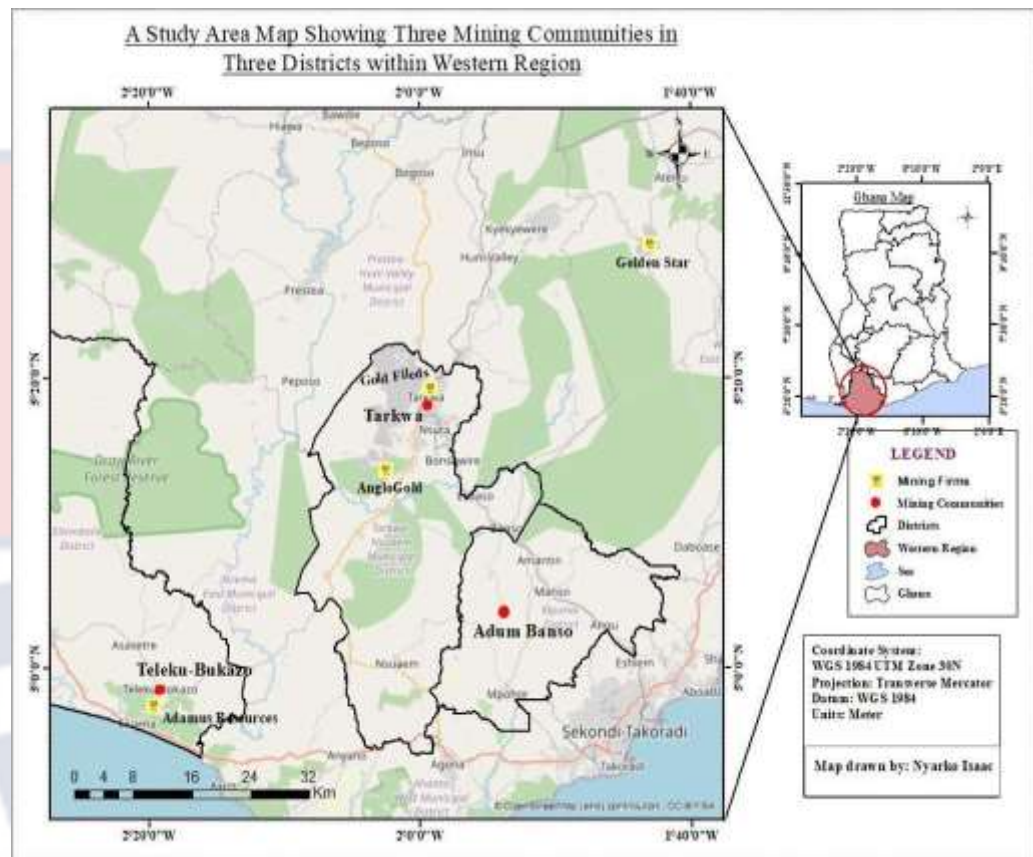


Figure 2: Map showing the Western Region with Districts and Capitals  
Source: Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC

### Sampling Procedure

According to Brink (2001), a sample is the component of the overall population or fraction of a whole selected by the researcher to participate in research work. Thus, sampling comprises a careful survey of a chosen proportion of a unit regarding a phenomenon, which knowledge and experience acquired from the study by the part will be generalised to the whole. The targeted institutions for this study comprised various state and non-state institutions relevant to the mining industry. These institutions include the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), the Minerals Commission (MinCom), the Forestry Commission (FC), Environmental



Protection Agency (EPA), the Ghana Chamber of Mines (GCM)/LSM firms, the Ghana Association of Small-Scale Miners (GNASSM)/SSM firms, The Tarkwa Traditional Council; Non-state actors engaged include Wacam, A Rocha Ghana, and the Media Coalition Against Galamsey (MCAG).

The researcher employed a purposive sampling technique to select participants for the study. This method involves selecting individuals based on their knowledge or expertise in a specific field (Tongo, 2007). The aim of purposive sampling in qualitative research is to meticulously select and examine a limited number of individuals or unique cases, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the people, programmes, cases, and situations being investigated (Yilmaz, 2013). Purposive sampling was the appropriate technique for this study as it allowed the researcher to identify participants with valuable insights into the mining industry. Thus, it enabled the researcher to select participants based on their extensive knowledge, qualities, and expertise in the mining field.

The study purposely engaged participants who were field officers and heads of departments from the mentioned institutions. These people possessed rich information due to their daily engagement with mining firms and activities on-site. Firstly, field officers and administrative heads from MLNR, MinCom, and EPA were selected because they are the bodies mandated by the state to regulate the mining industry to ensure safety and ecosystem protection. Therefore, the participants from these institutions possess first-hand information on the happenings in the industry. They provided tremendous insight into mining policy formulation and regulations, land acquisition, and monitoring measures in the mining industry.

Also, the researcher engaged officials from the Ghana Chamber of Mines (GCM) because it is the umbrella body for large-scale mining companies, which serves as a mouthpiece for the LSMs. Likewise, the Ghana Association of Small-Scale Miners (GNASSM) was selected due to their direct engagement with the SSMs. To complement information obtained from the above bodies, environmental and corporate officers of some LSM firms in the study area were contacted. As well as leaders in small-scale mining, both legal and illegal, were also engaged to solicit their views on the study. Engaging these participants was important in addressing the influence and power relations in the mining industry and diverse views on the fight against *galamsey*.

Again, participants from non-state actors, such as Wacam, were selected based on their consistent advocacies to ensure justice for the local farmers and indigenes whose livelihoods are affected due to mining activities in most mining communities in Ghana. Similarly, an officer from A Rocha Ghana was engaged due to their active participation and constant pressure on the government and state's regulatory bodies to preserve Ghana's forest reserves and the ecology from destruction. In addition, the researcher had a face-to-face interaction with some media persons who work as investigative journalists and have successfully covered and reported on the impact of *galamsey* on the ecology of Ghana. These were important, especially in achieving the third objective, which sought to examine how state and non-state actors check the activities of LSM and SSM firms to ensure environmentally friendly mining.

Finally, the researcher engaged elders from the Tarkwa Traditional Council. Their engagement was necessary because most of the country's LSM and SSM firms are in the area. More importantly, the surrounding communities are the immediate victims of the numerous environmental pollution occasioned by mining activities. Therefore, the views of the traditional leaders in the area were crucial to ascertain the role of traditional leaders in granting concessions to mining firms, the benefits they derive from mining firms, and their position in the fight against *galamsey*.

All participants mentioned were purposively sampled because they possessed the rich knowledge and expertise relevant to the study. Moreover, selecting these participants was crucial as they enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive and diverse information from stakeholders with expertise in the mining industry. The total targeted sample size for the study was 30; however, 20 participants were interviewed from the above institutions.

**Table 2: Targeted Sample and the Number of People Interviewed**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Targeted Number</b>	<b>Number interviewed</b>
MLNR	3	2
MinCom	3	1
EPA	3	3
GCM	2	1
WACAM	2	1
A Rocha Ghana	2	1
Media Persons	3	2
GNASSM (3 SSMs)	7	5
LSM (3 firms)	3	3
Traditional Leaders	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>

*Source:* Compiled by the researcher (2022)

### **Source of Data**

The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of information. The researcher accessed physical libraries and online sources to retrieve the relevant literature on the subject under study. Books, journals, and research reports were secondary data sources. Secondary data were crucial to laying the foundation for the study to critically analyse the power dynamics in the mining industry as far as the MNMC and the fight against illicit gold mining are concerned.

In addition, the primary sources of data included newspaper articles, newsletters from government institutions, webpages, online media portals, policy briefings, reports, personal observations, and interactions with participants. Interviews with participants allowed the researcher to elicit information unavailable in their reports, policy documents, and web materials. Similarly, primary data were gathered from some institutions' official social media pages. This included MLNR's daily update on their official Facebook page.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The study employed a semi-structured interview protocol for the data collection to ensure a systematic interview process. According to Ahlin (2019), semi-structured interviews involve the combination of pre-determined survey questions with open-ended, spontaneous follow-up inquiries initiated by the interviewer to gather data. In semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions help to clarify the issue at hand while letting the interviewer and subject explore further into certain themes (Mathers et al., 1998). The open-ended nature of the semi-structured interview permitted the researcher to



probe the interviewees further to clarify initial response or to pursue a line of inquiry initiated by the interviewees. These probes allowed the participants to elaborate on their initial responses. In other words, when the participants had difficulty answering a question or only gave a brief response, the researcher utilised clues or prompts to persuade the interviewees to think about the issue more deeply. This helped the researcher to ask the same question in different words to extract deep information from the interviewees' responses.

The semi-structured interview was justifiable for the study because it allowed the researcher to obtain detailed information from participants regarding the power relations in the mining industry. The flexibility of the semi-structured format allowed the researcher to adjust the questions based on a participant's knowledge and experience, which helped to ensure that the data collected was as accurate and comprehensive as possible. As Davidson & Tolich (2003) established, the semi-structured interview fostered an open and fluid conversation that allowed the interviews to delve deeper into specific subjects currently not covered in the existing literature.

Again, the semi-structured interview guaranteed that the researcher acquired all necessary information without forgetting questions, allowing respondents to react and illustrate concepts. This is because, in a semi-structured interview, the researcher was familiar with most of the questions to inquire about but unable to anticipate the responses. It also allowed the researcher to remain open to new and, at times, unexpected concerns that arose throughout the interview.

To answer the research questions, the researcher designed an open-ended protocols. This protocols was generated by taking into account the

research questions. The protocol contained a list of questions discussed during the interview. Given that the study involved multiple groups, the protocol helped ensure consistency in data collection (the type of question to ask particular groups of individuals) and uniformity and clarity during the analysis process.

In addition, documentary review was also employed in the study. The study consulted official reports, books, articles, and news items. This resulted in rich and robust dataset and enhanced the study's validity and dependability since the findings could be easily cross-checked.

#### **Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher received an introductory letter from the Centre for African and International Studies, which was made available to the various institutions targeted for the study. Upon receiving the letter, some institutions called to schedule the interview session at their convenience. An endorsed synopsis of the work was also submitted to some institutions that requested it. Upon receiving the introductory letter from the researcher, the Ghana National Association of Small-scale Miners (GNASSM) directed and introduced the researcher to some of its member firms. This gave the researcher access to the small-scale mining firms in the study area.

Most of the interviews took place at the respective offices of the participants. However, three of the participants were interviewed via Zoom. The interview sessions were recorded with a recording device. The researcher obtained the interviewees' permission before the recordings began. It is important to note that some participants agreed to have their statements recorded, but others did not. Although notes were taken for all interview

sessions, participants who objected to recording their statements were given extensive note-taking to ensure that vital information was captured. The data taken from participants were stored on two pen drives, a google drive account and a personal computer. This was to back up the information in case of data loss or damage on one storage device.

Before every interview commenced, the researcher introduced himself and the rationale for the study to the participants. This was done to enable the interviewee to appreciate the purpose of the work. The researcher assured the participants that all information shared would be kept confidential. This was done to obtain the respondents' approval and to make them comfortable to enable the researcher to get the best out of them. Most of the interviews were in English; however, two of the interview sessions at the small-scale firms were in the local language (Twi).

#### **Data Processing and Analysis**

The study employed thematic analysis to examine the data of the work. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is an approach to analysing qualitative data wherein researchers examine a dataset to identify, analyse, and communicate recurring patterns. Firstly, the data from the interview was transcribed and coded by the researcher along with other documents collected. This hands-on approach facilitated the efficient organisation and interpretation of data in a structured manner. Microsoft Word processor was utilised for colour-coding to highlight themes from the data that were relevant to answering the research questions.

Afterwards, the researcher adopted content analysis to generate themes from the information gathered. This allowed the researcher to analyse

and categorise data to provide insights into complex models of participants' thoughts and language concerning power dynamics in the mining industry. In the analysis process, the researcher concentrated only on the parts of the data relevant to the study's research objectives. The diverse range of data sources and types analysed ensured triangulation, enhancing the findings' reliability and robustness.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Research ethics are essential for maintaining integrity, preserving human rights and dignity, and promoting social interaction between science and society. Neglecting research ethics will also diminish the trustworthiness of a study as it will pose challenges for readers to ascertain the facts and the methodology used. As a result, the researcher ensured to uphold ethics throughout all study phases. First, the researcher obtained ethical clearance with an identification number (UCCIRB/CHLS2022/112) and a letter of introduction from the University's Institutional Review Board and the Centre for African and International Studies. These were to facilitate the researcher's entrée to the relevant bodies for the data collection.

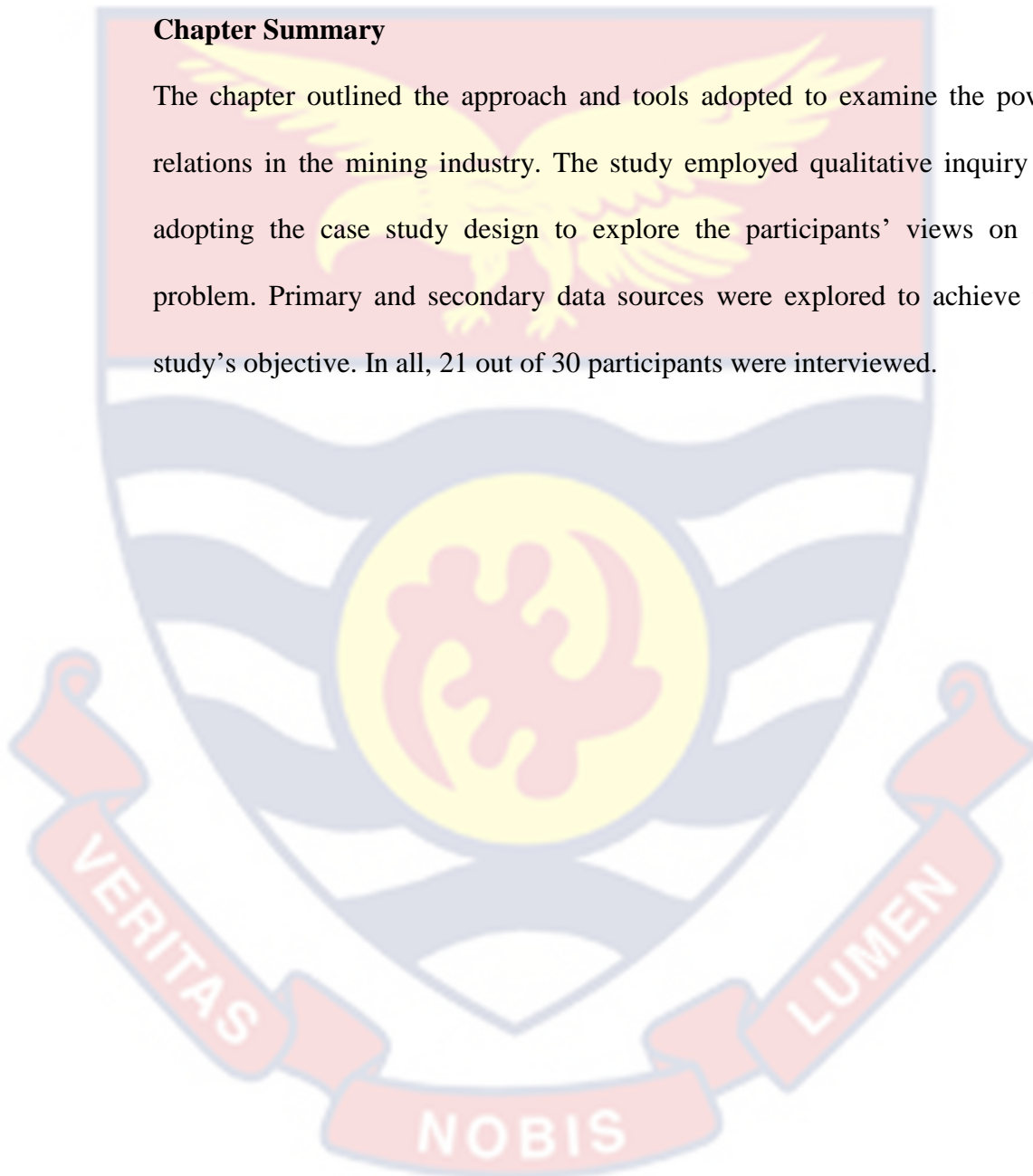
Before conducting the interviews, the respondents were given a detailed description of the rationale for the study. It is also essential to seek the respondent's consent before the interview. Regarding that, the researcher sought verbal consent from the respondents before every interview session and recording began. Given the delicate nature of the mining industry, it was necessary to figure out how to utilise participants' responses without disclosing their identities or citing them. In order to ensure confidentiality, the identities of respondents were made anonymous. Thus, pseudo-names were



adopted to ensure the anonymity of the respondents. It is important to note that participants were furnished with all the information needed to decide whether to participate in the study. Finally, participants were informed of how their responses would be used.

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter outlined the approach and tools adopted to examine the power relations in the mining industry. The study employed qualitative inquiry by adopting the case study design to explore the participants' views on the problem. Primary and secondary data sources were explored to achieve the study's objective. In all, 21 out of 30 participants were interviewed.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The study sought to examine the power dynamics in Ghana's mining industry through the lens of the *galamsey* fight. The thrust of this argument is to examine how multinational mining companies influence decisions making in the industry as far as the fight against *galamsey* is concerned. This chapter presents the findings and results of both primary and secondary data that were qualitatively collected. It presents results from interviews conducted, reports from government agencies, documentaries, newspapers, journals, articles and other online materials. The presentation will compare and contrast the data gathered vis-à-vis the theories and concepts underpinning the work and the literature reviewed.

#### **Governance Issues: Contextualising the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703)**

This section highlights the shortcomings of the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) and its inability to tackle crucial issues within the sector effectively. In order to appreciate the power relations within Ghana's mining industry, the study finds it appropriate to contextualise some provisions in the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703). The Act has received much backlash from a section of citizens and professionals in the mining field. During the study's fieldwork, participants who are experts in mining and environmental issues expressed spirited concerns about the Act being biased toward large-scale mining operations. According to Akabzaa (2009), various individuals and organisations involved in the mining industry were actively

engaged in the consultative procedures that culminated in the enactment of the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703). These stakeholders encompassed the Chamber of Mines, traditional leaders, a representative of small-scale miners, and the Third World Network, which advocated for the National Coalition of NGOs in Mining (NCOM).

However, the mining companies (LSMs) ultimately gained dominance due to unequal power relations among these stakeholders. Thus, “behind-the-scenes conversations” altered the fortunes of the multiple submissions concerned local players, community and civil society organisations made to parliament (Akabzaa, 2009, p. 39). This claim affirms Nye’s (1974 cited in Kim and Milner, 2019) position that firms’ “privileged position” in the view of governments, assist political leaders in defining problems, devising policies, and prioritising objectives, and through their service of assistance, they propose policies that are not in the interest of the state but favourable to their investment or agenda-setting.

Concerning the above assertion, participants emphatically stated that the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) was designed to favour the operation of the large-scale mining sector, which foreign investors dominate. Participants used words such as “problematic, favouritism, and liberal” to describe the Act. Participants perceived that most provisions in Act 703 favour Multinational Mining Companies (MNBC) in the industry over small-scale mining firms, principally organised by Ghanaians. Right from the memorandum, participants pointed out some weaknesses in the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) and how it favours foreign investors against small-scale firms and the state as a whole, which in a way is contributing to

the illegal mining activities in the industry in recent times. The memorandum of Act 703 cited in Wacam's (2019) *Policy Briefing* suggests that the purpose of Act 703 is to revise the Minerals and Mining Law, 1986 (PNDCL 153) in order to align it with Ghana's laws, incorporate updated perspectives and advancements in the mining sector, and combine it with the regulations concerning small-scale gold mining. Also, to redefine Ghana's status as a major mining investment hub in Africa.

This implies that the core objectives of the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) are to recognise and effectively regulate the small-scale mining sector and globally exalt Ghana as a hub of mining to attract foreign investment into the industry. Meanwhile, after nearly two decades of adoption, the Act has failed to regulate the small-scale sector effectively, contributing to the ballooning illegal mining activities in the SSM sector.

According to the Minerals Commission (MinCom) 2019 Annual Report, the small-scale sector contributes 36 to 40 percent of Ghana's gold exports. Despite this and other contributions to Ghana's extractive industry, the small-scale mining sector lacks proper regulation. Hilson (2019) states that about 85 percent of small-scale mining firms operate illegally. This implies that less than half of small-scale firms operate within the law. Nevertheless, sections 81 to 99 of Act 703 are purposely designated for regulating the small-scale mining sector. Participants blame the state's prioritisation of large-scale operations over the small-scale sector and political and traditional leaders' selfish interest in the failure to regulate the SSM sector effectively. A participant noted that;



*No government is concentrating on the small-scale; if you look at recent amendments to the mining law, they have more or less focused on limiting the small-scale aspect. When you move to the large or the general mining sector, the only way you usually see a back-and-forth is the issue of revenue rates. (NGO Official 1, personal communication, May 31, 2023)*

The Minerals and Mining (amended) Act 2019 (Act 995) focuses on the offences and penalties for small-scale miners without suggesting ways to grow the sector. With its regulatory bodies and legislative instruments, the state appears to be interested in restricting the sector's activities rather than proper regulation. This strengthens Alhassan's (2014) assertion that there is a consistent pattern worldwide, where many governments view the small-scale sector as illegal and actively seek to outlaw it through legislative measures and other approaches. It also sustains Hilson's (2017) argument that in an attempt to manage the small-scale sector effectively, the measures taken by African mining states instead favour the large-scale mining sector. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the sector was banned from 2017-to-2019 to ensure proper formalisation.

Again, the Act failed to encourage and enhance local entrepreneurs to advance domestic industrialisation in the mining industry; it made insufficient provisions for the teeming youth in mining areas whose livelihood will be compromised by these mining companies' operations. Also, there is no provision for the state to add value to the minerals it extracts from the ground to increase its revenue (Wacam, 2019). Hence, all gold extracted in the country is exported in its raw state to developed countries to be refined. This

clearly shows that the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) failed to address the paradox that plagues the mining industry in West Africa: the contradiction of abundant mineral resources coexisting with extreme poverty. Thus, the Act does not seek to enable Ghana to seize control of the industry to boost revenue and the nation's ability to alleviate poverty, safeguard mining communities, and protect the environment.

Indeed, the Government of Ghana (GoG) seems interested in attracting foreign direct investment into the mining industry through advantageous fiscal provisions to achieve the vision of making Ghana a destination for mining investment in Africa. This vision is demonstrated in the many fiscal terms and incentive provisions followed by the enactment of the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), and other legal frameworks concerning the industry to attract foreign investors. Participants bemoaned that Act 703 was designed for large-scale mining companies and expatriate firms.

Kim and Milner (2019) note that activities carried out by multinational companies have significant repercussions for various policy issues, such as taxation, investment protection and immigration, in many countries with different political and economic systems. This coincides with a number of the sections stipulated in Act 703. For example, Section 29 of the Act states that:

*The holder of a mineral right may be granted the following: (a) exemption from payment of customs import duty in respect of plant, machinery, equipment and accessories imported specifically and exclusively for the mineral operations; (b) exemption of staff from the payment of income tax on furnished accommodation at the mine site; (c) immigration quota in respect of the approval*

*number of expatriate personnel; and (d) personal remittance quota for expatriate personnel free from the tax imposed by an enactment regulating the transfer of money out of the country. (Minerals and Mining Act, 2006)*

This provision of the Act not only limits the state's revenue but is also pernicious to the small-scale mining sector (SSMs). This is because it does not intend to enhance the development of small-scale mining and local operators in the industry.

Similar to the above concerns is the Act's stability and development agreement stipulated in Sections 48 and 49, respectively. The Stability agreement stated in the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) prohibits the state from enacting any law, rule, or legislative instruments, taking any action, or making any decision that may adversely affect the mining firms or place additional duties on them for fifteen years. It is part of the mining lease granted to LSM companies to protect their investments from future changes in the state's fiscal policy.

Section 48 of the Act specifically implies that until fifteen years in the life of a mining company (LSM) operating under the mining lease, the state is prohibited from making any changes in the fiscal policies that may not be in the interest of the firm. Again, the state will not benefit from a situation where there is an increase in the prices of most metals and minerals in the world market (known as a "windfall price"). The revelation reflects Muigua's (2018) assertion that concession contracts are usually written so that the firms have unrestricted access to natural resources, with no room for future revisions by

the host state. This provision of the Act is inimical to the state's revenue accumulation from the mining industry.

Despite all these provisions, Section 30 of the Act permits mineral rights holders free transferability of proceeds earned from mineral exploitation. It allows the holder to open a foreign exchange account and retain at least twenty-five percent (25%) of foreign exchange for servicing and purchasing items for operations. This implies that a mining company can repatriate more earnings to its home country without reinvesting in the host communities in which it operates. All the gold extracted by the MNMCs is exported from the country to their home countries. This is detrimental to the state's revenue generation from the industry and dwindles the economic development of the state and host communities.

In addition, mining companies, especially the LSMs (MNMCs), grow in strength with more power and wealth accumulation at the nation's expense. This is because, while the home countries of these firms receive the extracted gold and proceeds in their banks and gold reserves, it strengthens their economies, while a mineral resource-rich country like Ghana remains poor and dependent on them. This aligns with the world system theory position on what is referred to as "unequal trade". This involves the regular transfer of surplus, in other words, resources from the periphery countries to the high-tech, industrialised centre. According to Wallerstein, this leads to the global accumulation of capital and underdevelopment of most developing countries (Goldfrank, 2000). Also, the situation in Ghana's mining industry justifies Walters' (1972 cited in Kapfer, 2006) argument that the MNCs are frequently considered as instruments employed by dominant nations (the developed



states) to pursue their self-serving objectives through infiltrating and achieving effective economic and political control over the less developed states.

It is important to note that the SSMs do not pay most of the various taxes paid by LSMs. However, gold extracted by the sector is sent to the Precious Metals and Minerals Commission (PMMC) to buy on behalf of the state. Again, proceeds from the operations are reinvested or stay in the country. Hence, it contributes to Ghana's gold production and economic development. Meanwhile, the small-scale sector does not enjoy any incentives from the state to grow or develop the local mining sector. Consequently, because mining is capital-intensive and small-scale operators do not get any support, they tend to rely on foreigners, mainly the "ever-ready" Chinese. An official from GNASSM indicated that this is one of the avenues that facilitate the Chinese and other foreigners to infiltrate the small-scale sector illegally. Hence, there is a rapid development of *galamsey* activities in the mining industry.

### **Multinational Mining Companies' Influence on Ghana's Mining Policies and the Fight against *Galamsey***

This chapter section examines multinational mining firms' influence on the mining industry regarding mining policies and the fight against *galamsey*.

#### **Techniques LSMs Employ to Influence Mining Policies of the State**

##### ***The use of experts***

The involvement of mining experts from developed jurisdictions by MNMCs during negotiation influences policies in their favour. As a result of the large companies being the major players in the mining industry, the state, through the Minerals Commission, engages them to solicit their views to shape

policies relating to the industry. According to an official from MLNR, the Chamber of Mines is an umbrella organisation for LSMs. Therefore, the state engages MNMCs through the Chamber to listen to their views. He added that most of these firms have mining experience from other developed countries, making their opinion crucial to any legislation instrument regarding the regulation of the industry. The participant stated that;

*They (MNMCs) have acquired experience in some developed jurisdictions like America and Australia, which have a highly developed mining industry. Most of these companies have been working there before coming here. So, they have experience as far as policy and regulation fundamentals are concerned. So, their input is very key. Therefore, they are engaged through the Chamber. (MLNR official 1, personal communication, June 5, 2023)*

Subsequently, these MNMCs have the financial resources to hire outside specialists to help them negotiate or stop the state from implementing legislation that might not be in their best interests. A participant stated that;

*They (MNMCs) have the financial muscles to contract consultants and all those people, so at times, there are some policies that the state wants to formulate, and they will raise strong resistance, that will be the case where that policy will not be in their interest. (MLNR official 1, personal communication, June 5, 2023)*

The above statement indicates that the MNMCs' technical contributions through the Chamber of Mines significantly influence the formulation of the mining policies because they hire professionals with

experience from other established jurisdictions to negotiate or lobby on their behalf. These responses buttress Nye's (1974 in Kim & Milner, 2019) assertion that when governments allocate work among many departments to develop policy effectively, these agencies or departments then engage panels and private experts from MNCs to develop policies. However, these private panels frequently include lobbyists and special interest groups with their agendas, so what is represented in the formation of policies is not in the well-being of the society but rather those of the interest groups and lobbyists. It is, therefore, not surprising that scholars like (Akabzaa, 2009), among other experts, argue that the mining policy, the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), was developed for the interest of the LSMs to the detriment of the state. This is because these lobbyists do their best to influence a policy in the interest of the companies they represent.

#### ***The use of threat and resistance***

Ruggie (2018) asserts that MNCs possess the capability to leverage their negotiating skills by presenting "inducements," such as commitments to additional investment, as well as "deprivations," such as threats of investment withdrawal. Similarly, Kim and Milner (2019) state that the massive investment of MNCs allows them to dictate to countries what they want. If a country does not respond positively, a multinational firm can pull out and invest in the next lowest-cost state. Drawing an inference from the happenings in Ghana's mining industry, the realisation of the state losing revenue to mining companies due to the stability agreement stipulated in section 48 of the Act compelled the government to review the agreement. However, the attempt by the state was unsuccessful due to threats from the major mining companies.

In 2012, the Ghanaian government appointed a team of seven individuals to assess and revise the stability agreements it had previously established with certain mining companies. It was an attempt to ensure that the country derived maximum benefits from its resources and also introduced a 10 percent windfall tax to benefit the state whenever gold gains on the world market. However, the state could not enact this tax proposal due to intense lobbying and threats from mining firms. During the 2014 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the then President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, revealed that his government's decision to suspend the windfall tax was based on threats from companies to eliminate employees and move their manufacturing investments to other nations. The president lamented that;

*They (MNNMCs) threatened to lay off workers if we implemented the windfall tax, and because we needed the jobs and you do not want workers laid off, you are coerced to go along... they will not allow us to implement the windfall tax in our country.*  
(Myjoyonline.com, January 23, 2014)

Once more, an MLNR official disclosed that these large-scale mining companies occasionally use threats to rescind government decisions, particularly those pertaining to the tax or fiscal system. He mentioned that;

*A case in point is this: we have a tax regime, exploration tax, and they have been complaining a lot that it is not in their interest. Moreover, they have been making a case that they cannot explore if businesses are not flourishing because of that tax. It's affecting their investment. Due to that, some have even threatened to leave for other jurisdictions where the regime is not rigid as it is in*



*Ghana. So, that is one way they tried to muscle up against the government. If you do not do this, we will leave to other jurisdictions where the regime is visible economically, and because the government needs to generate revenue, the state engages them through the Chamber, trying to attract a win-win approach. (MLNR official 1, personal communication, June 5, 2023)*

The statement from the President establishes the assertion made by Kim and Milner (2019) that MNCs use threats to influence government decisions on policy. Also, as pointed out by Block (2012) in his defence of neo-Marxist theory, states are wary of upsetting corporate confidence because they understand the importance of capitalists' survival. Therefore, state managers will usually limit themselves to adopting policies that are generally supportive of capital accumulation and not particularly unacceptable to any significant sector of the capitalist class. The above pronouncement of the President makes it evident that the state's hands were tied due to the fear of compromising the business confidence of these big companies. Also, the President appreciated that the future of his government depends on the continuance of the existing capitalist system due to their huge employment and revenue generation to the state. Hence, citizens may fault his government should workers be laid off. This will make his government unpopular for political power in the subsequent elections.

The response from the MLNR official supports Kapfer's (2006) argument that MNCs play states against each other, compelling states to fight for investment that produces jobs and tax income. Because the government

would not allow that form of investment to go away, the state is always compelled to find a way to solve such issues. Hence, most of the decisions taken by the government in policy formulation may be in the interest of the MNCs (in this case, foreign mining companies) at the state's expense.

### *The use of financial aid*

The use of financial aid by the MNMCs to the state to undertake projects is another tool the companies capitalise on to influence policies in the mining industry. Narula (2018) maintains that the MNCs' deep pockets and access to the global financial capital market in the extractive industry permit them to remain dominant and influential in their host nations, especially in less developed countries. The re-negotiating of the stability agreement with the large mining companies demonstrates the influence and gravity of these multinational firms' power on the state's mining policies.

The Ghanaian government declared its intention to review the stability agreements established between the state and various mining companies operating in the mining industry. The government made this announcement in 2011, and by 2015 through 2022, it has still been unable to finalise the agreement with the companies. On record, Prof. Sawyerr, the team leader in negotiating with the big mining companies to review the stability agreement, said, "our existing mining laws are not in favour of this country at all" (News Ghana, July 6 2015). His response to the media revealed that the state depends on the companies for financial aid, making negotiation difficult. He stated; "Government at times raises resources from some mining companies for developmental projects, which has affected their negotiation" (News Ghana, July 6, 2015).

The above argument further establishes Narula's (2018) contention that governments use multinational companies (MNCs) to advance national interests by enhancing the effects of sanctions through MNC production networks and facilitating capital transfers through firms to strengthen monetary policy, which in the process, influences the state decision-making body to meet their demands. With this assertion, it is clear that because the government rely on mining companies for financial aid to undertake developmental projects, it becomes difficult to review the stability agreement.

The publication alleged that the government is in cahoots with these big mining companies, which may be why the review had delayed (News Ghana, July 6, 2015). The issue is that the government cannot seek financial aid from the mining companies for domestic projects and ask them to review their stability agreement with the state. The implication is that the companies would take advantage of their aid to the state to prevent any law that may not be in their interest. This is harmonious with the neo-marxists' position that because states bargain with international capital for debt service and domestic investments, nation-states must adopt policies favourable to transnational enterprises (Barrow, 1993). Hence, the financial assistance of the MNMCs to the state influences the board's effectiveness in reviewing the policy, which considerably influences provisions of the mining policies.

#### ***Engagement with state authorities***

Fuchs (2007, as cited in Ruggie, 2018) identified three types of political power that multinational companies could use to dominate a state. According to her, multinational companies use "instrumental power" to achieve their dominance. Businesses may have information inequity and

preferential access to decision-making, mainly where standards are defined by private entities or “clubs” of state officials. Through the Ghana Chamber of Mines, large-scale mining firms are viewed as a key economic pillar of the state; hence, they are allowed access to decision-making bodies.

To buttress the above argument, in June 2021, the sector minister inaugurated a joint committee which involved members from the Ministry and Ghana Chamber of Mines in discussing the solution to the challenges in the mining industry and issues regarding policy formulation and implementation (GCM Newsletter, 2021). Surprisingly, with such important issues regarding the mining industry, there was no representative from the small-scale miners association, a key player. At the end of every decision the Committee takes, it will affect not only the LSMs but also the SSMs. This reaffirms Akabzaa’s (2009) and Engels’ (2016) positions that there is no equal playing field for the two sectors regarding policies and decision-making in the industry. The same influence is seen in the fight against *galamsey*, which is discussed in the next section of the study.

#### **The issue of illegal mining and the LSM’s influence in the fight**

Artisanal and small-scale mining has been a traditional way of extracting minerals in most mineral-resource-rich states before the introduction of modern mining. Scholars like Hilson and Maconachie (2017) have proven that most of these mining activities were carried out with rudimentary equipment like a shovel, pick-axe, and pan, among other simple tools. The concept of illegal mining is famous in Ghana and most mining states in Africa and across the globe. As the concept is known in Ghana as *galamsey*, it is branded in Brazil as *garimpeiros*. In Angola, it is called



*garimpo*; in South Africa, it is called *zama-zama*.

The issue of illegal mining (*galamsey*) is one of the causes of environmental hurdles the state finds challenging to conquer. In Ghana, *galamsey* activities were carried on sustainably until the introduction of modern machines and technologies such as excavators, *changfan*, and water pumps, among others, from the mid-2000s. This has resulted in massive environmental destruction such as deforestation, pollution of water bodies, destruction of farmlands, disturbance to biodiversity, diseases, deaths and death traps. Alhassan (2014) and a couple of others have described the situation as a threat to national security and national disasters to others.

The state has instituted numerous means to battle this canker. There have been a series of stakeholder meetings, media and civil group campaigns, and other activities to bring the situation under control. One of these stakeholders is the large-scale mining companies. As stated by a respondent from MLNR and MinCom, the large mining firms, through their Chamber, have influenced the fight against illegal mining through logistics, engagement with authorities, and collaboration with security agencies. A participant stated;

*Large mining companies offer massive assistance to the fight against galamsey because most of these illegal activities happen on their concessions. That is, on these multinational mining companies' concessions. (MLNR official 1, personal communication, June 5, 2023)*

Although the above participant was not explicit on the kind of support the large-scale mining companies offer, the official from MinCom stated categorically that the LSMs, through the GCM, provide logistics and financial

support to aid the fight against *galamsey* (MinCom official, personal communication, May 25, 2023). This is evident in a presentation the LSMs, through the Ghana Chamber of Mines, made to MLNR to support and address the aftermath operations of illegal miners.

*The Ghana Chamber of Mines on Monday (October 11, 2021) presented a cheque of GHc778, 657.00 to the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources towards implementing the Ghana Green Initiative and the National Consultative Dialogue on Small Scale Mining. (GCM Newsletter, October 11, 2021)*

With such kind of donation to the state agencies to fight illegal mining activities, some participants from the small-scale mining firms accuse the LSMs of using such aids to the state agencies to frustrate the activities of the small-scale operations in the industry. Thus, they (LSMs through GCM) provide financial support to the regulatory bodies and security agencies to intensify their fight against illegal mining, ultimately affecting the SSM sector's operations.

Additionally, LSMs engage the state's authorities through the Ghana Chamber of Mines to present their petition for the state to take action against illegal small-scale mining operations, particularly on their concessions. A publication of GCM reads;

*Touching on the dangers of illegal mining and insecurity, Mr Asubonteng (the former President of GCM) informed the MPs (the Parliamentary Select Committee on Mines and Energy) that the Chamber was working with the police administration to deploy elite police personnel to the mines. However, he said the*

*recent disturbances at some mine sites and their environs were making the investor community nervous, especially with the seeming lack of consequence for the perpetrators. He appealed to the Committee to look into these matters to help nip such issues in the bud (GCM Newsletter, August 9 2021).*

Such engagements compel the state to move rapidly to combat illegal miners to prevent the state from losing foreign investors in the industry. According to neo-Marxism theory, investors' decisions to do business in a state are influenced by some factors, including a state's security and stability (Block, 2012). Therefore, the state authority will do everything possible to safeguard these investors' confidence. As part of such engagement, respondents from MLNR and MinCom indicate that the government, through the security agencies, have collaborated with the LSM firms to establish a task force known as the "chamber-police" to protect the concessions of these mining companies and the environment from destruction. (MinCom official & MLNR official, personal communication May 25, 2023 and June 5, 2023). A respondent from the GCM admitted by stating that;

*Some years ago, we (Ghana Chamber of Mines) had an arrangement with the Ghana Armed Force, who gave us military protection, but the government decided to pull them out and replace them with the police. So yes, we have the police at our various mining sites. (GCM Official, personal communication, May 31, 2023)*

Meanwhile, the researcher's engagement with some licenced small-scale firms, which also may face the same threat associated with illegal

mining, do not enjoy such security provisions from the state. This is an obvious indication that the state places more value on the LSMs than the SSMs. Again, it shows how the state is more focused on protecting foreign investments to gain their confidence than protecting the local sector.

### **How Power Relations in Land Acquisition for Mining Contribute to Illegal Mining Activities**

Land acquisition for mining activities has been one of the controversial issues in Ghana's mining industry. This chapter section examines how the power play in land acquisition for mining activities contributes to overwhelming illegal mining practices.

#### **Legal provisions of lands for mining activities**

The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) specifies the process for acquiring land for mining activities. Section 1 of the Act indicates that all minerals on and beneath the earth are state property, and as such, they are entrusted to the President on behalf of the people. This gives the President the power to allot land for mining activities. As part of the executive arm of government, Act 703 empowers the sector minister through the advice of MinCom to act on behalf of the President or the state in granting concessions to mining firms for operations.

Although the President is granted mineral rights under the 1992 constitution of Ghana and the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), it is also important to note that traditionally, the chiefs have been the stewards of the land and have surface rights. Therefore, there is a need to engage traditional leaders in granting mineral rights to firms. However, the Act deprives the chiefs and community members of being part of the decision-



making process to lease out lands for mining companies. The researcher's interactions with a traditional council suggest that the state deals directly with the mining firms rather than involving the chiefs in granting concessions. Thus, there is no provision in the Act to engage the traditional leaders and their subjects to seek their consent or include them in the process before granting mining rights to an investor to operate in a particular area. Rather, the Act provides a notice informing a prospective mining community of the decision taken by the state. Section 13(2) of Act 703 stresses that;

*The Minister shall, not less than forty-five days prior to making a decision under subsection (1), give a notice in writing of a pending application for the grant of a mineral right in respect of the land to a chief or allodial owner and the relevant District Assembly.*

This illustrates a forceful acquisition of land from the original owners. From the traditional perspective, chiefs, clan leaders, and family heads hold allodial interests in traditional lands as trustees (Acheampong, 2014, cited in Ahmed et al., 2018). Therefore, it is often undesirable and does not reflect international best practices not to consult the chiefs or family heads, who are the custodian of the land, to obtain their approval before and after transferring a mineral right to a mining company. The section of Act 703 mentioned above restricts the chiefs' powers. It goes against the conventional belief that they are the guardians of the community lands and are, therefore, in charge of allocating land to cultivate export commodities, forest reserves, and mining concessions (Amanor, 2009).

The provision in the Act demonstrates the state's "power over" traditional leaders by compulsory acquisition of land from the original land owners for mining activities before notifying them. The power vested in the state's executives enables them to give mining firms access to a land area or community to without getting the consent of the landowners. Gaventa's (2006) conception of "power over", as explained in chapter two of the study, plays out in this context as the state does not involve the land owners in the negotiation process before a concession is granted to a mining firm. A participant from an NGO confirmed this by stating that;

*When the state owned the mining firms, we had laws in place that the foreigner who even wanted to mine needed the consent and approval of the landlord. In our current law, we do not have anything as such. We have rather, in more or less given them (mining companies) automatic entry into people's lands. (NGO official 1, personal communication, May 31, 2023)*

In addition to limiting the traditional leaders' power, the provision negatively impacts community livelihoods and their environments immensely. The condition usually leads to illicit mining, tension, and confrontations between the communities' residents and mining companies, ultimately resulting in the loss of lives and properties. In connection with the exclusion of chiefs in granting concessions, Otumfuo Osei Tutu, the Asante monarch, lamented that;

*While the chiefs held the surface rights to the land, the constitution vested the mineral rights in the President. However, the executive issued licences to concessionaires without recourse*

*to the chiefs who owned the rights to the lands. (Donkor, December 24, 2021)*

He further called on the government to reconsider the inclusion of chiefs in the process of signing a mining lease with a company. He believes that involving the chiefs in granting a mining lease to a firm will help reduce the issue of illegal mining in the industry. The king's reaction demonstrates the poor representation of local villagers and land users in the procedures for obtaining exploration licences and mining concessions.

### **Power play in land acquisition: the immediate cause of *galamsey***

Participants attributed the rampant emergence of *galamsey* activities to several issues, resulting in many clashes and confrontations between community members and mining companies. These include:

#### ***Regulatory failure***

It is argued that regulatory failure in the large-scale sector had inflated *galamsey* activities in the industry. The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) exempts certain land from mining activities. These encompass areas already leased for mining purposes and specifically set aside by the Act or any other applicable legislation. The Act made a blanket pronouncement of the lands excluded from mining but did not specify the lands by names such as Forest Reserves, Ramsar sites, Nature Reserves and Cultural sites. Conversely, Section 4.4(b) of the National Land Policy clearly declares that any lands categorised as forest reserves, strict natural reserves, national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and similar designations are considered Ghana's permanent forest reserves and wildlife estates. These areas are strictly safeguarded to maintain ecosystems, preserve biodiversity, and sustainably produce timber. Further,

Section 4.5(a) of the same policy emphasises the importance of preserving environmental quality by prohibiting the clearance of land with primary forest cover for the establishment of a forest or tree crop plantations, as well as mining activities (National Land Policy, 1999).

On the contrary, the state has defied the aforementioned sections of the Lands Policy parts throughout time. A participant argues that the proliferation of these illegal activities results from regulatory failures in the large-scale mining sector. This is because the government has granted large-scale mining companies mining leases in some major forest reserves in the country. Such places include Ajenua-Bepo Forest Reserve, Atewa Forest Reserve for bauxite mining, Yokumbra Forest Reserve near Buipe for limestone mining, some other forest reserves in the Western region to LSMs operating in the area (Okyerere et al., 2021), and more disturbingly, developing guidelines for mining in Forest Reserves in Ghana (Wacam, 2019). Participants argued that this failure by the regulatory bodies had facilitated illegal mining operations in most of the nation's forest reserves. Indigenes in the surrounding communities hold the perception that if a large-scale mining firm with its sophisticated machinery has been allowed to mine in the forest reserves where they have lived for a long time, they can also operate within the reserves to benefit from what is theirs. NGO official 2 indicated that;

*The government was giving up mining in forest reserves to large-scale mining companies like Ajenua-Bepo Forest Reserve with Tano-Offin. The government tried it all; when you go to the Tarkwa areas and Obuasi, some forest areas have once been given to large-scale mining companies and are destroying them.*



*What do you think a local person will do? ...he also gets foreigners to support him to do so. So where we are, excuse me for saying, giving more or less licences to multinational mining because we feel they have the equipment and know-how to put it, for me, it's a non-starter. (NGO official 2, personal communication, June 5, 2023)*

The foregoing statement suggests that the state capitalises on the monetary might and advanced machinery of LSMs in granting forest reserves to foreign companies due to the revenue it may generate from them. Contrariwise, the state strictly adheres to the laws concerning SSMs in the same regard. It also implies that large-scale companies can lobby to access the forest reserves, but it becomes difficult for small-scale mining firms. The regulatory failure of the state to allow LSMs mining activities in the forest reserves can be blamed for the illegal mining activities in the forest reserves and other restricted areas. Thus, the LSMs operating in major forest reserves have attracted illegal mining activities in the forest reserves and other unauthorised areas. Therefore, it is necessary to take holistic measures by stopping all mining activities in the forest reserves, as Wacam and other like-minded civil groups had suggested.

### ***Livelihood issue***

Most mining companies have recently been engaging in surface mining instead of traditional underground mining. Ayelezunu (2014) described this as a new “extractivism” which produces horrendous injustices and violence against peasant and artisanal, and small-scale miners, a part of the population whose well-being and growth it is supposed to foster. Surface mining

operations affect large tracts of traditional lands resulting in land conflicts, displacement of communities and loss of livelihood for many indigenes that undertake land-based economic activities. Some participants engaged attributed the overwhelming illegal mining issue to the deprivation of livelihood of the local people through the acquisition of sizeable land areas by the LSMs for mining activities. As lamented by one participant,

*...just last year, we did a survey to show the concession size given to mining firms in the western region, and it was the size of over almost 1000 football fields... look at the number of people who have lost their livelihoods to those who have been employed. (NGO official 2, personal communication, June 5, 2023)*

As such large land sizes are given as a concession to mining companies, it affects the livelihood activities of indigenes who depend on land-based activities for a living. This creates huge backlogs of unemployment in the various mining communities. Literature has established that surface mining concessions have taken up 70% of the land in Tarkwa (Ayelezunu & Mawuko Yavuga, 2019). A participant from one of the state's mining regulatory bodies confirmed the above claim and further stated that almost all the lands in Prestea in the western region of Ghana are concessions for large-scale mining firms.

*As I speak today, the whole of Prestea is part of another mines concessions... In future, if they decide to take their lands, it will be a different game altogether, which means they have to resettle Prestea again. (EPA official 2, personal communication, May 29, 2023)*

In addition, a reportage of GBC reveals that the Newmont Ghana project in Ahafo North covers a land size of about four thousand hectares, which comprises five towns, including Susuanso, Yamfo, Adrobaa, Terchire and Afrisipakrom with over one thousand livelihoods affected by the project (gbcghana online, July 16, 2021). Literature has also established that such development displaced over 14 settlements with a combined population of nearly 30,000 between 1990 and 1998 (Awudi, 2002). Okyere et al. (2021) highlight that surface mining by both large and small-scale mining operations is destroying the forest and agricultural lands in the Bogoso-Prestea, Tarkwa, and Damang areas. This has rendered livelihood challenges to those who depend on agriculture and other land-based activities in these communities. A participant bewailed that;

*... People's livelihoods are seized, and they will not have them again. They will think, 'I used to farm on this five-metre land; and my land has been taken away from me; how do I survive?' So, it then becomes the survival of the fittest. So, once you want to survive, then you want to find something to do, and that something will lead you to illegal mining. (SSM official 1, May 22, 2023)*

The preceding revelation indicates that the state is comfortable granting a major part of its lands as concessions to firms (MNNMCs) at the detriment of those living in such communities. The seizure of lands for investors (MNNMCs) as concessions is congruent with Harvey's "primitive accumulation" from the neo-Marxist perspective. According to Harvey (2003:149, as cited in Svarstad et al., 2018), primitive accumulation involved appropriating land, enclosing it, displacing the existing population to establish

a landless proletariat, and then releasing the land into the privatised mainstream of capital accumulation. In the case of most mining communities, lands belonging to the indigenes have been taken away from them by the government and granted as concessions to foreign investors for mining activities. This constrains the agricultural and other land-based economic activities of the indigenes. Hence, individuals are forced to do anything to survive, contributing to the illegalities in the mining industry. A participant stressed that:

*We are dominantly agricultural rural communities, and that is where these mining companies move into. And when and as people's lands are grabbed, you go to Obuasi, a whole two districts have been given as a concession to AngloGold Ashanti; you come to Tarkwa, and the whole Tarkwa-Bogoso area have all been assigned to about four or five multinational mining companies, we are talking about AngloGold, Gold Fields Ghana, Damang; Golden Star Wassa, and Ghana Manganese Company. It is not that they must have been amalgamated, not to mention the small-scale mining companies. So, when all these lands are taken away from the people, and now they do not have any livelihood to depend on, they do not have that level of identity that they had as a people, and poverty takes over... people are then forced to go inside the sector to survive. And that has brought about the illegalities. (NGO Official 1, personal communication, May 31, 2023)*



With these livelihood challenges, mining companies, after some time, initiated the Alternative Livelihood Program (ALP) to ensure that the affected individuals are given other job opportunities to sustain themselves. Respondents echoed that the alternative jobs include snail rearing, beads making, sewing, hairdressing, and other small-scale economic activities. However, conversations with some community leaders reveal that the jobs this ALP outlines are insufficient to sustain the indigenes compared to their previous economic activities. Some beneficiaries opine that the items provided under the project could not restore the lost livelihood. This is because the proceeds they had from their previous economic activities is much higher, and cannot be measured with what the ALP provided. Secondly, only few of the affected persons benefited from these ALP. Hence, individuals find illegal mining the cheapest and most lucrative way to survive.

In contrast, an anonymous participant from an LSM firm refuted the above allegation by arguing that it is not the case that the ALP is not sufficient to sustain them. However, the members of the catchment communities feel that if they are living on gold, they need to benefit from it. He stated;

*The issue is they have a local parlance which goes like 'those in the coast go to sea, so if they are sitting on gold, that is their sea', and they believe that it is the cheapest way to go rather than the alternative livelihood you are proposing to them, and that is a challenge. (Anonymous 1, personal communication, June 7, 2023)*

### *Lack of mineable land for the SSMs triggers illegal mining*

Section 83 of Act 703 states that the small-scale mining sector is restricted to Ghanaians only. Studies show that about 85 percent of the players in the sector operate illegally (Hilson, 2019). Data gathered from the fieldwork reveals that one of the factors contributing to illegalities is the lack of mineable lands or concessions for SSMs' operations. Per the licencing regime of the sector, a small-scale mining firm is entitled to 25 blocks of land area to operate as compared to the 300 to 750 blocks of land area for the LSMs. A participant admitted that:

*...one of the challenges or the reason or the drivers of illegal mining in Ghana is that there are not enough mineable areas to be blocked for small-scale mining operations. So, people get up and go anywhere to dig for mining. (MLNR official 1, personal communication, June 5, 2023)*

Participants from the small-scale mining sector reiterate that one of the sector's challenges is the lack of a place to mine. Interestingly, the indigenous Ghanaians in the small-scale firms lack mineable land. This is because most of the available mineable lands are given to the LSMs, primarily foreign companies, while small-scale firms, principally Ghanaians, struggle with land. This has pushed several licenced small-scale miners to operate illegally on unauthorised lands or LSMs concessions. A participant from the SSM sector complained that:

*The sector (SSM) is facing lack of concessions. Because all these large-scale companies have taken most of our lands, and those lands are not mining leases, some of them are prospecting, some*

*of them are reconnaissance etc, and ...in case you see an area and you want to search, you would be told it belongs to the large scale mining, that is the major problem we are facing. (SSM official 1, Personal communication, May 22, 2023)*

The above claims support Nyame and Blocher's (2010) findings that the main issues between SSM and LSM companies arise from the marginalisation and criminalisation of SSM due to their lack of unrestricted access to mineralised land. LSMs' ability to acquire large sizeable land for mining concurs with Muigua's (2018) assertion that multinational firms typically attempt to make the most cost-effective ways from the projects, which is usually done to the detriment of the host nation. Muigua further reveals that concession contracts are usually written so that the firms have unrestricted access to natural resources, with no room for future revisions by the host state.

This strengthens the earlier submission that the state values large-scale operations in granting concessions over small-scale firms. In other words, the state is more comfortable reserving lands for the LSMs for mining than giving them to small-scale mining firms due to the revenue it anticipates generating. The unrestricted acquisition of land has limited the land availability for small-scale mining. Therefore, the lack of mineable land results in illegal mining by operating in unlawful areas, and mostly on LSMs concessions in the quest to do something to survive. In most cases, the above situation creates banter between the two parties.

### **Conflicts and confrontations between community members and LSMs**

Issues over land acquisitions and concessions for mining by LSMs have orchestrated several confrontations between community members and mining firms (Awudi, 2002). Here, there is a clash of powers between the members of the local communities and the multinational mining companies. A participant argued that community members find it difficult to admit that the land they used to explore for a living is given to foreigners for mining without benefiting them sufficiently. The participant lamented, “Why do I own my land, and you sit in Accra, apportion the land to somebody to come in and mine, and say I do not have the right to mine on my land” (Anonymous 2, personal communication May 20, 2023).

With such thinking, local communities demonstrate their power by mobilising against multinational mining companies to assert their rights and interests by engaging in illegal mining on concessions of LSMs for survival, which in most cases end up in confrontations and conflict between the mining communities and LSM firms. This dichotomy arises from a fundamental disjunction in the understanding of land tenure. Local communities traditionally assert a customary ownership claim over the land, rooted in historical and cultural precedents. Conversely, mining companies assert legal ownership facilitated by state-issued licenses, thereby claiming inherent authority and control over the concessions in question.

Interestingly, indigenes in most cases get the backing of some traditional and opinion leaders in mining communities. An investigative journalist who reports on illegal mining orated that there are instances where community leaders argue that if firms are taking over their farmlands, then



they should be ready to employ some youth in the community. If not, the community youth will also take over firms' concessions.

Notwithstanding, because the state supports capitalists' accumulation and does not want to compromise MNCs' business confidence, as expressed in the neo-marxist theory, the LSMs gain state support through the state security agencies to protect them. The recent confrontation, which led to the death of one person, happened between the people of Teleku-Bokazo and Adamus Resource in the Essiama District in the Western Region of Ghana. This occurred when the firm clashed with the community youths after the company arrested some youths organising *galamsey* activities on their (the firm's) concession. The community leaders and members accused the firm of using its security apparatuses to intimidate and kill indigenes. The Member of Parliament (MP) of the constituency stated that;

*In fact, this is about the fourth death of a young person in connection with Adamus mining, and the persons who shot on those two occasions on these young people are not police officers. It is the military attached to the Adamus Mines... the people of Teleku-Bokazo and Ahwia and its environs have lived here for over 300 years as farmers on their lands in peace. Since all of a sudden, Adamus Resources came saying it had been given all those lands, we have not had any peace. Even when Adamus is done by mining in parts of the concession after 10 years, it refuses to allow even the community to engage in legal mining activity for their daily survival after destroying their farms. Is this fair? (Annim, April 3, 2022)*

The account from the honourable member upholds the earlier claims that LSMs have deprived community members of livelihoods. This is due to their financial might to acquire sizeable unrestricted land from the state. The community chief registers his initial displeasure with the firm's presence in their community. However, because the state holds the optimum power, the community had to accept the firm to operate within the vicinity. The chief lamented that;

*They (Adamus) have worked here for more than 10 years, but at the beginning, we were not in support of their presence. Later there was peace, but these days at the least thing there are gunshots, and this is about the fourth time that the security of the company has killed a youth. (Angel Online, April 4, 2022)*

The statement from the MP and the chief demonstrates the community's ill-treatment and human rights violations by the mining firm. The statement from the chief, "They (Adamus) have worked here for more than 10 years, but at the beginning, we were not in support of their presence," shows the imposition of the firm on the community and how unhappy the community leaders were with the situation. Nevertheless, because the state possesses "power over", as expressed by Gaventa (2016), the community would have to succumb to the government's decision. With reference to Gaventa's (2016) "power to", the community members at a point exercise their agency or realise their rights on the need to benefit from the resource deemed theirs. This eventually leads to confrontations and clashes between the community members and mining firms over lands.

In addition, the community members accused the District Chief Executive officer (DCE) of being in bed with the mining firm in all these brutalities. In response, the DCE stated that;

*Anyone who says I'm over-pampering Adamus does not understand my work as a DCE. Adamus is the biggest mining company in our district in terms of economic contribution; in fact, without Adamus, some banks in the district would have collapsed. (GhanaPlus, July 22, 2022)*

Gleaning from the statement made by the DCE cements the neo-Marxists position that states are cagey of upsetting business confidence because they understand the importance of capitalism's survival. Also, state officials' power and positions are dependent on the continuance of the existing capitalist system (Block, 2012). Therefore, it is in their (state officials) best interests for the capitalist system to be maintained. In that regard, the DCE will cautiously act against the mining firm.

On the contrary, the MP defended the community members' position by expressing how their livelihood is taken from them. Hence, they strive to earn something through small-scale mining by operating on the firm's concession. As stressed by Foucault, power manifests and is exerted within a network-like organisation. In other words, power is a relational dynamic that exists through its enactment among different individuals and groups (Christiansen, 2023). Though the state holds the optimum power, the activities of the community members forced the government to negotiate with foreign mining companies to release part of their concessions for community mining. Thus, through the sector minister, the state engaged Adamus Resource to

release part of their concession for Community Mining (Ghana News Agency, April 9, 2022). It reaffirms the earlier statement that indigenes struggle to get land to mine, while the foreigners have abundant lands to block some for the community members.

A similar confrontation broke out between Golden Star mining company and the community members when some surrounding communities invaded the firm's concession. An anonymous participant from the firm indicated that;

*whenever the mining company meet the galamseyers, we (the firm) try to take them away from our concession as the government requested, but in a situation we find ourselves at Benso at the moment, the community, some of the opinion leaders, and traditional leaders are in support of them, so we talk to them to communicate with the illegal miners to vacate some of the areas... according to the chiefs, they gave them some area to work and prior to we coming there. They left some parts for us but still want to enjoy that part. (Anonymous 1, personal communication, June 7, 2023)*

The above statement illustrates the politics and power play in the industry. While the mining firms own the concession for their mining activities, the community leaders and other influential persons believe they own the land. Therefore, they support the illegal miners to operate on the concessions of the firms. Personal communication and observation on *galamsey* sites visited revealed that the leaders of these illegal groups doubled as chiefs and influential persons in these communities. On one occasion, the



leaders of these illegal groups admitted that they were operating on the concession of a mining firm (Golden Star). Meanwhile, any attempt by the firm to drive illegal miners from the concession always results in a conflict which leads to the destruction of the firm's properties and, in some cases, blocking of roads leading to the mining firm.

### **Checking the Activities of LSMs and SSMs to Ensure Ecosystem**

#### **Protection: The role of regulatory bodies**

Gold mining has contributed to the economic development of most sub-Saharan regions of Africa and the entire world. However, mining is a double-edged sword that can potentially destroy the environment. This chapter section examines how state and non-state actors check the activities of both LSMs and SSMs.

#### **Environmental effects of gold extraction in mining communities**

The available literature suggests that mining has detrimental environmental effects on the surrounding communities and, by extension, the state. Scholars such as Mensah et al. (2015); Ayelezunu and Mawuko-Yiavuga (2019); Emmanuel et al. (2019); Toukuu et al. (2019), among others, have already established that mining activities have caused severe environmental havoc such as; river or water body pollutions, destruction of farmlands and forest reserves, among others. From the researcher's observations during the fieldwork, most mining settlements visited have a dusty atmosphere and cracked buildings, which is dangerous for those living there. Engagement with some elders of the Tarkwa Traditional Council showed that the community members are seriously at risk of major health problems due to mining

activities like blasting, smoke from large machinery, occasional vibrating houses and depletion of other ecological elements.

To curtail the situation, both state-sponsored and non-state actors have made several attempts to reduce the extent of environmental damage caused by mining. These measures appear counter-productive because the actors involved portraying the SSM operations as solely responsible for the environmental pollution associated with the mining industry while paying no heed to the destruction caused by LSMs. Some SSM participants acknowledged that their actions have far more detrimental effects on the environment but also mentioned that the LSMs' activities equally cause serious harm to the ecosystem. Personal experience supports Bell and Donnelly's (2006) contention that whether mining employs basic or advanced machinery, legal or illegal, has an environmental impact on the host communities.

A classic example of dangers associated with mining is the Apeatse explosion incident, which killed over 13 people, injured 100 innocent individuals and displaced close to 1000 people due to an LSM mining operation (Myjoyonline.com, January 23 2022). A participant also mentioned the impact of large-scale companies' surface mining operations on the environment and indigenes' livelihood when he stated that;

*We used to farm and hunt where they (referring to a mining firm) heap their waste, but they have destroyed the place due to the surface mining they engage in, which may not be used for agricultural purposes again. If it were to be us (SSMs), the state*

*would be mad at us by now. (SSM official 3, personal communication, June 14, 2023)*

Similarly, a prominent journalist famous for reporting mining issues stated that;

*Once you engage in surface mining, no matter how strictly you adhere,... you will destroy the ecosystem. When the LSMs say they have reclaimed the land, it will take several years to be ready for use, and even then, it cannot be compared to its pristine state. (Media person, personal communication, June 9, 2023)*

A forum held by Wacam revealed that mining companies had turned many of the state's forest reserves which contain numerous rivers and flora that are novel to science, into a shelter for surface mining operations. This behaviour of the mining companies is gradually destroying the Ghanaian ecology. Nevertheless, the state pampers these mining companies with tax relieves (Wacam Forum, 2022, September). The above revelations cement the argument that both small and large-scale mining firms contribute to the devastating effect of mining on the ecology. Hence, it calls for a holistic approach devoid of favouritism.

### **Ensuring environmentally friendly mining: The role of the state's regulating bodies**

#### ***Structural supervision***

Studies such as Okyere et al. (2021), Obeng et al. (2019), Boadi et al. (2017), and personal interviews shown above have demonstrated that both small-scale and large-scale firms cause severe environmental destruction. Therefore, EPA and MinCom are the state's regulatory bodies mandated to

police the mining industry to safeguard the ecology of Ghana concerning mining. In principle, firms must have physical structures to facilitate the supervisory role of the regulatory bodies. These bodies ensure and satisfy the on-site layout of the mining firms. However, the state's regulatory bodies justify the large-scale operations. According to EPA official 1, the LSM firms have the technical know-how to ensure adequate environmental management concerning mining and environmental issues. They have an environmental section with labs and other testing equipment and work with state regulatory agencies to ensure ethical and sustainable mining. These measures distinguish the LSM sector from the SSM sector. An official from a well-known LSM firm asserted that;

*Our (LSM firm) activities are heavily regulated. So, if you are using hydrocarbons, which can go and affect the environment, you have to find a way of reprocessing them and bringing them to zero harm before discharging them. So, we are made to create tailings dams to treat them to make sure that any water that remains from our process is being catered for... we also do a recognisance inspection with both the EPA, the Minerals Commission and the Water Resource Commission, who come to inspect the institute's nature of the place... We count the kind of tree species, the animals there, and after mining activities, we have a program called the rehabilitation phase, which is supposed to bring the place to its natural state as you met before extracting the minerals.*

*(Anonymous 1, personal communication, June 7, 2023)*



Furthermore, EPA official 1 emphasised that large-scale mining firms are likely to have offices, so engaging them on the spot is easy since there are always on-site people to engage and evaluate their operations. In contrast, small-scale mining operations often lack offices. Hence, during periods like the rainy season, when work comes to a halt, no one is on-site to allow regulatory agencies to assess them (EPA Official 1, personal communication, May 19, 2023). This makes adequate supervision of the SSM difficult as compared to the LSMs. However, these explanations do not negate that LSMs pose no environmental threat to the ecology. As stated by an official from the Ghana Chamber of Mines (GCM) and other participants, the firms pose environmental pollution. Nonetheless, there are laid down procedures to minimise their impact on the ecology.

#### ***Posting of Reclamation Bond***

The 1994 Environmental Act (Act 490) mandates EPA to ensure that the environment is secure. Hence, EPA works closely with the Minerals Commission to ensure that the proper measures and environmental policies are implemented to protect the environment regarding mining. Regulation 23 of the Environmental Assessment Regulation, 1999 requires mining firms, either LSM or SSM, to post a reclamation bond to regain the lands into their original state after mining. Nevertheless, over the years, the mandated bodies have been diligently enforcing this regulation within the large-scale mining (LSM) sector. A participant admitted that;

*LSMs also cause environmental pollution; however, their place is well managed, and there are guarantees that if you mess up, you might lose a huge amount of money. They set aside a huge*

*amount of money (sometimes about 40 million US dollars), which is just a fraction of their environmental liability, and it is called a guarantee and is backed by law. (EPA Official 2, personal communication, May 29, 2023)*

On the contrary, MinCom and EPA have not ensured that small-scale miners comply with the reclamation conditions, nor do they verify or certify reclaimed small-scale mining sites. Therefore, the small-scale operators mine and move away without considering reclamation due to regulatory gaps on the part of the regulatory bodies. As cited by Wacam, the Auditor General's report blamed the MinCom and EPA for regulatory failure. According to the report, the EPA failed to administer posting reclamation bonds to the SSMs as required by Regulation 23 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations, 1999 as done to the LSMs. Also, MinCom failed to ensure SSMs submit operational plans before issuing them with operating permits (Wacam, 2020). This revelation demonstrates how the state regulatory agencies prioritise the LSM sector's regulation over the SSM sector. Thus the state regulatory bodies are more particular in projecting the LSMs sector through regulation due to the quantum of revenue generated from the sector while painting the SSM sector as a polluter of the environment.

#### ***The Akoben Rating Program***

As part of their mandate, EPA introduced the *Akoban* rating program to access the environmental management control of mining firms. This annual assessment was initiated by EPA and mining companies to ensure ecosystem protection in the mining communities. The program was derived from the local concept of the *Adinkra* symbol, which signifies "vigilance,

circumspection, and preparedness”, which depicts the Ghanaian understanding of the need to protect the environment (EPA, 2010).

The goal of the *Akoban* “environmental performance rating and public disclosure project” is a fiducial effort by the state through the EPA to ensure continuous monitoring of gold mining firms after their Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). The program is a “five-colour rating scheme,” which employs the colours gold, green, blue, orange, and red to depict the environmental performance of gold mining companies concerning their day-to-day operations. These colours were adopted as a coding model to communicate to the general public and the media to appreciate the environmental management status of a mining firm. The approach adopted to obtain accurate rating program results includes quantitative data, qualitative data and visual information (EPA, 2010).

The criteria for the *Akoban* rating is based on seven requirements: “hazardous waste management, toxic and non-toxic releases, monitoring and reporting, environmental best practices, community complaints and corporate social responsibility”. EPA field agents undertake site inspections to identify environmental and social issues that may not be recorded using quantitative methods to assure the correctness of *Akoban* ratings. The *Akoban* ratings allow the EPA to evaluate gold mining firms based on promises outlined in the environmental impact assessments they have filed to the EPA. The figure below illustrates the *Akoban* Rating System explaining the various colours and their respective remarks.

<b>AKOBEN RATING SYSTEM</b>		
<b>Rating Level</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>RED</b>	<b>POOR</b>	<b>Serious Risks</b>
<b>ORANGE</b>	<b>UNSATISFACTORY</b>	<b>NOT in Compliance</b>
<b>BLUE</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>In Compliance</b>
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>VERY GOOD</b>	<b>Applies Best Practices</b>
<b>GOLD</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>	<b>Committed to Social Performance</b>

Figure 3: Showing the Akoben Rating System

Source: Environmental Protection Agency (2010).

Alluding to the above rating program, an official from a notable LSM firm admitted that;

*We (LSM firms) have the EPA program called the Akoben audit that ensures that you comply with all environmental protection policies stapled in the LI 2182. Then some of the environmental conditions given to you in your environmental management plan that you have stated that you will do to protect the environment. So, in the case when you are complying with it, and they see that you are ahead of what you are supposed to do... it boosts our confidence in what we do because it gives us a good corporate image, and that is what multinational companies want... if you have a good corporate image, it enhances your ability to attract more stakeholders and investors to you. (Anonymous 3, personal communication, June 12, 2023)*

The above indicates the strenuous measures put in place to mitigate the environmental consequences of mining. From the conversation, the program



aims to ensure healthy mining practices to protect the environment of the vicinities of which the mining firms operate. Also, the effort is not targeted at the environment of the mining communities alone. It is a form of motivation and avenue for the firms to attract shareholders and IFCs who may want to partner with a mining firm.

Interestingly, this rating program is not implemented in the SSM sector. Thus, no arrangement or program exists to regulate or motivate the SSM sector to engage in best mining practices. This reaffirms Hilson's (2019) argument that state regulating bodies are more interested in protecting the LSM sector due to its "growth pole", but restrict the SSM sector by concentrating on offence and penalties regarding their operations.

That notwithstanding, the accuracy of the results of the *Akobon* rating program is questionable. The program lacks an independent regime or body to monitor the environmental components such as air, water, sediment, and soil quality to ascertain the actual state of a mining firm's environment. Hence, there is possible manipulation since the mining firms do their test and later send the assessment report to the EPA for examination. An official from EPA conceded that there had been gaps in the results due to inaccuracy in reporting (EPA official 2, May 29, 2022). A participant disclosed the inaccuracy in the rating program by comparing Ghana's system of evaluating environmental management in mining firms to other jurisdictions and the politics attached. He stated that;

*When a firm conducts a lab analysis, the sample is taken to a third party ...such as Ghana Standard Authority, to analyse and bring the results. In Canada, when the results are ready, they*

*send one to the regulatory body directly, and then they bring one to the company. However, in Ghana, they send all the results to the company, and then the company prepares a report and forwards it to the regulator. So, the regulator comes in periodically to take samples of these water bodies and analyse them to see if the results given to them are accurate. The interesting thing is that sometimes, you (the regulatory body) will come, and then they (the company) will take them to a different site. (Anonymous 4, personal communication, June 12, 2023)*

This revelation shows how the system allows large mining firms to easily manipulate results to suit their aims. Aside from this, mining companies use their relations with political or influential leaders to cover up the environmental damage their operation causes even if the regulatory body identifies any wrongdoing. This enables the firm to elude any punishment due to them. The participant divulged that;

*...even if they identify some non-conformance, because of the company's affiliation to some political party, you can't escalate it... from where I work, it is not directly with a political party but with people holding higher positions. So, if a board member of the company knows someone in a higher position and there is a 'fuckup' on site, he has to call the person; then, in the next moment, a call comes, and everything is resolved. So, even if the company is supposed to be fined, they will not charge the company for any wrongdoing. (Anonymous 4, Personal communication, June 12, 2023)*

The preceding statement coincides with Amusan's (2018) assertion that MNCs officials and corrupt politicians or state officials perpetuate "rule-keeping and rule-breaking" corruption. That is, MNCs preach and pretend to operate within the confines of the laws but breach them and appear innocent with the help of state political officials and influential persons. Again, the revelation supports Oyier's (2017) and Muigua's (2018) claims that multinational firms utilise their financial power and collaborate with some state officials to thwart judicial processes against them to ensure they are not held accountable for crimes they are responsible for. It is evident from the above conversation that there is a high possibility of environmental destruction in the areas these LSMs operate. However, due to their relationship with some high-profile individuals, their illegal activities are concealed.

Such power relations reveal why almost all of the environmental havoc associated with mining in Ghana are put at the doorsteps of the small-scale mining sector. Meanwhile, there is less attention on the environmental violations perpetuated in the LSMs. The above information also confirms Hilson's (2018) assertion that the government is well aware of the environmental destruction caused by LSMs' operations. However, a lack of political will and powerful forces in government and society covers up firms acting contrary to environmental laws. This is due to the revenue the state generates from these LSMs, individuals' selfish interests and the need to protect capitalist accumulation.

### **The role of the non-state actors: the one side story**

The media, civil groups and NGOs have been instrumental in exposing the illegalities in the mining industry. They engage with industry firms (LSMs

and SSMs), regulatory bodies and communities. As already established in the literature, the media and some civil groups campaign vigorously against irresponsibility in the extractive industry. These campaigns usually are levelled against the small-scale mining sector for perpetuating illegalities in the industry which affect the environment. In most cases, their actions pressure the government of the day to take drastic measures to deal with the canker. For instance, the activities of the media and other civil groups led to the government's decision to place a total ban on small-scale mining activities in 2017 (Ayelezunu & Mawuko-Yiavugah, 2019).

Recently, the Media Coalition Against *Galamsey* (MCAG) sent an instructive and categorical message to the government stating that “order all small-scale mining and surface mining activities to stop immediately to allow our water bodies and forests to begin to be restored and strategize a way to bring sanity to all surface mining” (Lartey, October 13, 2022). This statement was made without regarding to the licenced players in the SSM sector.

Similarly, some powerful religious leaders in the country called for an immediate ban on all small-scale mining (both licensed and unlicensed) to prevent the degradation and pollution of the environment (Ghana News Agency, October 17, 2022). Interestingly, these media and other civil groups find it challenging to exert the same pressure on or accuse large-scale firms of causing environmental harm to the state's ecology. Meanwhile, studies such as Ayelezunu & Mawuko-Yiavuga (2019); Emmanuel et al. (2019); Toukou et al. (2019) and others have established that the LSMs engage in a large section of surface mining have reduced the nation's forest reserve and affected



biodiversity. Yet, these bodies do not dare to criticise the destruction caused by the LSMs to the environment.

Thus, it is unusual for the media and other civil groups to censure the LSMs' activities against the nation's ecology. Although the media and other civil groups play crucial roles in protecting the environment, their activism appears to be limited to SSM while shielding the foreign mining firms. Such actions of the non-state bodies demonstrates the bias against the SSMs sector. This affirms the neo-Marxist position espoused by Sutch and Elias (2007) that the oppressed class accepts the cultural perspectives and values of the ruling class as their own, which occurred within civil society institutions, through the media, educational institutions, churches, and other non-governmental organisations. These institutions only portray the SSMs as environmental polluters while remaining silent on the pollution by the LSMs.

Afriyie et al. (2016) highlighted that the activities of SSMs are frequently seen as more detrimental to the environment due to heightened scrutiny from the media and the public. Conversely, LSM companies limit access to their facilities, thereby concealing the environmental harm caused by their activities. Supporting these biases, a participant from the media space indicated that;

*...as a media organisation, you may want to talk about some of these things (environmental pollution). But how many times will you have access to the premises of a mining organisation (LSM)? If you not are invited...sometimes, you may want to enter their premises to assess how things are done, and they will tell you it is dangerous. And these multinational mining companies have*

*money to provide security and sometimes place guards on their concessions, so entering becomes difficult. (Media person, personal communication, June 9, 2023)*

The statement above strengthens the argument that the aforementioned civil bodies have easy access to the concessions of small-scale mining firms to examine their activities; for this reason, they are able to scrutinise their operations. In contrast, these bodies are mute on the LSMs' operations because getting access to these firms is challenging. Hence, civil groups or the media find it laborious to report large-scale mining companies' environmental status to the general public.

Likewise, information from the LSMs remains confidential to them. Letting out information regarding their (LSM) operations are kept secret. A participant pointed out that;

*...access to information makes information giving more or less a confidential thing. So, the information that you sometimes go there for, they can put a clause on you to say that 'we are giving you this information, but you cannot publish it'. (NGO Official 1, personal communication, May 31, 2023)*

With such heavy security presence and legal "threats" or provisions, individuals, civil groups, communities, or researchers find it intimidating to let out information that may not be in the interest of a mining firm. It is worth noting that the MNMCs (LSMs) have the necessary resources and connections with some prominent men in the political space to defend or thwart any allegations that will be levelled against them.

Again, these groups sometimes seek support or collaborate with the LSMs to mount pressure on the SSM sector. For instance, the members of MCAG called on the Ghana Chamber of Mines (body of the LSMs) to court their support to join the campaign against the *galamsey* menace. This kind of assistance from the LSM through GCM makes it very unlikely for the group to question the activities of the LSM sector concerning ecosystem protection.

### **Using the poor as scapegoats, shielding the Chinese and the “bigmen”**

When dealing with unlawful conduct in the mining sector, the state frequently uses the underprivileged as a face shield to conceal the prominent individuals and Chinese involved in the activity. Most people detained and arrested by the *Galamsey* task force were average folks involved in illegal mining for their survival. Meanwhile, the “bigmen” and Chinese ineligible to participate in small-scale mining activities are protected from imprisonment. The researcher’s experience at some of the *galamsey* spots visited showed that powerful people, including chiefs and politicians, are actively in charge of the *galamsey* activities.

Aside, several allegations have been ascribed to some government officials and other powerful individuals who are the financiers and managers of these *galamsey* activities. The paradox of the issue is that these are individuals championing the fight against *galamsey*. This is congruent with the world system theory that wealthy or elites in peripheral nations profit from the labour of low-wage workers and their business dealings with capitalists in the core nation. In effect, the less privileged labourers employed by these elites at the various *galamsey* sites suffer the penalties of illegal mining while the financiers and “bosses” walk free. A security analyst contends that the state is

unwilling to fight the illegal mining canker. According to the security analyst, some companies and influential individuals are engaging in illegal mining, but the state has turned a blind eye to them. He stressed;

*So we initiated inter-ministerial groups, multiple joint campaigns by statutory security forces and don't go anywhere, and they will not go anywhere until we are bold enough to strip bare the individuals and crooks involved. (Cromwell, October 3, 2022)*

Regarding Chinese protection, several publications indicate that most imprisoned *galamseyers* are less advantaged Ghanaians and other West African citizens. Most of the Chinese arrested by the task force have been freed. According to Ghanaweb (October 12, 2022), about 187 illegal miners were jailed, comprising 29 Nigers, 7 Nigerians, 3 Chinese, and 148 Ghanaians. In addition, the Fourth Estate Foundation indicated that in June 2021, some three Ghanaian illegal miners were sentenced to 15 years each in prison and fined GHC 720,000 by Takoradi Circuit Court. Similarly, in May 2022, eleven persons engaged in illegal mining in the Atewa Forest in the Eastern Region were given between five and 15-year jail terms. The publication of the Fourth Estate reveals that 220 people jailed for illegal mining offences from 2016 to 2020 were mainly Ghanaians and other African nationals (Fourth Estate, July 2022).

The resurgence of the *galamsey* fight in 2017, and 2021 saw hundreds of illegal Chinese miners arrested. However, upon request made by the Fourth Estate to Ghana Prison Service through the Right to Information (RTI), it was discovered that only two Chinese nationals were in prison for illegal mining offences. A classic example of the state shielding the powerful and Chinese



individuals is evidenced in the arrest of a Chinese *galamsey* guru and statements from some government officials. In 2017, when Ashia Huang, an illegal Chinese miner, was arrested, the Senior Minister made a profound statement that;

*We have a very good relationship with China. Today, the main company that is helping develop the infrastructure system in Ghana is Sinohydro, it is a Chinese Company. It is the one that is going to help process our bauxite and provide about two billion dollars to us... So, when there are these kinds of arrangements, there are other things behind the scenes. Putting that lady (Aisha) in jail in Ghana is not going to solve your economic problems. It is not going to make you or me happy, that's not important, the most important thing is that she has been deported from Ghana... (Graphic online, April 18, 2019)*

Gleaning this burgeoning statement from the state official shows how the state shields the powerful foreign nationals in the fight against *galamsey*. Alternatively, the state takes strict punitive actions against Ghanaian citizens. The statement from the minister is harmonious with the neo-Marxists' assertion that the government relies on tax, aid and borrowings to seek re-election from constituents who will hold them accountable if the economy fails (Block, 2012). Hence, the preceding comment specifies how the state trades justice with aid and financial assistance from powerful states through its officials to obscure their wrongdoings. This demonstrates how state officials facilitate the capital accumulation of powerful states.

### Perceived Influence: The root of biases towards LSMs

Ferdausy and Rahman (2009) accuse MNCs of being both the cause of pollution and the only source for its remediation concerning the environment. They argued that MNCs' operations in mining had caused serious environmental damages and contaminations, including the discharge of toxic substances into river bodies, the disposal of massive volumes of waste, the improper disposal of hazardous wastes, pollution of the atmosphere, and other violations in developing nations. In Ghana's mining industry, there has been the perception of the LSMs hiding behind the state and non-state advocacies to ascribe all the environmental havoc to the small-scale mining sector through the prism of *the galamsey* fight. It argues in this context that the benevolent nature of the LSMs enables them to influence these bodies to be silent about their harmful activities on the environment. Anyidoho and Crawford (2014), Hilson (2017), and Eduful et al. (2020) established that the Ghana Chamber of Mines funded the government (the state) to launch the first *anti-galamsey* taskforce, *Fight against Illegal Mining*, in 2006 and other support to the state's developmental projects.

The large-scale mines support the government in various ways to fight against illegal mining. This is because LSMs are on the receiving end of these illegalities, and therefore, they support the government with logistics and money to secure their concessions. An official from a regulatory body revealed that;

*Because a lot of galamsey is on the large-scale mining concessions, it is in their interest to get them off so they can mine peacefully. Apart from the fact that when they (illegal miners)*

*mine, they take off the ore, and also pose risks as well as safety dangers. Again, because heavy machines are moving around, and if they do not take time, they can run over those people. So, these large-scale mines support the government in various ways, mostly through the security agencies... They support them in any form, sometimes through the Chamber. (MLNR Official, personal communication, June 5, 2023)*

Similarly, a participant indicated that the LSMs offer assistance in diverse ways to facilitate the operations of the regulatory bodies. He stated that;

*Sometimes, when we (a mining regulatory body) are also suffering, we rely on them (LSMs security) to make arrests and other subsequent things ...the large scale mostly assists if it is affecting their concessions. That is, sometimes, they will have an area they are exploring, and the illegal miners troop in. With that, they have to defend their property. We also collaborate with them in such situations. (EPA Official 2, personal communication May 29, 2023)*

In that case, an executive member of GNASSM alleged that the LSMs, through their Chamber, masterminded the ban on the small-scale mining sector in 2017. He stressed that the Chamber funded the state to take action against illegal small-scale mining on their concessions. The participant bemoaned that, as stakeholders, the government did not inform or engage GNASSM regarding the ban before they issued it and further went ahead to seize and destroy their equipment without checking the legitimacy of a small-scale mining firm (GNASSM official, personal communication, May 22,

2023). The action affected the sector's operations and the low-class individuals who rely on the sector for a living.

That notwithstanding, some NGOs such as Wacam and A Rocha Ghana have strongly encouraged the government to revise the existing mining policy (Act, 703) to safeguard the country's ecosystem. Wacam has consistently criticised the government for pampering the mining companies at the expense of the citizens and the ecology of Ghana. According to Wacam's Associate Executive Director, "mining companies have used their economic and lobbying power to control negotiations of compensation with vulnerable farmers. Resulting in payments that do not reflect the long-term benefits of farming to the people affected by the operations of multinational mining companies" (Wacam, 2020). She further stressed that despite all the destruction caused by the mining companies, the government gives them "pamper treatment" with favourable tax incentives.

On the other leg, the researcher's engagement with A Rocha Ghana revealed that there is inadequate government engagement with stakeholders, especially NGOs and Civil Societies, on the regularisation of the small-scale mining sector. Thus, the government does not pay much attention to the suggestions and contributions civil groups put on the table regarding effective regulation of the SSM sector. NGO Official 2 purports:

*We find ourselves in a situation where the government does not engage. Even when they are engaged, they do not listen. We discussed all these regulation issues at the National Consultative Dialogue on Small-Scale Mining, and non-state actors tabled many recommendations; when you see the minute, you will*



*realise there is much sense in it, but they are not working with it.*

*The government thinks they know it all. (NGO official 2, personal communication, June 5, 2023)*

This suggests that the non-state actors are willing to offer solutions to the government to regulate the small-scale mining sector effectively. However, the government uses its discretionary power to set aside other views or do things their way without proper dialogue with stakeholders.

### **The Pros and Cons of the Mining Industry to the State**

Ghana has dramatically benefited from the mining industry, notably from the activities of both sectors in the gold extraction industry. These contributions include putting Ghana on the international stage and enhancing bilateral partnerships, developing the country's economy and infrastructure, and fostering a sense of community through shared social duties. Also, this section covers the economic and environmental effects of mining on the state.

### **The Pros: Contributions of LSM and SSM to the country**

#### ***International Relations: Promoting Ghana's international recognition***

Ghana has gained much international recognition due to its massive contribution of mineral resources to the international market. The mining industry, specifically gold mining, is one of the commodities that has projected Ghana internationally and deepened its multilateral and bilateral relations. Studies reveal that the industry is the largest source of the country's foreign direct investment (FDI) (GCM Annual Report, 2021). It has attracted investors from developed countries like America, China, Canada, South Africa and Australia. Ghana is currently ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the international space and the leading producer of gold in Africa (GCM Annual Report, 2021).

Regarding bilateral relations, Ghana and Australia reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing their bilateral ties to support each other's mining industries. This was made public when the Australian High Commissioner, Leann Johnston, visited Ghana's Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. She stated, "We are very keen to continue to help Ghana grow and to achieve Ghana's Mining Hub status" (West African Mining and Power Expo (WAMPEX, 2022)). She further mentioned that there is engagement between her and some of the Australian mining partners about what they are doing to contribute towards regulating the mining industry in Ghana. Also, the South African High Commissioner to Ghana, Grace Mason, expressed the readiness of her country to understudy the regularisation of Ghana's small-scale mining operation. She described Ghana's small-scale mining architect as one of the best in the continent (MNLN, November 29, 2022).

Again, over the years, the industry has invited other countries to study how things are done in Ghana's mining industry, which promotes the bilateral relations between Ghana and such countries. For instance, a 4-member delegation led by the Zambia's Mines and Minerals Development Minister, Mr Paul C. Kabuswe, engaged with Ghana's Minerals Commission to study their operations, especially in the Small-Scale and Artisanal mining sector, to replicate it in Zambia's mining industry (MinCom newsletter, July 2022). According to the MLNR official 1 and MinCom official, most African Countries like Sierra Leone and Tanzania have adopted the Mineral policies of Ghana to regulate their respective mining industries. Ghana also partners with international agencies such as the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), and ECOWAS

Federation of Chamber of Mines (EFEDCOM), among others. These and other engagements help project the image of Ghana in the international space, attracting investors to the country.

### *Employment and economic contribution*

Furthermore, the mining industry creates room for alleviating the country's unemployment burden and generating much of its revenue from the mining industry. According to Kumah (2022), the small-scale sector employs about 4.5 million people, which forms 12% of Ghana's population. The sector accounts for 60% of the labour force in the mining industry. The Chamber of Mines report records that the large-scale mining firms employed about 12,236 Ghanaians in 2021 alone (GCM Annual Report, 2021), making the total number of employees in the LSM sector slightly above 34,363. These individuals, in their small way, contribute to the country's economic development through direct and indirect tax payments.

In terms of gold production and revenue generation, both sectors make a significant contribution in this regard. The 2021 GCM Annual Report indicates that the gold volume attributable to Ghana producers declined from 4.022 million ounces in 2020 to 2.818 million ounces in 2021, the lowest output level since 2008. This resulted in Ghana dropping from its position as the top gold producer in Africa to the second spot. However, according to the recent rating, the country regained its position as Africa's number one gold producer, from 2.82 million ounces in 2021 to 3.74 million ounces in 2022 (Ghanaweb, June 12, 2023). That notwithstanding, the statistics in Table 4 below indicate that the small-scale mining companies complement the LSM sector in contributing significantly to Ghana's gold production, projecting the

country's image as one of the leading gold producers in the world. The table below gives the figures of gold production on the large and small scale of Ghana's mining industry.





**Table 3: Comparative gold production between LSM and SSM from 2006-2021**

Year	LSM Production (oz)	SSM production (oz)	Total Gold production (oz)	SSM Percentage (%)
2006	2,095,553	247,063	2,342,616	10.5
2007	2,239,678	388,594	2,628,272	14.8
2008	2,378,012	418,943	2,796,955	15.0
2009	2,564,095	555,737	3,119,832	17.8
2010	2,624,391	767,196	3,391,587	22.6
2011	2,697,612	978,611	3,676,223	27.0
2012	2,848,409	1,464,781	4,313,190	33.96
2013	2,808,405	1,441,497	4,249,902	33.92
2014	2,851,885	1,489,722	4,341,607	34.31
2015				
2016	2,586,596	1,656,762	4,243,358	39.0
2017	2,807,025	1,424,351	4,231,376	33.7
2018	2,807,000	1,984,000	4,791,000	41.4
2019	2,989,000	1,588,000	4,577,000	34.7
2020	2,847,000	1,175,000	4,022,000	29.21
2021	2,720,000	98,000	2,818,000	3.48

*Source:* Information extracted from Minerals Commission Annual Report 2015; Chamber of Mines Annual Reports 2019 and 2021

Notably, most of the revenue the state generates in the mining industry comes from the LSM firms. As indicated by Gold Fields Acting Executive Vice President and Head of Gold Fields West Africa:

*In 2021, we (Gold Fields) made a total contribution of USD320.2 million to the government, being payments for corporate taxes and royalties (USD244 million), employee pay-as-you-earn (USD28 million) and dividends (USD48.2 million)... (Top Guide interview with Joshua Mortoti, June 2022).*

According to the Bank of Ghana (cited in GCM Annual Report, 2021), mineral export-related revenues waned by 25 percent from US\$ 6.998 billion in 2020 to US 5.241 billion in 2021. Despite the above reduction, the industry's total revenue fetched the country GH¢ 1.536 billion in 2021 from GH¢ 1.116 billion in 2020 as royalties. Direct and indirect taxes to the state resulted in US\$ 922,241 (GCM Annual Report, 2021). As stated in the report, revenue generated by the Chamber to the state increased from Gh¢ 2.333 billion in 2020 to Gh¢2.547 billion in 2021. This includes direct and indirect tax (GCM Annual Report, 2021). These figures ground Hilson's (2018) argument that the LSMs are seen as a "growth pole", which is the rationale for the favourable decision and prioritisation of the sector over the SSM sector.

#### ***Community support***

Mining firms support communities in various forms, including education, health, and other social amenities. In the education space, AngloGold Ashanti Iduapriem Mines constructed a set of residences for the Abompuniso Basic School, which included two semi-detached units with two bedrooms each and four semi-detached units with one bedroom each, worth GHS 669,111 to

assuage the issue of lack of accommodation for teachers. The company gifted each school a six-unit classroom block at the Awudua Methodist Basic School and New Tokunuaso Basic Schools (GCM Annual Report, 2021). The mining companies also offer scholarships to brilliant but needy students in their catchment communities as part of their social responsibility programs.

Also, the company constructed a GHS 300,000 worth 20-bed fully resourced Communicable Diseases Unit for the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality at the Apinto Government Hospital in the Western Region of Ghana (GCM Annual Report, 2021). On the field, the researcher chanced on health screenings organised by AngloGold and Golden Star Resource, partnering with GIZ, a mining service provider for the above companies. This health screening was organised to sensitise and educate community members on breast cancer awareness, prostate cancer, HIV-AIDS and sickle cell disease. Mining communities which benefited from this health screening include Wassa Akyimpim, Old Subri, Nsadweso, Tebrebe, Ahweteso, and Bankyem. All these communities are in the catchment communities of AngloGold and Golden Star in the Western Region of Ghana. To add up, officials from Tarkwa traditional council indicated that the mining firms in the area embark on monthly sharing of sanitary pads to improve good hygiene among girls (Traditional Elders, personal communication, June 14, 2023).

Furthermore, the Acting Executive Vice President and Head of Gold Fields West Africa stated that Gold Fields had allocated a significant amount of money, totalling more than US\$84.4 million, through its foundation to support various projects and initiatives centred on education, health, water and sanitation, agriculture, and infrastructure (Top Guide, 2022). The foundation

focuses on projects that create shared value and brings tangible benefits to the communities where Gold Fields operates. One notable achievement is the construction of a 33 km asphalt road connecting Tarkwa and Damang, which has enhanced transportation and improved road safety in the area (Top Guide, 2022). Some of these projects and programmes include scholarships, Youth in Horticulture Production (YouHoP), community apprenticeships, Graduate Traineeship, and the construction of roads, schools and clinics. The above are a few mining companies' contributions to the host communities.

### **The negative impacts of mining on economic development of the mining communities and the country**

Despite the above contribution, mining distresses the environment and livelihood of local communities and the country at large. These include:

#### ***Environmental cost of surface mining***

Awudi (2002) avers that large-scale surface mines have degraded vast land swamps, severely threatening local agriculture and economic existence. As the Minerals Commission indicates, almost all the large mining companies and small-scale operations are engaged in surface mining. Despite the benefits the state attracts, the mining industry has profound environmental and health implications for the nation's ecology. Surface mining destroys the vegetation, farmlands, and habitats of other species and causes severe water and air pollution and affects indigenes' well-being. Kumi et al. (2021) state that mining companies have drained almost 86 percent of the forest cover and farmlands in some parts of Ghana. A participant in charge of an SSM firm lamented that;

*Those in surface mining spoil things, I am totally against it. From the beginning of its implementation, I have stood against surface*



*mining because it is the cause of much destruction in the industry. The government should limit it and focus on the rock that will be helpful. Even Nkrumah stopped surface mining because he knew the effects... the large-scale mining companies destroy the environment. When you look at Gold Fields Teberibe, the place used to be a forest; that was where the people of Tarkwa farm their crops, but today they have destroyed the land. We used to hunt in the forest, but the place is depleted now, so there are no animals for hunting. (SSM officer 2, personal communication, June 10, 2023)*

In addition, personal observation attests to the above comment on how the waste from the LSMs in the area has occupied a considerable amount of land that could be used for agricultural purposes. The environmental cost to the state is injurious to its development. Resources meant for other developmental projects are channelled into the reclamation of mined lands, treatment of water, and fighting disease. An NGO official stated, “the cost of reclaiming the environment is about 10% of the country’s GDP” (NGO Official 1, personal communication, May 31, 2023). It is on record that Government of Ghana borrowed USD 103.4 million from the World Bank to reclaim the degradation of devastated lands due to mining activities in 2021 (World Bank, August 30, 2021). These loans could have been used for other developmental projects to benefit the affected people and the nation.

### ***Collapse of local industry***

The power relation in the mining industry is gradually collapsing the small-scale mining sector and other local land-based industries, which provide

income for the indigenes and the country. As sizeable agricultural land is given out to mining companies, farming activities that employ thousands of rural settlers suffer. Most affected individuals are now in the different ventures of the economy through the introduction of ALP. It is important to note that some officials from Tarkwa Traditional Council and other participants expressed that such activities are not worthy enough to sustain them as income from their initial agricultural activities. This increases the country's unemployment rate and reduces the income of the community and the state. Wacam officials noted in the organisation's maiden forum that;

*Mining rather negatively affected important sectors of the economy, such as agriculture which had provided economic sustenance for the majority of our people, ...there is enough evidence in our country to support the fact that farming, especially cocoa farming, had supported agrarian communities in the education of many intellectuals we have in the country but had not enjoyed the protection of the numerous mining laws.*  
(Wacam, September 2022)

A careful study of the 2019 and 2021 annual reports of the Ghana Chamber of Mines showed that the small-scale sector's production had reduced drastically after the ban in 2017. Gold production by the SSM sector reduced from 1,588,000 ounces in 2019 to 1,175,000 ounces and 98000 ounces in 2020 and 2021, respectively (GCM, Annual Report, 2021). From the statistics, between 2020 and 2021, the SSM sector's gold production declined by 91.66 percent (GCM, Annual Report, 2021). GCM attributes the near collapse of the SSMs as a reflection of the producers' response to the government's imposition

of a 3 percent withholding tax on their output in 2019 (GCM Annual Report, 2021). In addition, the indigenes in the small-scale mining sector are gradually losing hope due to the unfavourable environment occasioned by the government to operate. Also, some SSM firms bemoaned banks' unwillingness to support their operation with loans after the ban was lifted has affected their operations. A further examination of the players in the SSM sector revealed that the introduction of the Community mining scheme after the ban had suppressed their operation due to the political backing of the scheme. These and other factors affect the operation of the sector.

#### ***The exploitation of the state's mineral resources***

Poulantzas (1978, p 66 cited in Howlett, 2010) sees the state as a “factor of cohesiveness between the stages of social formation,” functioning not always in the interests of specific capitalists but always in the long-term interests of capitalists. The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), drafted and implemented by state officials, has given room for multinational mining companies to possess power over gold mined with little percentage for the state. According to Act 703, section 43(1);

*Where a mineral right is for mining or exploitation, the government shall acquire a ten percent free carried interest in the rights and obligations of the mineral operations in respect of which financial contribution shall not be paid by the government.*

Thus, the state holds only a 10% equity interest in the various mining firms in the industry, to some 0% interest. Sir Sam Jonah, an industry player, describes the situation as “shameful”. He detailed that:

*The Ghana government had 55%, at some stage they sold their interest from 55% to 25% in 1994; Ghana government sold and took USD 400 million out, so the Ghana government became a 25% and not a 55% shareholder... Ghana government, as we speak, has not got 1%, it has zero equity interest in AngloGold Ashanti. (Yalley, September 27 2022)*

He further lamented that “no Ghanaian owns even a 2% share in any mining company in the country”. This implies that the firms hold a significant percentage interest in gold mining in the country, with less interest to the state. Again, this supports the world system assertion that the core countries represented by MNCs are given the means through structural setup (in this context the, minerals and Mining Act, 2006) to dominate and cheaply exploit the peripheral country like Ghana for mineral resource and other raw materials (Martinez-Vela, 2001). This demonstrates the extent of how foreigners control the state’s gold resources.

Aside from this, the Act allows multinational mining firms to transfer all the proceeds from the ore mined without an upper limit of retention outside the country’s jurisdiction. As stated in Wacam’s (2019) *Policy Briefing*, there is a lack of provision to reinvest the profits into local businesses, which would serve as a safety net for the country and the communities where mineral extraction occurs if the extraction is completed. It is interesting to note that Ghana is the sixth largest producer of gold globally and first in Africa, yet less than 10 percent of the proceeds are retained in the Ghanaian economy. Despite the endowment of gold deposits and touted as one of the leading producers of the item, the country can only boast of 8.74 metric tons of gold reserves. In



harmonious to the above claims, the current governor of the central bank of Ghana bemoaned that;

*... Ghana has mined gold for over three centuries and for the most part, the gold is exported. In 2019 for instance, Ghana was adjudged the largest producer of gold in Africa and the 7th largest in the world. Yet, in that same year, other central banks acquired a record level of 670 tonnes of gold to boost their reserves, according to the World Gold Council... Ghana added nothing to its gold reserves over the period. (Bank of Ghana, June 17, 2021)*

This attests to the argument that foreigners are major beneficiaries of Ghana's gold resources. It is also evidenced from the above claims that the transferability clause enshrined in Act 703 demonstrates how the state's structures facilitate foreigners to enjoy the country's rich mineral resources at the expense of the state. Thereby making peripheral country like Ghana depend more on the multinational mining companies represented by the core countries for capital, as acknowledged by the world system theory.

This also explains the neo-Marxist's argument that the structural mechanisms maintain capitalism's dominance and that these structural mechanisms function regardless of the ruling class' political consciousness. Instead, the state managers in the structural position of a capitalist society push them to develop some awareness of what is required to keep capitalism viable. Neo-Marxists, such as Miliband (1973 cited in Howlett, 2010) described state elites as agents operating to defend the capital accumulation process and to ensure the ruling capitalists' class domination. In this context, the transferability provision enshrined in Act 703 forces political leaders to give that "dominance

power” to the capitalist groups to exploit the nation’s natural resources at the expense of the citizens. Hence, multinational mining companies dominate the country’s extractive industry. In contrast, the indigenes keep fighting to survive through illegal means.

### Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed and analysed data collected on the four research questions. The first section addressed how multinational mining companies influence Ghana’s mining policies and the fight against *galamsey*. A careful examination reveals that the framers of Act 703 aimed to attract more investment into the mining industry. Hence, most provisions in the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) are liberal towards the LSMs. Through its Chamber (GCM), the sector uses its financial strength and experts to lobby and negotiate for favourable deals. The second section shows that some multinational mining companies had been permitted to mine in some forest reserves. Also, inadequate compensation, livelihood issues, and a lack of mineable land for the small-scale sector have resulted in confrontations between mining firms and community members. The third section demonstrates that the regulatory actors prioritise the LSM over the SSM sector to ensure sound mining and environmental protection. The study also shows that access to information in multinational mining firms is challenging. Hence the attention is more focused on the SSM sector regarding environmental protection. The final section indicates that both sectors significantly contribute to the country’s gold production and economic benefits. However, the provisions in the Act support capitalists’ accumulation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's objective has been to investigate the power relations within the mining industry by exploring multinational mining companies influence in the industry through the prism of the *galamsey* fight (illicit gold mining) to suppress the small-scale mining sector. This chapter of the study contains a summary of the findings and the study's main conclusion. It further provides recommendations to be considered by state institutions mandated to regulate the mining industry and non-state bodies. The rationale for the recommendations is to ensure holistic measures and approaches to protect Ghana's ecological integrity and economic development of the state and mining communities as far as the mining industry is concerned. Also, the chapter suggests recommendations for further research.

#### Summary of Research Findings

The research aimed to accomplish five goals for achieving its primary purpose. The first objective was to examine the challenges of Ghana's policy framework in the mining industry. The second objective seeks to examine how LSM companies influence the fight against illegal mining activities and mining policies in Ghana. Also, the third objective aimed to examine how power relations in land acquisition for mining contribute to illicit mining activities. The fourth sought to explore how the state and non-state actors check or monitor the mining activities of both LSM and SSM to ensure sustainable mining practices. Lastly, the study examines the pros and cons of both LSM and SSM on the economic development of the state and mining communities.

The qualitative method was employed in the study to fulfil the research goals. Specifically, the study employed a case study design to address the questions generated from the research objectives. The purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the relevant participants for the study. This sampling technique was suitable for the study because it allowed the researcher to carefully select participants with in-depth knowledge and expertise in the mining industry. In all, 30 participants were sampled; however, only 21 were interviewed.

The study employed both primary and secondary data to draw its conclusions. The primary data was obtained through a press statement, newsletters, web pages of targeted institutions, policy documents, and a face-to-face interview with 21 key participants from purposefully selected institutions in the mining industry. These include officials from the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Minerals Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Ghana Chamber of Mines, the Tarkwa Traditional Council, and the Ghana National Association of Small-scale Miners. Further, officials from non-state institutions such as A Rocha Ghana, Wacam, the media, and some LSM and SSM sectors were engaged. Secondary data, on the other hand, were obtained from books, journal articles, newspapers, and web pages. Thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data collected for the study. This procedure allowed the researcher to thoroughly examine the data related to power dynamics within the mining industry regarding multinational mining companies and the fight against illegal mining.

The study discovered that the state's aim of making Ghana the mining hub by attracting foreign investors into the mining industry influenced the



formulation of the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703). Although Act 703 was designed to regulate the entire mining industry, the provisions in the Act are biased toward the LSMs (MNNMCs). Thus, the study unearths that multinational mining companies do not directly influence Ghana's mining policies. However, the state capitalised on the financial strength, technical know-how, and structural advantages of the MNNMCs to influence decision-making in the LSMs' favour. Meanwhile, the provisions of the Act designated to the SSMs appear to restrict the sector's activities instead of developing them. This partly enables multinational mining companies to remain influential in the mining industry at the expense of the economic development of Ghana and the communities in which they operate.

Also, the study further discovered that multinational mining companies influence government decisions in the industry through lobbyists and experts, threats and resistance, provision of financial aid, and engagement with specialised committees. In addition, the large mining companies through Ghana Chamber of Mines influence the fight against *galamsey* by providing logistics and collaboration with mining regulatory bodies.

Again, the study revealed that the state's laxity in giving out forest reserves for foreign mining companies, inadequate compensation to affected individuals, and insufficient concessions for small-scale mining firms serve as pull and push factors for individuals to engage in illegal mining. There appears to be a state priority in granting large-scale mining firms in unauthorised areas, such as forest reserves. The study demonstrates that this gesture pulls or encourages individuals to operate illegally in such places for their selfish gains without paying attention to the environmental consequences of their activities.

More so, lack or inadequate compensation for individuals whose economic and livelihood activities have been affected by these mining companies, coupled with inadequate mineable areas for small-scale mining firms, compelled most individuals to venture into illicit gold mining for survival.

The study further unearths that the non-engagement of some key stakeholders, such as the EPA and traditional leaders, in issuing mining licenses is crucial in *galamsey* activities in the mining industry. This is because some individuals, especially small-scale miners, may obtain a mining license from the Minerals Commission but fail to obtain an environmental permit from equally essential bodies like the EPA, the Water Commission, and the Forestry Commission. It was discovered that the government's initiative, the Community Mining Program, is not regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency due to the political strings attached to the program.

Finally, the study revealed that the government is poised to make decisions without paying much attention to the views of civil groups on the regularisation of the small-scale mining sector to curb or reduce the activities of illegal miners. Further, the study shows that the media and other civil groups are willing to scrutinise the actions of LSMs like the SSMs to ascertain their environmental management status. However, access to LSM firms is challenging, and hence, information that may not be in their interest remains confidential to them. This influences the media's constant reporting on the small-scale sector and environmental pollution.

### **Conclusion**

The extractive industry, especially gold mining, has gained Ghana's international recognition. The industry has facilitated strong ties with developed

countries such as Australia, Canada, the USA, China, Norway, and South Africa. Economically, the industry brings in millions of dollars for the country. However, the study concludes that the economic and environmental sustainability of the industry for the state is in jeopardy due to the power play in the mining industry. Thus, power relations in the industry stressed in the study are propagated by the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) and state officials. Most of the provisions in the Act and the actions of state officials favour multinational mining companies, which are detrimental to the economic development of Ghana.

The study further revealed that MNMCs are able to exert their power on the state to influence decisions policies relating to the extractive industry. The study's findings give strength to the two theories: the world-system theory and the neo-Marxist position that state officials and structures aid core states' capital accumulation in less developed countries through MNCs. It also strengthens the argument that most governments in African mining states restrict SSMs' operations through legislative means to create room for foreign mining companies.

Also, the study shows that local communities are side-lined in granting concessions to large mining companies. Hence, there is a power struggle for land ownership between the indigenes and mining companies. It further revealed that government officials violate established regulations in favour of MNMCs, as do some influential individuals who contribute to illegal mining and destroying Ghana's ecology. The study highlighted that the state is committed to sanitising the mining industry and protecting the ecosystem from destruction. However, the government is content with issuing forest reserves to

multinational mining companies and “bigmen” or influential individuals for mining operations. On the other hand, the state prohibits the less privileged or members of the local communities from engaging in small-scale mining activities in the forest reserves. Meanwhile, there are inadequate concessions for the SSM sector to organise their mining activities. These have contributed to illegalities in the small-scale mining sector.

Furthermore, the study found that mining authorities tasked with overseeing the activities of the entire mining industry failed to do so effectively. This is because most of the measures initiated by the government to ensure environmentally friendly mining are only operationalised and enforced at the large-scale mining firms, while the small-scale sector is given less attention regarding effective regularisation. Similarly, civil groups remain silent on the activities of the LSMs due to access and information restrictions from the sector. However, civil groups and the media appear more vocal about the SSMs’ activities due to the easy accessibility to their sites.

Nevertheless, the importance of the industry cannot be overemphasised. The study highlighted the benefits the state derives from the mining industry. Both sectors in the industry contribute immensely to Ghana’s economic development and deepen the country’s bilateral and multilateral relations with other states and international organisations. This has internationally projected Ghana’s image as one of the giants in gold production. Mining firms have also contributed to the development of local communities by providing social amenities and generating revenue for the state. The study also shows that despite the benefits derived from the mining industry, there is capital flight on the part of the big mining companies. Again the mining activities of both sectors



in the mining industry have serious environmental and health consequences on mining communities and the state.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made to ensure economic growth and environmental protection as far as the mining industry is concerned. These recommendations, if implemented, can lead to a more sustainable and profitable mining sector. It is recommended that the government ensure a broad-based consultation with significant stakeholders to revise the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) or amend some sections of the Act that are detrimental to the state's economic growth. Also, the government should enact policies to ensure the effective regularisation and growth of the small-scale mining sector, which can contribute significantly to the country's economy.

The study further recommends that to be able to reduce the power struggle between the local communities and mining companies; the regulatory bodies such as Minerals Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency should endeavour to promote community participation and consultation in the decision-making process, encourage dialogue between stakeholders, including government, companies, and local communities, to foster collaboration and mutual understanding; enhance corporate responsibility through fair compensation, local hearing, and community developments to restore lost livelihood of indigenes as a result of mining projects. This will help reduce excessive influence from the large scale mining companies.

Also, the Government of Ghana should refrain from granting forest reserves to LSM firms and other influential people in SSM to discourage mining

in restricted and reserved areas. Likewise, the government should ensure adequate mineable land for the SSM firms' operations. This will curtail or reduce the issue of small-scale miners invading the concessions of LSMs, which, in most cases, results in conflicts and confrontations. Concerning the complaints of inadequate concessions for small-scale mining operations, the study further recommends that the Minerals Commission and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources amalgamate SSMs into groups to gain the LSM status to enable them acquire more considerable concessions for their operations. By doing this, the individual miners combine resources to manage their operations. This will augment local gold production, generating more revenue for the state.

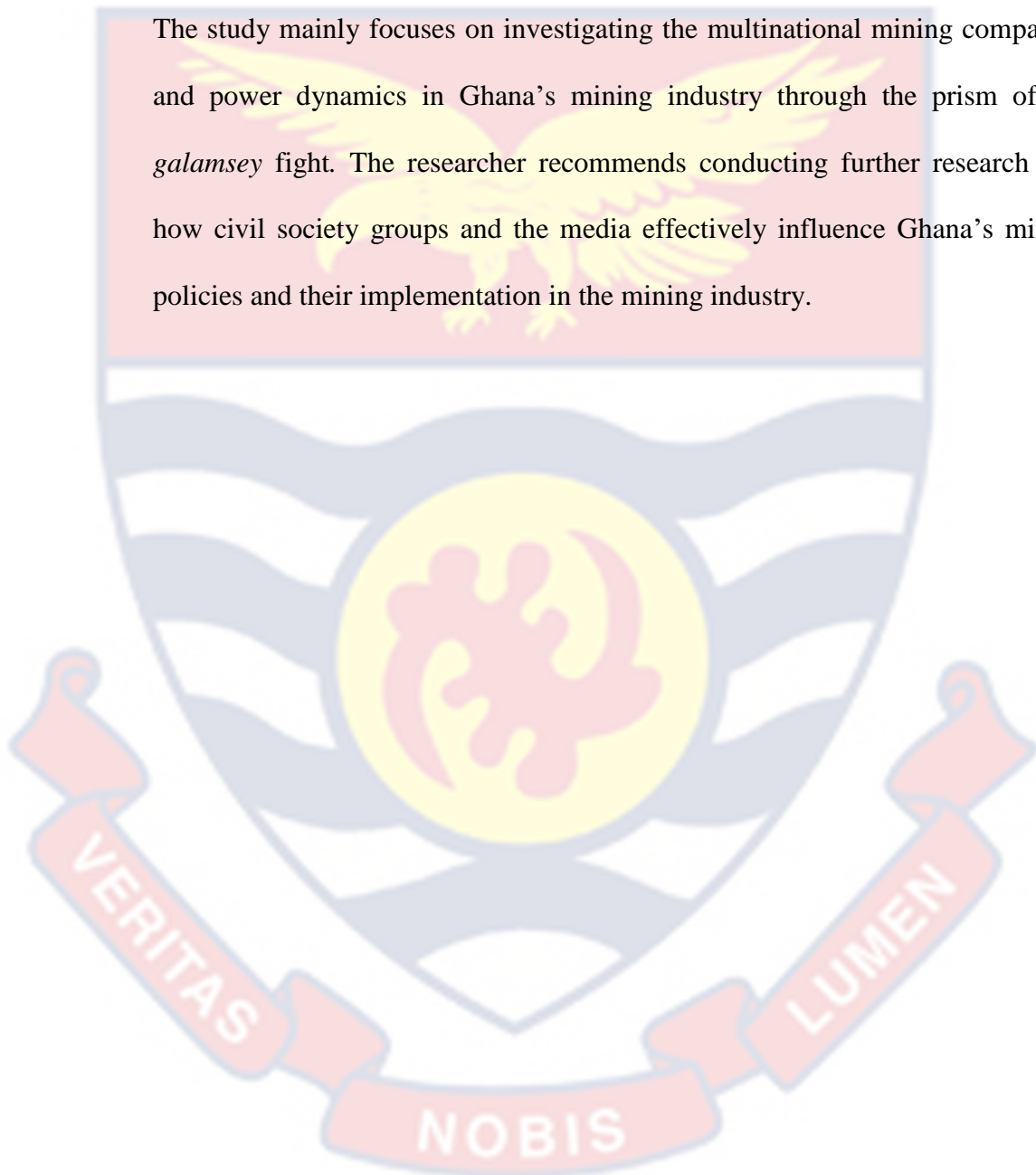
In addition, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Minerals Commission should proactively engage major stakeholders like traditional leaders, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other equally essential agencies before issuing licences to firms. Engaging these bodies in the early stages of the mining licence process will ensure proper environmental assessments are made before licences are issued for mining activities.

To ensure sustainable mining and environmental protection, the Minerals Commission, the Environment Protection Agency, and the non-state actors mentioned in the study should ensure proper checks on mining companies, irrespective of size and devoid of favouritism. Regulatory bodies should require regular reporting of activities and environmental impact assessments from mining companies (both large and small-scale mining firms) and make this information accessible to the general public. To that effect, the media must act as a “watchdog” to investigate both large and small-scale

mining firms for environmental destruction. This will ensure transparency and holistic protection of the environment, giving the general public a sense of reassurance and confidence in the process.

### **Recommendation for Further Research**

The study mainly focuses on investigating the multinational mining companies and power dynamics in Ghana's mining industry through the prism of the *galamsey* fight. The researcher recommends conducting further research into how civil society groups and the media effectively influence Ghana's mining policies and their implementation in the mining industry.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Introductory Letter

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES  
FACULTY OF ARTS

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

PHONE (233) 559092181/0552481788  
EMAIL: [cais@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:cais@ucc.edu.gh)  
OUR REF CAIS/C/12/VOL.2/22  
YOUR REF:



12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**  
**(JUSTICE KWABENA ATENKA - AR/MPI/20/0005)**

This is to introduce the above-named M.Phil. student from the Centre to you for your kind assistance.

Mr. Atenka is seeking to collect data to undertake research on the topic: *"Power Dynamics in Ghana's Mining Industry: Exploring the Influence of Multinational Mining Companies on the fight against Galamsey."*

We would be most grateful if you could accord him the needed assistance he may require from your outfit.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Emmanuel Saboro  
DIRECTOR

## Appendix B

## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

## COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES

## FACULTY OF ARTS

## CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

## Ethical Clearance

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**  
**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT**

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OUR REF: IRB/C3/VoLL/0152  
YOUR REF:  
OMB NO: 0990-0279  
IORG #: IORG0011497



15<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023

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Mr Justice Kwabena Atenka  
Department of Accounting  
University of Cape Coast

Dear Mr Atenka,  
**ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CHLS/2022/112)**  
The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research on **Power Dynamics in Ghana's Mining Industry: Exploring the Influence of Multinational Mining Companies on the Fight against Galamsey**. This approval is valid from 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 to 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024. You may apply for a renewal subject to the submission of all the required documents that will be prescribed by the UCCIRB.

Please note that any modification to the project must be submitted to the UCCIRB for review and approval before its implementation. You are required to submit a periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,  
  
Kofi F. Atmuquandoh  
Ag. Administrator



**Appendix C****UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST****COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES****FACULTY OF ARTS****CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES****Interview Guide for the Regulatory Bodies**

1. What are some governance issues pertinent to the mining industry?
2. In formulating mining policies, does the state engage other stakeholders, such as the LSMs, SSMs, CSOs and other relevant bodies?
3. What is the composition of parties involved in the formulation of mining policies?
4. How do the LSM firms support the fight against *galamsey*?
5. To what extent do the parties (SSM and LSM) influence mining policies and their implementations?
6. What is the prerequisite for LSM and SSM firms before registering to operate?
7.
  - a. How do the mining authorities define illegal mining?
  - b. Does the definition only applies to the SSM sector or both sectors?
8. What measures are put in place to check the activities of both SSM and LSM firms to ensure environmental protection?
9. What punitive actions does the state take against firms whose activities endanger the ecosystem?
10. How does the state collaborate with non-state actors to ensure environmental protection in the mining communities?
11. What are the economic and infrastructural benefits the state and mining communities derive from the mining companies?
12. How do the mining activities of both sectors affect other economic activities in the mining communities?
13. What are the environmental effects of mining on the mining communities and the country?



**Appendix D**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**  
**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES**  
**FACULTY OF ARTS**  
**CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**Interview Guide for Ghana Chamber of Mines/ Large-Scale Mining (LSM)**

**Companies**

1. What are some governance issues pertinent to the mining industry?
2. a. Does the state engage the sector or LSM firms in formulating mining and environmental policies?  
b. If yes, what role does the sector or LSM firms play in the process of mining and environmental policies' formulations?
3. To what extent do the sector or LSM firms influence or contribute to formulating and implementing a policy in the mining industry?
4. a. To what extent do the Small-scale Mining (SSM) activities affect the operations of the LSM firms?  
b. How do the LSMs co-exist with the SSM firms?
5. How does the sector contribute to the fight against illegal mining in the industry?
6. a. Does the state provide 'security' to the sector to ensure that the business confidence of its firms is not compromised?  
b. If yes, in what ways and how does the state provide the sector with such "security"?
7. How do the LSMs collaborate with state agencies and non-state actors to check healthy mining activities?
8. a. Do the operations of LSMs affect the environment of the mining communities in any way?  
b. If yes, what measures have the LSMs adopted to address the environmental effects mentioned in (8. a)?  
c. How does the sector (LSMs) ensure ecosystem protection in the process of their operations?
9. In what ways do the sector (LSMs) contribute to the development of the mining communities?

**Appendix E**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**Interview Guide for the Small-Scale Mining (SSM) Firms**

1. Do the state mining authorities engage the sector in formulating mining and environmental policies?
2. If yes, what role does the sector play in the process of mining and environmental policies' formulations?
3. How does the sector ensure healthy mining practices and environmental protection?
4. Does the state provide security to the firms in the sector?
5. If yes, in what ways and how does the state provide the sector with such "security"?
6. What challenges does the sector face in its operations, and how are they addressing them?
7. Why do most SSMs operate in unauthorised areas?
8. How does the sector ensure environmental protection?
9. What will be your response to the media reportages about the massive environmental degradation caused by the SSM sector?
10. How does the sector contribute to development in the mining communities?

**Appendix F**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**Interview Guide for the Non-State Actors (The Media, NGOS and CSOS)**

1. What are some governance issues pertinent to Ghana's mining industry?
2. How would your organisation describe the mining policies of Ghana?
3. In your view, to what extent do multinational mining companies influence Ghana's mining policies?
4. What do you think accounts for most SSM firms operating illegally in unauthorised areas?
5. How often does your organisation check the activities of LSM and SSM operations to ensure ecosystem protection?
6. How long has your organisation been involved in the fight against illegal mining?
7. How does your institution collaborate with state agencies to fight against illegal mining and ensure environmental protection?
8. How do the state and the mining firms support your quest to ensure the protection of the country's ecology?

**Appendix G****UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST****COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES****FACULTY OF ARTS****CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES****Interview Guide for the Traditional Leaders**

1. Does the state engage the traditional leaders in the formulation of mining policies?
2. a. Does the state engage the traditional leaders in granting concessions to mining firms?  
b. To what extent do the traditional leaders influence granting of concessions to mining firms in their communities?
3. How does the acquisition of concessions by mining companies contribute to illegal mining in your community?
4. How do traditional leaders engage with large-scale mining (LSM) and Small-scale Mining (SSM) firms?
5. How do the LSM and SSM firms affect the ecosystem of your community?
6. How do you ensure that the activities of the LSM and SSM firms do not endanger the environment?
7. How do the traditional leaders collaborate with the state and private actors to check the mining activities of LSM and SSM firms in their communities?
8. What is the position of the traditional leaders in the fight against *galamsey*?
9. Does the traditional leaders' position reflect the community people's choice?
10. What support does the community gain from the mining companies?