

Security Movements in Ghana's Extractive Spaces: Dispossession, Community-Level Grievance and Implications for Sustainable Development

Nathan Andrews, Phil Faanu, Augustine Gyan and Sulemana A. Saaka

McMaster University

Abstract

Poor governance of natural resources has long been acknowledged as a risk to human development and sustainable peace in primary commodity-producing countries across the Global South. There is evidence that natural resource extraction has played a significant role in maintaining structures of inequity and violence in developing societies. This is largely incompatible with social justice due to its disastrous socio-economic and environmental consequences. Given the fact that grievance, conflict, and forms of security movements increasingly characterize the African extractive sector, this paper seeks to explore community-level grievance and the associated security movements in the extractive spaces in Ghana drawing upon primary fieldwork data collected in the small-scale mining sector. The paper aims to critically examine the new forms of security movements as a form of natural resource governance in Ghana's mining industry that contribute to community-level grievance and dispossession. The paper aims to answer the following questions: How do the government's security policies contribute to community-level grievance and dispossession? How is security conceptualized or understood in Ghana's mineral extraction? Whose security is often being prioritized and what are the implications for sustainable development or people's wellbeing? Guided by these questions, the paper aims to conceptualize "new form security movements" in the extractive sector, its overall intersections with community-level grievance/conflicts as well as its implications for long-term community development. The paper's overall objective is to underscore how marginalization, conflict, violence, and general insecurity issues in the extractive industry undermine development and the notion of 'sustainable extractivism'.

Keywords: Natural resource extraction, security, community-level grievance, dispossession, sustainable livelihoods