

Institutions and Resource Governance at the Sub-National Level: The Case of Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Zambia

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Abstract

This thesis analyses how formal and informal institutions influence the degree to which communities benefit from natural resources. Specifically, the thesis engages with the dynamics of resource extraction in the context of formalised artisanal and small-scale mining, which has received limited attention in the literature. This is done through three independent but interconnected, publishable articles based on archival research, interviews and field visits to Zambia's amethyst and emerald mines. The first chapter is a co-authored, published article and evaluates the link between formalisation, as a formal institutional intervention, and economic outcomes for formalised artisanal and small-scale emerald miners. The study finds that contrary to indications in the literature, formalisation has not resulted in increased access to credit, investment or state assistance. Conversely, the state employed formalisation as a tool for centralising control over mineral-rich areas while displacing artisanal miners to marginal lands. In the second chapter, the thesis explores how mining licence-holders respond to institutional failures to support their activities. The study finds that 'competing' informal institutions have emerged around resource extraction that undermine the government's goals of revenue generation and miners' goals of poverty-reduction. In the third and final chapter, the viability of mining associations in facilitating collective action in response to common production constraints by miners is assessed. The chapter discovers that mining licence-holders rely more on informal, trust based networks than mining associations, which face internal governance and capacity constraints and low levels of trust. The thesis importantly demonstrates how the introduction of formal institutional frameworks, in the form of policies and laws, has limited impact on increasing access to benefits from resources by communities. Formal institutional interventions, primarily favour actors with pre-existing capital to benefit from resources while the poor continue to rely on informal institutions.