7 Some Last Words on the "Ethical Turn" in Mining

Spaces of Responsibility has explored how "ethics" added a new layer to global mining governance and what this "does" to company-state-community relations in specific contexts. Flourishing for about three decades now, one of the driving forces behind the institutionalization of different global regimes of responsibility in the mining sector was to counter a perceived enclave status of mining in the Global South. The latter draws on the resource-development nexus which correlates the resource abundance of a country with (non)sustainable development outcomes. In contrast to similar popular concepts, such as the "resource curse", the "paradox of plenty", or "enclave economies", James Ferguson's account of emerging territorialized mineral enclaves in African countries explicitly refers to dominant spatialities of extraction. Contemporary extractive ordering, he emphasized, would manifest itself spatially through the discontinuous, enclosing, and grid-making capacities of global capital investments. This produces enclaves of mineral production that are disconnected from both their direct neighbourhoods and national development projects. As a dominant spatial format of mining governance, they would eventually make global mining capitalism feasible.[1]

In this book, Ferguson's assumptions have been used as a heuristic tool to investigate spatialities of "ethical extraction". In their design, the numerous ethical standards, engagements, and requirements attempt to engender different processes of disclenclaving. However, while this significantly increases the spatial complexity of extractivism, these "global" models neither produce universal modes for mining governance nor do they engender linear outcomes concerning the mining-development nexus. An investigation of dominant governance schemes during the recent "mining boom" in Burkina Faso clearly points to the relevance of powerful global ideas, such as "resource decentralization", "sustainable development", "transparency", and "local content". Nevertheless, actors responded very differently to them, incorporating some while rejecting others in certain circumstances. There were differences in how these concepts were constructed and used according to divergent interests and political agendas. Moreover, the sites where these concepts were struggled over not only exceeded the actual terrains of mining concessions, but also the territorial boundaries of

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[1] Ferguson, *Seeing Like an Oil Company*; Ferguson, *Global Shadows*; Himley, *Extractivist Geographies*.

Burkina Faso. Concession-making from near and at-a-distance involved policy makers and Project-Affected Persons (PAP) in Ouagadougou, Houndé, and Bagassi. Mining professionals, INGO representatives, and investors in Toronto or Frankfurt am Main equally participated in ordering practices. Through a theoretical and empirical sampling of the topics and tropes most relevant for mining governance in Burkina Faso, the book explored multi-scalar spatialities of responsibility. None of the most prominent topics discussed, be it "resource decentralization", "local content", or "transparency" in mining governance, are attached to one specific site. Thinking space relationally eventually reveals practices, trajectories, and interrelations in global mining governance.[2]

Spaces of Responsibility empirically explored that popular distinctions between abstract global forces and local places where struggles take place cannot account for the complex forms of strategic scale-making in global (mining) capitalism.[3] Mining capitalism as a project and the spatializing global models on which this project is based, however, require a certain coordination of practices over space.[4] Through global regimes of responsibility, people of geographically distant sites become responsible for what happens in places they often are not directly connected to. While the corporate world typically seeks to dominate these regimes of responsibility, the enactment of "ethics" eventually involves a multiplicity of national and local policy-makers. I, therefore, consider sites of Burkinabè mining governance as emplacements of "the global" where the question of who is to be held responsible and accountable for the mining-development-nexus is subject to constant struggles.[5] Through the strategic (de)connection with and to "the global", "the national", and "the local", or the macro actors that symbolically represent these scalar dimensions of practices ("the company", "the state", "the local populations"), people enact spaces of responsibility.

Multi-Scalar Mining Governance in Burkina Faso and Beyond

Through the lens of economic anthropology, the present book's attempt was to provide empirical and analytical bits and pieces to make the "interplay of social relations, economic interests and struggles over power" in mining capitalism

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2 See Massey, *Geographies of Responsibility*.
3 Ibid.; A. L. Tsing, "The Global Situation", *Cultural Anthropology* 15 (2000) 3, pp. 327–360; Young, *Responsibility and Global Labor Justice*.
4 See Appel, *The Licit Life of Capitalism*; Mansfield, *Spatializing Globalization*.
5 Massey, *Geographies of Responsibility*, p. 8.

more tangible.[6] The puzzle this book seeks to address is twofold: "global" in that it makes visible in a more general sense what and who holds the global mining economy together. At the same time, it tells the story of a specific place-based history of mining capitalism (that of the recent "mining boom" in Burkina Faso). There are three main conclusions to be drawn from the empirical chapters on mining governance in and beyond Burkina Faso.

Firstly, responsibility and authority in mining governance are subject to shifting scalar practices. This does not happen, however, in the sense of a uni-directional rescaling from "the national" to global and local scales. Through their spatializing practices, actors strategically claim and reaffirm stateness, localness, and globalness. A historical analysis of modes of mining governance in Burkina Faso has revealed how, in the past, they were subject to important temporal shifts. These ranged from a policy emphasis on "making the subsoil investible" from the colonial period through the Washington-consensus era, to the twenty-first century political claim to transform the mining sector into an "engine of sustainable development". The strategic opening of the national economy to "the global" was accompanied by logics of (re)asserting stateness in mining governance. While the quasi delegation of certain state functions and political authority to multinational concession holders prevailed, the Burkinabè central state attempted to position itself as a central planner and regulator in mining governance in the post-Compaoré era since 2015. The government (re)affirmed its authority in mining governance primarily through the principle of state ownership of mineral resources while promoting "good governance" and "transparency" initiatives. Furthermore, the creation of new central state agencies for mining governance, such as ANEEMAS, must be considered as an attempt to reclaim stateness in the ambiguous relationships between artisanal and industrial mining. This eventually resulted in both a politico-economic preference for large-scale over small-scale mining and a greater generation of taxes and incomes deriving from an ASM sector that was deliberately left to itself during the Compaoré era. However, dominant access relationships and notably the state's custodianship role in granting mineral rights have been increasingly questioned by national civil society organizations and populations in the mining areas. Displacement-affected populations or artisanal miners started to actively claim their share of the mining economy in form of access to land, labour, and resources. They expressed their agency in concession-making practices through different channels, such as formal stakeholder meetings and popular protest. In so doing, they increasingly accused the government

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6 Gilberthorpe and Rajak, *The Anthropology of Extraction*.

(and not multinational corporations) of prioritizing industrial mining over other forms of livelihoods. Consequently, central state authorities increasingly figured as main targets in local conflicts over mining.

Secondly, the every-day enactment of company-state-community relations involves constant struggles over the boundaries between private and public spheres of mining governance. Corporate voluntarism added a further layer to state-centred regulation. In so doing, it involved a content (re)casting and boundary-making of and between different political spaces of sovereignty and authority in mining governance. The decentralization process of mining governance, most notably initiated with the reformed mining legislation of 2015 and the introduction of the Mining Fund for Local Development (FMDL), points to this difficult balancing process between voluntary and legal requirements. Mining corporations publicly claimed that "mining reforms are not fair for investors" and that the latter would eventually redirect their investments to more mining-friendly legal destinations. On the other hand, Canadian INGOs actively supported the reforming process through public-private aid partnerships (PPPs) in the mining areas. Moreover, the bargaining processes around mineral revenue and "the local" in Burkina Faso are also exemplary for the divergent interests and motivations actors may have while promoting the same global ideas and concepts. Beyond their own interests in attracting and generating funds for their projects and organizations, INGOs officially pursue philanthropic ideas of "democratizing access to mining revenue" and of "community development" in the Global South's areas of extraction. Yet, as a political project, the "Canada brand" raises questions of responsibility for business practices of domestic industries across geographical distance and how this could be monitored beyond corporate self-regulation. INGO engagement ultimately secures corporate social licences and therefore the feasibility of extraction. Local authorities in the mining areas, on the other hand, reasserted their authority in mining governance by claiming the implementation of legal obligations – instead of relying on corporate CSR or CC voluntarism.

Thirdly, concession-making in Burkina Faso is subject to dialectical processes of opening and enclosure. What is often described as an inherent feature of the global mining economy is implemented in reality through the everyday company-state-community relations. As described beforehand, the government's strategic opening of its national economy and territory to the global mining economy was accompanied by a logic of reasserting stateness in mining governance. Opening spaces for global finance must thus be seen as entangled with different policies to control corporate behaviour. The construction of corporate citizenship from near and at-a-distance illustrates how extraction is made feasible through both spatial frontier imaginations of investors and socially "thick" relationships

between companies and communities in the mining areas. Both are shaped by territorializing logics of extraction, the place-bounded nature of subsoil minerals, but also by specific techniques and infrastructures that make extraction feasible. In so doing, different "promises of development" of the corporate world are sometimes common, sometimes divergent but usually entangled. They maybe most significantly point to the "oxymoronic" attempt of the corporate world in connecting principles of profit-making with ethical engagements.[7] The Burkinabè mining sector is an emblematic example for how "developing reserves into resources" and "developing mining regions into potential reservoirs of supplying economies and local labour forces" must both be considered as constitutive to the twenty-first century global mining capitalism. Exploring the mining labour market from various angles, however, highlights how the mining professionals' own positioning and attachment to "the local", "the national", and "the global" shape the enactment of corporate citizenship. While "local content" promotion attempts to integrate "the local" into the global mining economy, linkage economies do not always dismantle hierarchies and exclusion. The make-up of the (mining) labour markets in Houndé and Bagassi reveal how these global concepts engender more mobility into the labour market, while (re)producing segmentation within the labour market.

Implications for Spatialities of Extraction

This book has explored how extractive relations are made and remade through dialectical practices of flows and control. Recent practices of extractive ordering, according to principles of "ethics" and "sustainability", point to accelerating processes of disenclaving under the global condition. I assume that this ultimately challenges the idea of (re)emerging "enclaved" material, political, and discursive spaces as dominant spatial formats of resource extraction. However, this does not imply that "enclaves" play no significant role in imagining and practicing extractivism. In Burkina Faso, the term "enclave" figured as an important metaphor for claiming a more inclusive mining economy. Government policies promoted "désenclavement" (disenclaving) as a means to connect isolated regions of the country to national or global economies by providing the necessary infrastructures and other means of "connection". The term "enclave economy", on the other hand, was used as a national claim for linkage economies and local content promotion in mining areas. In their aim of overcoming

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7 Rajak, *In Good Company*, p. 9; Benson and Kirsch, *Corporate Oxymorons*.

popular perceptions of multinational mining corporations operating as "diplomatic enclaves", mining companies for their part fashioned themselves as "good corporate citizens".

In Burkina Faso, these claims for a more inclusive and responsible mining sector have resulted in different strategies and policies of disenclaving. In their aim to counter the potential negative correlations of the resource-development nexus, the latter eventually shaped multi-scalar mining governance: from transnational norms and guidelines of "responsible mining" implemented in the country to the various degrees of stateness and the increasing role of the local state in mining governance. The complex spatiality of Burkina Faso's mining sector and of the global mining economy more broadly, figure as emblematic examples that point to at least two dominant ordering practices in mining governance. It seems, on the one hand, that due to the territory-boundedness of subsoil resources, the state ever was and remains an ideal type regulator in and of mining governance. On the other hand, is the whole global production network of gold extraction essentially building on border-crossing connections that link "the upstream mineralisation" with "the downstream money".[8] This book, however, cannot deliver an all-encompassing account about how these ordering practices in the global mining industry exactly relate to each other and how power relations affect them. My aim was primarily to contribute elements of a puzzle that are put together to form a more complete picture of how the resource-development nexus challenges and (re)produces specific spatialities of extraction. The study of "ethics" as a new layer of extractivism reveals how classical assumptions of space as a container for power relations cannot account for the multi-scalar modes of mining governance and the bargaining processes between claims to "the global", "the national", and "the local". Nor can universalizing and ideal-type based spatial frameworks adequately consider the complex historical-social processes of space-making.[9] Global regimes of responsibility, as the book has explored, imply that different scales ("the local", "the national", "the global"), or "the below" and "the above", cannot be analyzed separately. They represent entangled scalar dimensions of mining governance, and, as such, produce and form part of spaces of responsibility.

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8 Miskelly, *The International Mining Industry*; Marung and Middell, *The Re-Spatialization of the World*, p. 10.

9 Cf. Jessop, Brenner and Jones, *Theorizing Sociospatial Relations*.

Responsibility and the Mines of the Future

> The world of mining is changing: digitalization, technology and social connectivity are creating the mines of the future. [. . .] We wonder, with the robotics that change the way we mine, with the digital advances, we'll reduce costs and long term impacts [. . .] mixed with new frontiers and frameworks for mining in the twenty-first century. [. . .] we have to consider where the new resources will come from: do we need to develop projects in remote regions, under the ocean or even in space? What do we need to think about today to be ready for the future? Let's find out together. This is Mining Indaba.

The futuristic video presentation at the opening ceremony of Mining Indaba 2019 in Cape Town points to the multiple spatial and temporal registers mining capitalism is confronted with in the twenty-first century. While the managing director of Mining Indaba stated that the mining sector "really decided to do the right thing" in terms of community engagement and sustainability, the industry has to push for ever new frontiers for "responsible investments". These frontiers relate to geographical localities, specific technologies and infrastructures as well as to new markets for minerals and metals. With the flourishing global demand for metals to satisfy the needs of electromobility and other "green" technologies, the global mining sector has identified a "historic opportunity" to contribute to the clean energy transition and to challenging the global climate change, as a mining executive emphasized two years later at the digital 2021 edition of Mining Indaba. In that sense, a promotional video of the main sponsor AngloAmerican expressed that industry players want mining of the future to be "green", "responsible", and "invisible" at the same time: "At Anglo-American we see a world where you may barely notice some mines at all. Yet these mines of tomorrow will continue to provide the precious raw materials our society relies on."[10]

In terms of the geographical expansion of mining capitalism, authors have shown how mining takes place in ever more peripheral world regions or re-evaluates the more traditional ones. John Childs, for example, has shown how in Papua New Guinea deep-sea mining (DSM) is being promoted as the next frontier of resource extraction by multinational mining corporations.[11] The latter implies extreme localities and materialities somewhere in the ocean to discover spatially bounded minerals, metals, and phosphates in the deep seabed. Others stated that especially with the boom in "green metals" demand and the

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10 AngloAmerican, "Our Purpose and Values", https://www.angloamerican.com/about-us/our-purpose (accessed 2 March 2021).
11 J. Childs, "Extraction in Four Dimensions: Time, Space and the Emerging Geo(-)Politics of Deep-Sea Mining", *Geopolitics* (2018).

reputational costs associated with "conflict minerals" such as the 3 T resources (tantalum, tungsten, and tin) mainly located in the DRC, mining regions in Europe or North America may re-emerge as new frontiers of mining investment.[12] Indeed, in the past few years, some post-closure sites in Europe, such as the Erzgebirge in Eastern Germany, have attracted multinational junior mining companies to explore silver, tin, lithium, tungsten, and gold deposits.[13] In their attempt to reconcile profit-making with ethical engagements, multinational corporations increasingly consider the "social costs" of acquiring and maintaining a "social license to operate". Under the global condition, this social license is not only necessary for their hybrid security governance mechanisms in the concessions, they also have to display corporate good behaviour when faced to a national and global public. A phenomenon that many industry leaders call "societal SLO" and which also poses challenges to European mining projects due to the rather negative image of the mining industry on the continent. Will the global mining economy eventually become "more 'oil-like'" in that global finance (re)directs its focus to tiny pitches of resource abundance in the most unpopulated frontier zones around the globe?[14] Or may companies decide to relocate their exploration and exploitation projects to more "secure" contexts despite less favourable legislations for large-scale mining and higher production costs? How do these geographical, material, and discursive moves and twists eventually (re)define global regimes of corporate responsibility?

That spatialities of extraction are continuously subject to (re)ordering and negotiation practices is also evident when one looks at current developments in Burkina Faso's mining sector. African countries continued to attract global mining finance and experienced in 2018 "a fair share of mini booms, particularly in battery minerals as well as in more traditional metals".[15] Gold, in particular, is considered as a stable investment item and was lately promoted by the World Gold Council as a climate risk mitigation asset in long-term investment

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12 See, for example, O. Sidorenko, R. Sairinen, and K. Moore, "Rethinking the Concept of Small-Scale Mining for Technologically Advanced Raw Materials Production", *Resources Policy* 68 (2020); C. Vogel and T. Raeymaekers, "Terr(It)Or(Ies) Of Peace?: The Congolese Mining Frontier and the Fight Against 'Conflict Minerals'", *Antipode* 48 (2016) 4, 1102–1121.

13 See Spotlite Mining, "Mining for Europe: Exploring Saxony with Globex Mining", *YouTube*, 22 April 2019.

14 Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, p. 201.

15 C. Kotze, "From Bust to Boom: Africa Attracts Its Fair Share of Exploration Spend", *Mining Review Africa*, 19 July 2019.

strategies.[16] Yet the mere resource abundance of many African countries does not automatically engender "spatial fixes" of capital investment on the continent.[17] The worsening security situation in Burkina Faso and its repercussions on the mining economy illustrates that large-scale mining projects cannot be totally disentangled from local and national contexts. Artisanal mining sites are said to be increasingly under armed-group control or even become sites of recruitment for the latter.[18] Burkina Faso's mining industry recently experienced several attacks on convoys transporting national employees to their mine sites. The attack on mining staff at Semafo's Boungo mine in the east of the country in early November 2019 led to the deaths of dozens of mine employees and may also have been a main reason why Semafo sold the mining project to Endeavour Mining in July 2020.[19] Investors and corporate executives, as Sébastien de Montessus, may well argue in Toronto that terrorists' main targets are state institutions and representatives, and not multinational corporations. Reality has proven that their military or gendarmerie-escorted convoys represent targets par excellence for attacks weakening both Burkina Faso's political regime and the mining economy. Nevertheless, these events have not prevented Endeavour Mining, their investors and shareholders, from reinvesting in Burkina Faso and in this mining project in particular. In November 2019, Mining companies, regrouped in the Chamber of Mines, agreed on reinforcing the security of mine sites and of the main roads leading to the mine sites. When I visited Burkina Faso again a month later in December 2019 to present the results of my research, the transport of expatriate employees travelling between Burkina Faso's capital of Ouagadougou and the mine sites in helicopters was a norm rather than an exception.[20] It remains to be seen what this implies for the social embeddedness of mine sites in the future. At best, investigations on the emplacement of global regimes of responsibility thus require long-term multi-sited analysis to account for actual historical-social processes of space-making.

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16 World Gold Council, "Gold and Climate Change: Current and Future Impacts", London (2019), https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-and-climate-change-current-and-future-impacts (accessed 17 January 2021).

17 Harvey, *Globalization and the 'Spatial' Fix*.

18 International Crisis Group, "Getting a Grip on Central Sahel's Gold Rush", Report 282 (17 November 2019).

19 See Endeavour Mining Corporation, *Endeavour to Combine with SEMAFO*; SEMAFO, *Attack on the Road Between Fada and Boungou*.

20 See Reuters Staff, *Semafo to Restart Mining*; van Praet and York, *Dozens Dead*.