1. Introduction

Driven by soaring mineral prices and heightened resource demands from the world's emerging economies, over the past three decades, the globalization of the extractive industries has led to dramatic technological, organizational, and regulatory changes in resource-rich West Africa. While mining sector reforms and a steady flow of international investment in mineral extraction has, in many cases, increased government revenue and helped some countries achieve phenomenal economic growth, the local-level development impacts of such investments, however, have often been less spectacular. In many West African countries, mining investments have failed to catalyse broad-based, inclusive local economic development, particularly at the site of extraction, and there has been very little "trickle down" accruing to local populations. In such situations, the mining economy can lead to "enclave" development with few forward, backward or lateral linkages, and without sustained prosperity of a wider region (African Economic Outlook 2013). As Ferguson (2006) has warned, resource extraction that is concentrated in "exclusionary spatial enclaves" tends to benefit elite groups, has little impact on wider society, and reproduces the inequalities that can trigger resource-driven conflict.

To address this disconnect between mining investment and local development, voluntary community development programmes have for many years played a key role in mining companies' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies, in the process helping them to acquire a 'social licence to operate'. However, many governments in resource-rich countries are now changing track, formally adopting laws that require mining companies to pay more attention to local content requirements. Since the end of the most recent commodity boom in 2014, local content policies (LCPs) have increasingly gained traction in resource-rich developing countries around the world, where extractive-led developing trajectories are being pursued. Such policies, which seek to stimulate development through the procurement of goods and services locally in mining areas, are now apparent in 49 countries globally, although in many cases they have been implemented with mixed results (Hilson and Ovadia 2020).

Guinea – the focus of this paper – remains one of the poorest countries in the world, despite its vast deposits of high-quality bauxite. It possesses an estimated 30 percent of global bauxite reserves and in

2012, mining accounted for approximately one quarter of the country's gross domestic product and 85 percent of its export earnings. But at the same time, Guinea remains the quintessential example of a nation plagued by a ''resource curse''[1], where extractive activities do not seem to have translated into tangible positive impacts for society. The Guinean case also clearly illustrates that achieving inclusive resource-based development through mining sector reforms can be constrained by numerous challenges at different scales.

Firstly, policies designed to channel more benefits to host communities are often poorly designed and do not always map on to local-level realities on the ground. For example, LCPs, although now a common requirement in most agreements with mining companies, have been widely criticised for their difficult and ineffective implementation, as well as their limited capacity to address the structural limits of extractive impacts (Calignano and Vaaland 2018; Geenen 2019; Lange and Kinyondo 2016; Lebdioui 2019; Macatangay 2016; Nwapi 2015; Ovadia 2014). Moreover, the effectiveness of the main catalysts which can potentially stimulate local-level development – for example, taxes and royalties, linkages and spillovers, and CSR – vary widely by context and are often controversial in terms of their implementation and effectiveness (Bebbington 2013).

Secondly, even if redistributive policies are designed with local mining communities in mind, they often merely address the symptoms rather than the root causes of problems, reinforcing continuity rather than tackling structural change. Even when guided by seemingly progressive policy reforms, resource exploitation can thus remain predatory and destructive, generating little employment, leaving inherent inequalities unaddressed, and allowing uneven economic structures to be unchallenged (Arsel et al. 2016; Cordoba et al. 2018; Gudynas 2011; Svampa 2015). A major obstacle, according to recent research by Ackah-Baidoo (2020), is that mining companies in sub-Saharan Africa tend to rely upon deeply-rooted international partnerships and operate within previously established networks, both of which remain difficult for local businesses to penetrate. Recent evidence suggests that this may largely be the case in Guinea, despite attempts to break down these barriers by mining sector reforms which

[1] For a comprehensive review of the Resource Curse debate, see Papyrakis (2017); Rosser (2006); or Stevens (2015).

are often ineffective despite their apparent progressiveness (Knierzinger 2016; Szablowski and Campbell 2019).

Thirdly, the evolution of extractive activities under neo-liberalism has undermined the power of the state, stripping it of its responsibilities to its citizens, and placing high expectations on mining companies to fill this gap as new agents of development and service provision. While the state may provide some of the basic infrastructure required to enable extractive activities to take place, its function has become “peculiar” as power has been transferred to private actors in response to a neoliberal context (Ye et al. 2020) . While this shift in power dynamics has been apparent in the case of Guinea (Bolay and Knierzinger 2021; Campbell 2009; Diallo 2019; Knierzinger 2015; Rey, Mazalto, and Jeanne 2020; Szablowski and Campbell 2019), whether or not LCPs can redress the development void left at the local level yet remains to be seen.

Against this backdrop, this paper aims to deepen understanding of recent local content mining sector reforms in sub-Saharan Africa, and to explore their effectiveness in terms of inclusive resource-based development provision. Focusing on the case of LCPs in Guinea’s bauxite sector and drawing upon multi-sited qualitative fieldwork carried out in Guinea between May and July 2019 in Conakry and Boffa préfecture, we seek to investigate the effectiveness of LCP implementation, in the process examining both opportunities and obstacles to be surmounted. Inspired by Norman Long’s actor-based approach[2], 31 semi-structured interviews were carried out with government officials, civil society actors and mining company representatives from three of Guinea’s main extractive companies: Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (CBG), Alufer, and Guinea Alumina Corporation (GAC).[3] ~~Interviews were~~

[2]Long’s actor-oriented analysis provides a useful lens to unpack LCP implementation and to explore the interactions between various stakeholders, in order to understand and scrutinize their changing roles before, during and after mining sector reforms. According to Long and Long (1992), actors are active participants that shape the policy process and in this research the approach was employed to identify the dynamics of LCP implementation based on the interaction between different actors. For further elaboration on Long’s actor based approach, see Long and Long (1992); Long (2001); or Arce and Long (1987).

[3] CBG is the oldest and most established mining company in Guinea. It has exported bauxite since 1973. CBG’s ownership structures have changed over time, but a 49% government share has been maintained since its creation. CBG is a joint venture which includes shares held by Alcoa (22,95%), Rio Tinto (22.95%) and Dadco (5.1%). The mine is operated by Halco (Alcoa + Rio Tinto). Alufer’s Bel Air Mining started in 2018 in Guinea, and the mine that is operated by Alufer Guinea Ltd is owned by Alufer Guinea Ltd (BVI) (65%), Alufer Base Metals Ltd Bn (20%), Soguipami (State of Guinea) (15%). The company is registered in Guernsey. Guinea Alumina Corporation (GAC) began production in 2019. The company is fully owned by Emirates Global Aluminium

~~mainly carried out in French, recorded and transcribed and then analysed thematically using NVivo software. This was complemented by the analysis of documents obtained from both the Ministry of Mines and the mining companies themselves, as well as government press conferences and public communications by the government and mining companies.~~

The paper seeks to contribute to the literature on local content in developing countries by first providing an overview of LCPs in Guinea's bauxite industry, of which no analysis has been carried out to date. Here, we share and analyse some of the lessons revealed in LCP implementation in Guinea, which feed into wider debates that concern the relationship between the state and mining companies. Second, given decades of state withdrawal under the years of structural adjustment and Guinea's ensuing neo-liberal trajectory, we explore how mining companies and the government are currently responding to their changing roles in terms of LCP implementation. More specifically, with respect to the latter, we explore how politics and power dynamics within the government are shaping the implementation of policies, an area which the literature on LCPs has not yet addressed in any detail. We conclude by locating the lessons from Guinea within wider discussions that concern LCPs and mining sector reforms, in the process offering some reflection on possible ways forward for minimising resource enclavity and fostering more inclusive forms of local economic development in sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Methodology

This research has been conducted qualitatively. Data was collected during fieldwork between May and July 2019 in Conakry and Boffa in Guinea. Two key methods for data collection were used, namely document analysis and semi-structured interviews. This combination is widely used among qualitative researchers who analyse LCP implementation, as well as resource governance in general (Ablo 2019; Siakwah 2018; Vaaland, Soneye, and Owusu 2012). Document analysis is important to obtain the necessary informative basis to learn about LCP legislations and their implementation. The documents also allow triangulation to not only understand the interviews better, but also to verify statements

(EGA), which is equally owned by Mubadala Investment Company of Abu Dhabi and Investment Corporation of Dubai. The three companies are major players in Guinea's bauxite industry.

(Bowen 2009). The interviews provide more in-depth insight. Key informants and 'elites' with expert knowledge on LCPs and the mining sector in Guinea were selected and approached via email and phone calls. Using these 'experts' is a common technique, as key informants and 'elites' tend to not share their personal opinions and views, but rather the stance of the institution, company or group that they represent (Richards 1996). This gives valuable insight into the institution and is an effective and productive way to collect information. These initial contacts enabled the creation of a contact network through snowballing. An actor-based approach was followed, which included representatives from the three main actors, namely government, mining companies and civil society. The 31 interviews include the three mining companies and the mining chamber, 13 government representatives, 3 'hybrid' actors (government affiliated institutions, or intergovernmental organizations like the World Bank's IFC office in Guinea), and 11 representatives of civil society (national and international NGO representatives, journalists). The interviews were semi structured to allow a certain flexibility to pose broad and open ended questions to the experts (Bryman 2012). Interviews became increasingly concrete and specific with the exploratory research to become narrower over time (Saunders, Thornill, and Lewis 2009). The interviews varied between 20 minutes and 2 hours in length. Interview questions included broad questions, such as how LCPs in Guinea came into being, what they entail, how monitoring and evaluation work, as well as what the opportunities and observed and anticipated obstacles are. Interviews were mainly conducted in French (without a translator), recorded, transcribed, and thematically coded and analysed using NVivo software. To protect participants, data was anonymized. Ethical approval was obtained beforehand, and all participants were briefed with an information sheet and consent form where written consent was obtained.

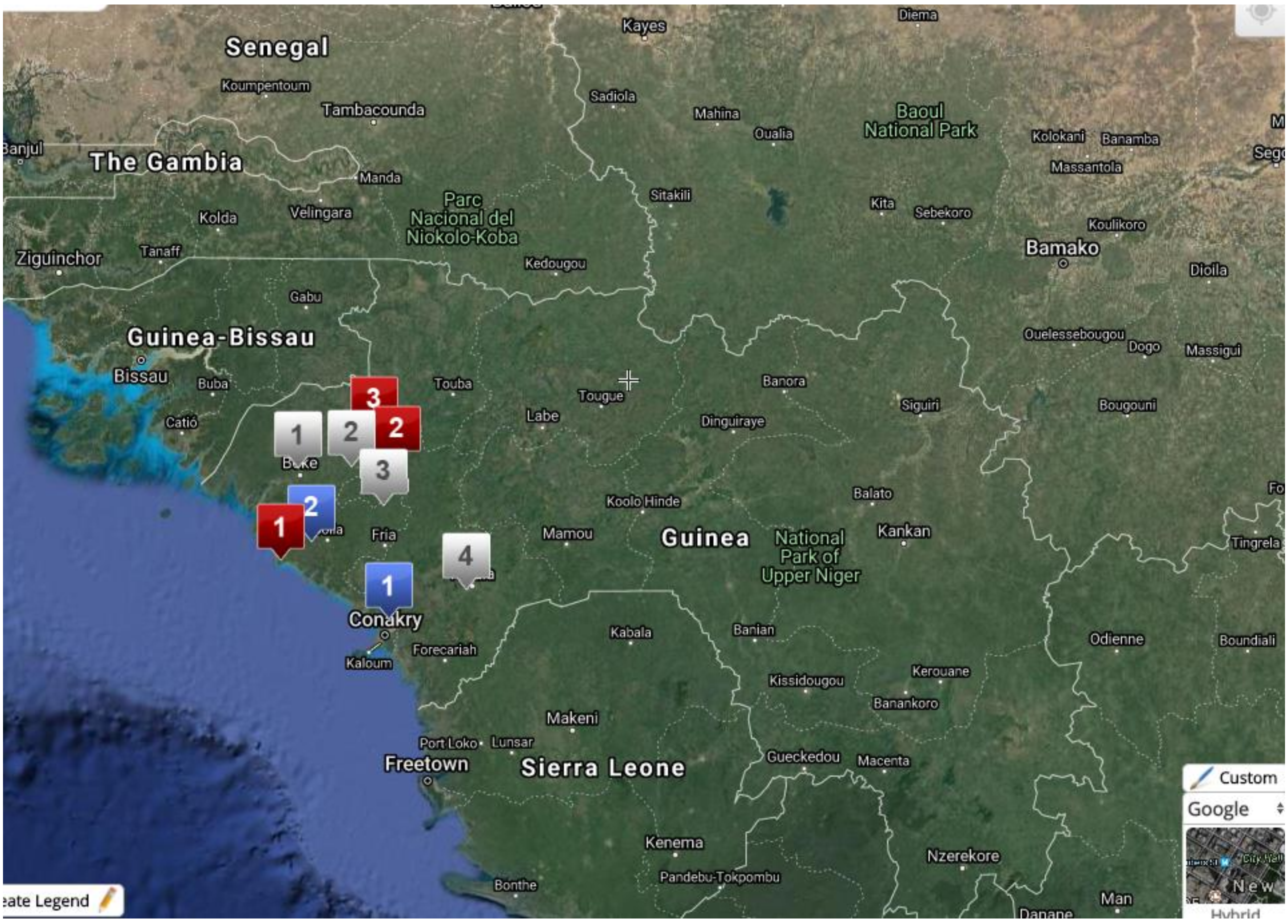
3. Guinea's mining sector and the transition to LCPs

Guinea qualifies as a resource-dependent country. In 2018, 43% of its total exports consisted of aluminium ore. The most recent numbers by the Ministry of Mines show that in the first trimester of 2020, 21mn tonnes of bauxite were exported, and 127,117 tonnes of alumina were exported from Guinea's only refinery, Friguia (Bulletin de Statistiques Minières 007, 2020). In recent years, various new players have arrived in Guinea. The biggest bauxite producer is now the Société Minière de Boké

(SMB)[4], followed by the oldest bauxite mining company in Guinea Compagnie de Bauxites de Guinée (CBG), Alufer, Guinea Alumina Corporation (GAC), Compagnie du Développement des Mines Internationales Henan Chine SA (CDM Chine)[5], Dian-Dian Bauxite Company (COBAD)[6], and Compagnie de Bauxite de Kindia (CBK)[7] (Bulletin de Statistiques Minières 007, 2020). Moreover, next to the companies in production various additional players have arrived and are currently in exploration phases or hold active concessions and research permits. Up to this date, we count 32 active bauxite mining companies present in Guinea, with this number highly likely to change quickly.[8] The map below shows the field site locations, the companies that were interviewed, as well as the mine sites of the other major bauxite producers in Guinea.

[4] SMB is a consortium consisting of Singapore's Winning Shipping Ltd, the French transportation and logistics company UMS, and the Chinese Shandong Weiqiao. The Guinean states holds 10%.
[5] CDM Chine is fully owned by the Compagnie du Développement des Mines Internationales Henan Chine, a Chinese-based company (Henan China).
[6] COBAD is owned by the United Company Rusal, which consists of 48% En+ Group, 13.7% Onexim Group, 15.80% SUAL, and 8.75% Amokenga Holdings.
[7] CBK is owned by Russky Alumny Ltd (Rusal) and the Guinean state holds 15%.
[8] Examples of these other companies are Dynamic Mining (Jaguar Gulf FZC), the Chinese TBEA Group, the Chinese Chalco Guinea Company, three projects by Anglo-African Minerals Plc, among others. The Guinea Mining Cadastre Portal provides updated information on all mining licences in the country with an interactive map: https://guinee.cadastreminier.org/en/

Map 1: Location of field sites, studied companies, and other major bauxite producers in Guinea



Legend:

Field Sites	Companies studied	Other major bauxite producers
1: Conakry 2: Alufer's Bel Air Mine in Boffa	1: Alufer's Bel Air Mining 2: Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (CBG) 3 : Guinea Alumina Corporation (GAC)	1 : SMB 2 : CDM Chine 3 : COBAD 4 : CBK

Source: Map created by authors with Scribblemaps & Google Maps. Open source for non-commercial purposes

Since its independence from France in 1958, bauxite mining has been at the heart of Guinea's post-colonial history. However, over the past six decades, the country's extractives sector has been continuously shaped by politics and gone through various stages under different government regimes. The first regime following independence under Ahmed Sekou Touré (1958-1984) was strongly influenced by Marxism, and a developmentalist approach was implemented with the goal of nationalizing foreign companies and transforming the mining sector. This strategy included a combination of state ownership and international cooperation. Following the death of Touré, power was assumed by Lansana Conté, who fiercely pursued liberalization policies (1984-1995) through structural adjustment, deregulation, revision of the mining code and renegotiation of mining contracts, with the aim of increasing revenues from mining activities. However, as noted by Campbell (1991), Conté's initial strategy had disappointing results and limited impacts on economic growth. Consequently, between 1995 and 2008, further liberalization policies were introduced, but this time they also included remedial measures to strengthen governance and pro-poor state interventions. This shift in strategy was largely driven by pressure from widespread social protests, where Guineans were demanding an end to unfavourable mining agreements and more positive impacts for local people. In 2010, a new mining era emerged under the administration of Guinea's first elected president, Alpha Condé. At this time, the mining code, mining contracts, royalty and duty payments were all significantly revised. A promise was made to tackle unemployment through new reforms, with the aim of making mining more impactful for local people and generating benefits for all Guineans in mining areas and beyond.

Throughout these various phases of extractivism, the challenge of achieving inclusive resource-based development in Guinea has remained. Guinea, like other extractivist states, depends on its mining revenues for achieving development goals. Arsel et al. (2016) refer to this relationship as the *extractive imperative*, where the continuity of extraction and the central role of mining revenues remain. They argue that extractive activities can be harnessed in three main ways to generate positive development impacts, namely: (i) through structural economic transformation in a Rostowian sense; (ii) by way of economic diversification and value creation through extractive activities; or (iii) by utilizing resource rents for achieving development through initiatives which prioritize poverty alleviation and inequality eradication (Arsel et al., 2016). Similarly, Bebbington (2011) posits that the local benefits of extractive industries are most often directed through three main channels – taxes and royalties, linkages, and spill-overs[9] – as well as CSR programmes that focus on targeted and non-targeted social policy and social

[9] Bebbington (2011) refers to so-called 'multiplier effects' from extractive activities. Following this idea, local development can be catalysed by local multiplier effects that include forward and backward linkages, as well as backwards multiplier effects of the mine through CSR programmes. This idea of maximizing the impacts of

protection initiatives. Bebbington (2013) further identifies eight key factors that determine the degree, to which resource extraction can stimulate inclusive development including: employment, supply chain management, ownership, public ownership, planning and consultation, taxation and social expenditure.

All of these ‘ingredients’ for catalysing inclusive, resource-based development are essential elements in Local Content Policies (LCPs). Following precisely these ideas, LCPs are state-led policies that aim to increase the local share of employment and sales along the extractive value chain. LCPs are linked to productive development policies, as well as protectionist industrial policies, resource nationalism and import substitution policies, if they are implemented in a strict sense (Kalyuzhnova et al. 2016; Tordo et al. 2013). In practice, however, LCPs frequently introduce quotas for multinational extractive companies on domestic direct and indirect employment, as well as requirements to boost and support the capacities of local companies. Thus, LCPs have recently become a popular mechanism in resource-rich countries to build local linkages and improve the in-country benefits of their extractive sectors. There is now a growing LCP literature which outlines the opportunities and obstacles of LCPs, including LCP implementation studies and assessments (Calignano and Vaaland 2018; Geenen 2019; Kalyuzhnova et al. 2016).

Guinea’s new mining code was introduced in 2011 and revised in 2013, and it prioritizes LCPs as its new centrepiece. Within the mining code, LCPs are specified through a series of quotas that mining companies must follow, both in terms of direct and indirect employment. Here, the focus is placed on so-called “*Guinéisation*”, where there is maximum direct and indirect employment in mining catchment areas, and along the entire value chain, and where labour needs to be recruited domestically. Tables 1 and 2 depict the local quotas as specified in the mining code. These quotas indicate, for instance, that over its 1-5 year period of exploitation, an international mining company must recruit 15% of its suppliers and contractors from local Guinean Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). Moreover,

extractive activities along the value chain, but also of linking the activities to other sectors through widespread diversification, are also core elements of the concept of Hirschman’s linkages (Hirschman 1958; Hirschman and Adelman 2013) and Singer’s spillovers (Singer 1950).

at all stages of mine development, 100% of non-qualified employees working in the mines directly must be locally recruited.

Table 1: Minimum quotas reserved for Guinean SMEs per phase of mining activity

Research	Development	1-5 year period of exploitation	6-10 year period of exploitation	11-15 year period of exploitation
100%	20%	15%	25%	30%

Source: Created by authors, based on Guinean Mining Code (République de Guinée, 2011).

Table 2: Target of employed Guineans per development phase and employment category

Employee Category	Research	Development	1-5 year period of exploitation	6-10 year period of exploitation	11-15 year period of exploitation
Senior Executive	33%	20%	60%	80%	90%
Management	50%	30%	80%	90%	100%
Qualified employees	66%	40%	80%	95%	100%
Non-qualified employees	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Created by authors, based on Guinean Mining Code (République de Guinée, 2011).

To provide further insight into how these quotas are intended to be executed, the Guinean Ministry of Mines has created numerous initiatives and laws in a self-proclaimed, multi-stakeholder process. Legal specifications on implementation and monitoring continue to be developed. However, the 2017 legal application document on LCPs (Lettre de Politique Nationale du Contenu Local, 2017), declared the main responsibilities and objectives of the government in the implementation of LCPs as follows:

- To deliver a favourable macroeconomic, social, legal and political framework to enable the creation of adequate employment and commercial perspectives;
- To eliminate political and judicial obstacles which may confront and hinder local suppliers;
- To work on programs for the education and support of companies;
- To work on special structures which will improve the productivity and competitiveness of the private sector.

In the same document, the LCP responsibilities of the mining companies are also outlined:

- To determine a representative for the implementation and monitoring of LCPs;

- To publish the information of the company's employment policies, supply of goods and services, and contribution to local development;
- To communicate the social strategy of the company to the government;
- To participate in the *Bourse de Sous-Traitance et de Partenariat* (The Supplier and Partnership Marketplace, BSTP).

The *Bourse de Sous-Traitance et de Partenariat* (BSTP) is one of the initiatives that the Ministry of Mines created to facilitate the implementation of LCPs. It is a platform where mining companies post their tenders and recruit Guinean SMEs directly. The goal here is to increase transparency and fair competition in recruiting Guinean SMEs, as well as to enable the creation of a reliable database. However, as we shall see, the newly established BSTP has to date had a limited impact in addressing the unequal advantages that some SMEs have over others, particularly with respect to the differences between local businesses and those that are located in the country capital, Conakry. In fact, since its creation in 2019, the BSTP has only posted tenders by two mining companies (GAC and Alufer) (BSTP Website, 2020).

In addition, although LCPs have become the centrepiece of Guinea's 2013 mining code, the question of whether or not LCP requirements are binding, or voluntary, has not always been clear and has sparked considerable debate. For example, a 2017 Ministry of Mines document outlined that, "its [LCP] implementation, on a voluntary basis by the mining companies operating in Guinea, is strongly encouraged by the government" (République de Guinée 2017a). This would imply that LCPs are a voluntary requirement. Similarly, in an interview, a senior government official pointed out that in the case of non-compliance, sanctions would be possible steps in the future, but for the time being, the main goal was to work with ranking systems for mining companies. He noted: "for them [mining companies], it is also a huge PR move. We also do want to crown a local content…champion that helped the most companies."[10] This should then work as an incentive. However, when speaking of the voluntary nature of LCPs, government interviewees also referred to the mining code, and stated that it was a binding

[10] Interview with BSTP representative, Conakry, July 01, 2019.

requirement to follow the mining code. They further confirmed that LCP implementations were monitored and evaluated, and companies were expected to comply.

'Indirect LCPs'

When questioned about LCPs, key informants not only referred to the quotas and initiatives to support local employment and Guinean SMEs, but they also frequently spoke of two new mining revenue funds – the Local Economic Development Fund (FODEL) and the National Fund of Economic Development (FNDL). Indeed, this would seem understandable since the two funds are closely connected to LCPs. As Figure 1 illustrates, one of the main purposes of the new funds is to support employment activities, as well as other forms of "local development". A senior representative of the mining company, GAC, for instance, explained how he expected a more dynamic local economy to transpire because of the funds and the infrastructural projects they support. Referring specifically to the FODEL and the FNDL, he stated:

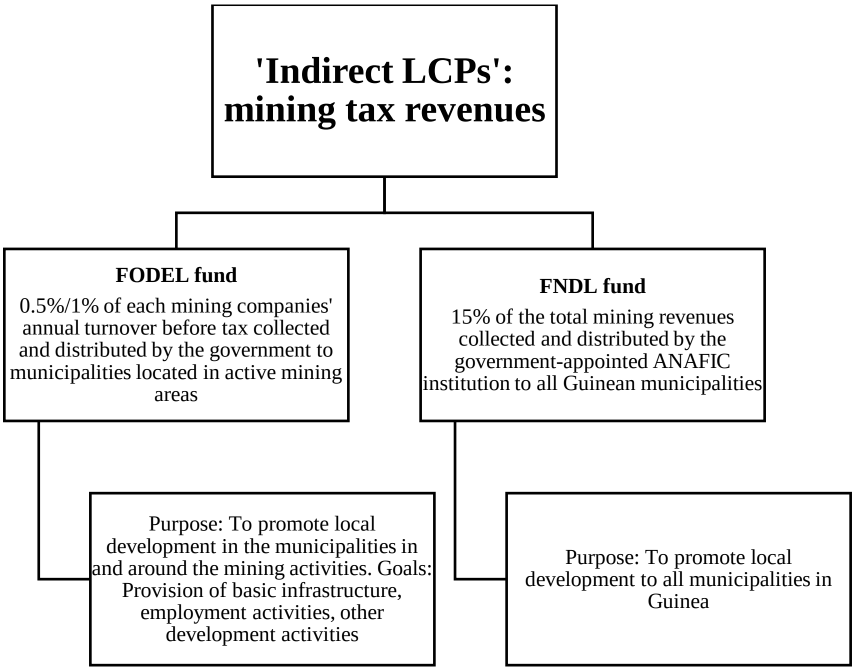
> … I still feel like because the choice of projects is handled by the communities, the communal authorities, there is going to be a lot of projects surrounding school buildings, mosque building, and youth centres. These are going be the biggest things that we will be seeing in the next year or so. And, while that is great, just doing the building doesn't help to move the community (forward)…Once we get passed that, then you're going to have projects surrounding infrastructure, big infrastructure, electricity, roads, water, things like that. I don't think right now they are the main focus of those things. But we will see.[11]

Similarly, in a news report aired on the Guinean television channel, *Evasion Guinée*, which focused on the first payments of the company Alufer to the FODEL, there appeared to be widespread community support. In an interview with the vice-mayor of the village Doupourou in the Boffa préfecture who was present at the ceremony to receive the cheque, he explained that, "…the FODEL is a programme that will help us to create employment, infrastructure for the youth, for women, and for the whole community."[12] Such sentiments support the belief that the impact of the FODEL and FNDL will go beyond their immediate objectives of financing *ad hoc* development initiatives such as building wells

[11] Interview conducted in English with a GAC representative, Conakry, 02 July 2019.
[12] News Item Evasion Guinée TV Programme, 16 January 2020. Video provided by Alufer through their social media channel https://www.facebook.com/belairmining/videos/2461840667277569/.

and schools. Ultimately, projects supported by the two funds should contribute to increased employment, which is one of the central objectives of LCPs. In doing so, programmes to create employment and infrastructure would also contribute to a better SME climate, which, in the long term, could lay the necessary conditions for enabling the successful implementation of LCPs. As noted by Ackah-Baidoo (2020), SMEs presently account for some 90 percent of all businesses in sub-Saharan Africa and generate 60 percent of employment, so their potential to catalyse linkages at mines and stimulate local development should not be overlooked.

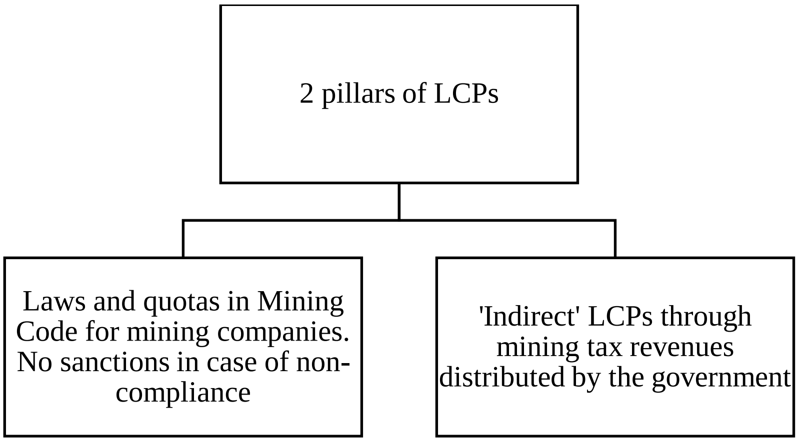
Figure 1: The two mechanisms of mining sector tax revenue distribution in Guinea



Source: Created by authors based on interviews and Government documents (République de Guinée 2019a; 2019b; République de Guinée 2017c).

Consequently, it can be argued that LCPs in Guinea consist of two main pillars (Figure 2). The first, direct pillar contains laws and quotas for mining companies to increase their recruitment of direct and indirect local employment. This also entails certain duties and responsibilities of the government and the private sector to provide the adequate infrastructure to enable a dynamic environment in Guinea that can respond to these goals. Although LCPs may be seen as voluntary and without a mechanism to enforce sanctions in case of non-compliance, their implementation is clarified through fixed quotas in the mining code. Companies are thus expected to comply, as their compliance is monitored and evaluated. The second pillar consists of ‘indirect LCPs’, namely mining tax revenue distribution. The expectation here is that these revenues will finance LCP projects in the long-term.

Figure 2: The two pillars of LCPs in Guinea



Source: Created by authors based on interviews and government documents.

Guinea’s LCP path draws upon a variety of different types of LCPs that have been adopted in different contexts across sub-Saharan Africa. Table 3 illustrates some of the different kinds of private sector LCP involvement in resource-rich countries. On the one hand, this can involve a high degree of private sector independence where LCPs can be entirely followed by companies voluntarily through their CSR measures. On the other end, LCPs can also be drafted by the government and imposed with sanctions. Tax-based LCPs are a further option, where LCPs are financed through mining tax revenues. The case of Guinea seems to be a situation where mining companies have had a high degree of involvement in the establishment and implementation of LCPs, as they were involved in the creation of the mining code. However, although the implementation of LCP requirements in Guinea is highly expected and encouraged, they remain without sanctions. Indirect LCPs in the form of the new tax funds allow for greater government agency, where the government independently organizes the tax revenues that are obtained from mandatory tax income.

Table 3: Types of private sector LCP involvement, including Guinea (GN)

Degree of private sector independence and involvement in terms of LCP creation and implementation	**Characteristics of LCPs**
High	LCPs as CSR projects and initiatives without government involvement
High	Voluntary LCPs, drafted and implemented by the government and private sector. No sanctions
Medium	Mandatory LCPs. Drafted and implemented by the government and private sector. With sanctions
Medium	Mandatory LCPs. Drafted and implemented by the government. Without sanctions
Low	Mandatory LCPs. Drafted and implemented by the government. With sanctions
Low	Tax-based LCPs. LCPs exercised by the government only, financed through mining tax revenues

GN

Source: Created by authors, based on LCP literature review (Bridge 2004; Calignano and Vaaland 2018; Issabayev and Rizvanoghlu 2019; Kalyuzhnova et al. 2016; Lange and Kinyondo 2016; Macatangay 2016; Ngoasong 2014; Vaaland, Soneye, and Owusu 2012; White 2017).

In summary, the implementation of recent mining sector reforms in Guinea clearly illustrates that adopting the right type of LCPs is a complex and challenging process. Those policies that are too strictly implemented and government-controlled fall into the category of protectionism and resource nationalism, and are often even banned under World Trade Organization rules (Kalyuzhnova et al. 2016; Ramdoo 2015). To bypass this situation, many countries have adopted LCPs that have shifted to a softer and more voluntary approach, in order to better accommodate the needs and demands of the private sector and investors (Lange and Kinyondo 2016; Ovadia 2016). There is much debate in the LCP literature about the use of restrictions, sanctions, and binding measures (Ramdoo 2015; Tordo and et al 2013). Although Guinea has tried to adopt a mixed approach, numerous obstacles remain, as will become apparent in the discussion to follow in the next two sections of the paper.

3. Opportunities, Limits and Obstacles to the LCP initiative: Government and civil society perspectives

During interviews carried out between May and July 2019, government and civil society representatives shared considerable insights into the opportunities, limits and obstacles to the implementation of the LCP project in Guinea. Initially, many interviewees expressed great optimism for recent policy reforms, celebrating LCPs as a "revolutionary" achievement, particularly when compared to the legal frameworks of past administrations. At the heart of most discussions, was acknowledgement of the potential for LCPs to address unemployment, which was noted as a major concern by government and civil society representatives. Many interviewees saw LCPs as a mechanism for generating new employment opportunities along the bauxite mining value chain, particularly for young Guineans. For example, a senior government official clearly expressed his admiration for LCPs, pointing out that "…it is rare to see such a commitment to local content in a mining code…it was a very courageous reform, that first of all we need to welcome."[13] Another senior government official reinforced this stance, describing LCPs as,

> …revolutionary, between parenthesis. This [mining] code tries to achieve an equilibrium, between the interests of the mining companies on the one hand [beats on the table], the interests of the government [beats on the table], and also, and foremost, the interest of the population [beats on the table].[14]

However, despite this optimism, a variety of obstacles were also referred to. These challenges could broadly be characterised as being: a) technical or capacity related; or b) stemming from governance issues and unequal power relationships.

a) Technical and capacity challenges

From a technical/capacity perspective, the mining industry is capital-intensive and overwhelmingly requires skilled labour. It therefore can only offer limited opportunities in terms of local employment. This reality clashes with disproportionate demands and the high expectations of Guineans, which often causes tension and disillusion among local populations. Consequently, some interviewees noted that LCPs had not generated the amount of meaningful employment they had anticipated, blaming this on

[13] Interview with Mining Ministry official, Conakry, 02 July 2019.
[14] Interview with Mining Ministry official, Conakry, 10 June 2019.

the general economic conditions in Guinea. For example, when asked about the current employment situation in Guinea, one government official noted:

> …it is complex…it is a real problem…the economy has to be dynamic…it is the economy that creates employment. By not having a dynamic, inclusive economy that pushes the growth rate, it is very difficult.[15]

In a related vein, other interviewees also suggested that the Guinean business environment was difficult terrain to negotiate for LCP implementation. It was reported that the labour force and local SMEs not only lacked the required technical skills and capacities, but they also could not meet the high demands, standards and qualifications that were requirements of the mining sector. Guinean businesses, it was noted, lacked the technical and financial means to meet international standards, and their infrastructure was often inadequate, where a lack of electricity and internet access had become a major concern across the country. This challenge was compounded by the fact that local SMEs often suffer from tax disadvantages that can make their services and products more expensive, particularly when compared to higher quality imported goods and services. More structurally, the business culture in Guinea was described as being problematic, where quality, norms, and delivery times were of a low standard.

Many interview respondents further spoke of Guinea's lack of adequate education as a major contributing factor to the country's failure to meet the demands of the labour market. This issue is of course not limited to Guinea, but is rather a challenge that many countries in sub-Saharan Africa are faced with. Education statistics across the continent paint a stark picture, with one in three children failing to complete primary school, less than 50 percent of children completing secondary school, and less than 10 percent going on to enrol in higher education (Ackah-Baidoo, 2020). The African continent is often described as having the world's least-skilled workforce. In Guinea, this problem remains acute, as one government official explained:

> The level of education and knowledge is a problem. The (school) curricula need to be modified to respond to the needs of the market…The small and medium-sized enterprises in

[15] Interview with a representative from the Youth Ministry. Conakry, 28 June 2019.

> the Boké region[16] do not have the adequate means to work for the mining sector. Access to financial capital is also missing, so they [the local companies] cannot grow.[17]

Such a dearth of local skills and technical knowledge has created an unequal playing field, where small businesses in mining areas cannot compete with their more well-resourced counterparts located in the capital city, or indeed with international suppliers that can ensure efficiency and minimize costs. The situation was well described by one civil society representative in Conakry:

> …certain SMEs do not have the capacity, the financial, technical, and even material capacity to respond to the contracts. When we have a tender, it is the big companies from Conakry [that succeed] because they have everything. They have the qualified human resources, the required equipment and the facilities to get the financial means from the banks. That's why I say, we need to organize this sector really well in Boké.[18]

In order for LCPs to be effectively implemented, there must be a commitment to developing capacity and creating a skilled workforce that is capable of meeting the needs of international mining companies. However, interviewees also noted that capacity issues further extended to the government's inability to effectively enforce and sanction violations of LCPs. In particular, respondents raised questions about the process of monitoring and evaluation, including problems arising from logistics and the lack of capacity amongst local administrators, who were meant to be implementing LCPs and conducting monitoring. A civil society representative explained this further:

> …in the zones, there are préfectures where a person [an official] does not even have a motorbike. How will this person verify the implementation? They have no means, communication, or education. They can't even read…there are mayors that cannot read or write. But we will give them billions to handle. Those who are not familiar with accounting, need education…It is a problem. The FODEL is a good initiative, but no Guinean can tell you if it will work or not.[19]

Related to both the deficiency in local skills and technical difficulties associated with LCP development, delivery, and enforcement, many government officials also expressed capacity-related concerns about the legal and institutional aspects of LCPs. The process of drafting LCP instruments, it was explained, continued to be a cumbersome and drawn out ordeal. In fact, it was reported that the finalization of the

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[16] The Boké region in the North-West of Guinea is the area with the largest bauxite deposits and the most active bauxite exploitation zone. All three interviewed companies operate there, with GAC and CBG directly based in the central Boké préfecture, whilst Alufer's Bel Air Mine is in the Boffa préfecture.
[17] Interview with government official, via Skype, Conakry, 04 June 2019.
[18] Interview with civil society representative, Conakry, 30 May 2019.
[19] Interview with civil society representative, Conakry, 07 June, 2019.

legal application documents meant to explain LCP implementation had been ongoing since 2013 and was still incomplete. In the words of one influential international NGO representative:

> We have the Mining Code. But 60 new regulations should have implemented. As of now, we only have 10 or 11. There is some catching-up to do…there is a lack of binding deadlines, and the hierarchical structure and consequences in the case of non-compliance are missing. For instance, the FODEL came five years too late. The parliament should have monitored this.[20]

A government legal expert interviewed in Conakry underscored this concern and further added:

> For an application of the law, the law needs to be complete. We have the part of the announcement of the principles, but the implementation, the texts and details are not there. We want to implement the law, but we don't know how. These are problems.[21]

Further related to this issue, an additional problem was noted that stemmed from the perceived dual character of LCPs, as the legislations were not retroactive. As such, the same government legal expert noted that LCPs were often only selectively implemented and enforced. He explained:

> …it [the new mining code] will continue to suffer from duality. There are companies which have been here since 1965. We had a Mining Code in 1986. There are new companies which have arrived, there are numerous regimes, there are some generations of mining companies. How will we get out of this? This is a difficulty. We will need to get past this. Either in a renegotiation with mining companies, or, we will wait until the expiration with the goal of renewing mining contracts.[22]

b) Governance challenges

Further interactions with representatives from the government and civil society suggested that at the heart of many legal challenges associated with LCPs were governance issues and power relationships that were constraining their effective implementation on a variety of levels. Effective governance is an important pre-condition for the implementation of LCPs, and above all, interviewees registered widespread concern for the entrenched nature of national level corruption in Guinea. One international NGO representative, who was highly regarded by the government, went as far as to suggest that, "Guinea is a ghost state. The administrators only serve their own interests. They have lost their feeling to serve their population."[23] Other civil society representatives were particularly vocal about fears of

[20] Interview with international NGO representative, Conakry, 29 May 2019.
[21] Interview with government legal expert, Conakry, 03 June, 2019.
[22] Interview with government legal expert, Conakry, 03 June, 2019.
[23] Interview with representative of an international NGO, Conakry, 29 May 2019.

entrenched power hierarchies and structures that they believed were hindering the successful implementation of LCP requirements, as well as the 'indirect LCPs', most notably the unequal distribution of mining tax revenues. This challenge, it was reported, was being further compounded by a lack of monitoring for anti-corruption laws, and a chain of corruption was identified, stretching from local mayors, to the governors, to *préfets*, and up to the ministers. The systemic nature of this problem was further elaborated upon by one local NGO representative:

> With good follow-up, and without corruption, it [local content] could work. But the other problem in Guinea is corruption. People can be educated, but it is the corruption in the municipalities, in the mayor's offices where money is received from the Ministry of Mines, that is a big problem. Because here, it is a chain. It is not just the mayor who takes money. It is the mayor, the national director, the minister. And who will go after the mayor? Because the mayor, he 'eats' his money with the governor, the *préfet*, and the minister. Who will go after the mayor? And this is the problem here. That's why everyone will tell you it is difficult. How can we fight effectively against corruption?[24]

Interestingly, government representatives were also concerned about challenges created by unequal power dynamics. One national government representative who worked directly on tax revenue distribution complained about a lack of cooperation from the local municipalities, where local administrators refused to follow the orders of the national ministries and institutions. He explained that some local administrators refused to comply with LCP legislations, and they did not recognize the new funds and mechanisms. In fact, the interviewee went as far as to describe local administrators as rebellious children who did not want to listen to their "Papa" in the capital Conakry.[25] This power struggle between the capital and local municipalities was also noted previously in terms of competition between companies in the mining areas and those in Conakry. Interviews carried out in the mining areas suggested that SMEs in Boké were disadvantaged when compared to the big SMEs in Conakry, which had better access to finance and technology.

As is the case in other resource-rich African countries (e.g. see Ayanoore, 2019; Geenen, 2019; or Nwapi, 2015), our respondents further noted that in Guinea, corruption and favouritism were major factors in shaping the LCP process. In the words of one representative from a local NGO: "When there

[24] Interview with local NGO representative, Conakry, 07 June 2019.
[25] Interview with government official, Conakry, 05 July 2019.

is a lack of opportunities, and employment is rare, it is favouritism at play. It is the cousins, the friends, the brothers who are recruited without looking at the skills."[26] However, even the Guinean government was acutely aware of these issues and acknowledged the dangers they posed to the successful implementation of LCPs. When asked about the monitoring and control of authorities involved in LCP implementation, a company official from GAC noted:

> … I remember that there was a big conference when they announced those two funds back in April. And the president was like, any mayor that marries another wife with this and this fund is going to be fired. [laughs] Everyone just laughed. But hey, it's true! …they are scared that they will misuse this money. That they will build their own houses. Buy cars, send their kids to study abroad, you know. So yeah, those fears are real. They are real."[27]

In the past, corruption and inequality have been major sources of frustration among ordinary Guineans, at times fuelling violent unrest in the country. The political shift towards mining sector reforms has in many ways been a direct result of such protests and the pressure to make the mining industry more inclusive for all Guineans (Knierzinger 2015; Posthumus 2016). Corruption and favouritism in LCP implementation mean that large amounts of money are often misused and fail to provide the much-needed social spending that country needs. They are also major factors in strengthening resource enclavity, which can reproduce the inequalities that stoke social tension and trigger conflict.

Without addressing such inequality, numerous national and international NGOs have warned of the potential for local-level conflict to arise, especially among the youth. For example, the Guinean NGO, *Leadership Jeune pour la paix et le développement en Afrique-Guinée* (LEJEPAD),[28] carried out a study in 2018 which warned of the ongoing conflict potential in the Boké region. One of the mitigation techniques proposed was to make new livelihood opportunities available to young people outside of the bauxite mining industry, as the main focus of the youth had long been on employment from the mines. Representatives from LEJEPAD noted that the youth of the Boké region had a tendency to "abandon"

[26] Interview with representative of a local NGO, Conakry, 23 May 2019.
[27] Interview conducted in English with a GAC representative, Conakry, 02 July 2019.
[28] LEJEPAD (Leadership Jeune pour la paix et le développement en Afrique-Guinée) is based in Conakry but operates all over Guinea to support the Guinean youth in order to contribute to peace and stability.

all their activities, in the hope of solely profiting from the mines. In most cases, such opportunities were not available and played a role in fuelling conflicts (LEJEPAD 2018).

4. The corporate response to LCPs: Between curiosity, optimism and suspicion

The perspectives of the third actor group, mining companies, offer further insight into how the private sector has responded to state-directed LCPs, following decades of state withdrawal. Despite demonstrating considerable optimism and openness for this new path, corporate interviews revealed that there are some clear reasons why mining companies also seem to be suspicious of LCPs, creating a situation which makes cooperation with the government challenging at times.

While the mining company officials we interviewed were concerned about many of the same obstacles that were discussed in the previous section, they were particularly vocal about the dilemma of reaching target profit margins while at the same time meeting LCP requirements. Officials at GAC, for instance, stated that although they would like to maximize the use of local suppliers, often the quality did not correspond to their standards and requirements. This challenge of a poorly developed SME environment in sub-Saharan Africa has often been attributed to the issue of the "missing middle", where there is a lack of an entrepreneurial class who have been able to progress successfully from being recipients of microfinance to accessing the conventional bank finance needed to develop their businesses further (Alibhai, Bell, and Gillette 2017). In some cases, it was reported, not only was the quality of domestic goods and services being supplied locally poor, but they were also more expensive. Similar sentiments were confirmed by interviewees who detailed a number of negative experiences with local suppliers, all of which had significant impacts on profits. A representative of the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) in Conakry further spoke of "bad memories" that some mining companies had of the unreliable delivery of local goods and services, and a lack of expertise.[29] The representative from GAC elaborated on this concern:

> …another issue is that sometimes you find (local) SMEs that have the capacity to do the work. But they don't have the professionalism to be consistent on how they deliver on the promises on their

[29] Interview with representative of the World Bank's IFC, 28 June 2019, in Conakry.

> contract. Let's say we have a chicken farm and we say we need a hundred chickens per week. For personal reasons they'll come up to you and say, I lost a cousin, I had a wedding. I wasn't able to produce all the chickens you needed. Those are the things that are very recurrent. It's one of the reasons as well why the mining companies tend not to work with SMEs. Another reason is they are more expensive. For the same level of service, the cost might be two or three times as much as an international vendor.[30]

Interestingly, in contrast to their doubts about LCPs, representatives from all three mining companies expressed a strong commitment to their own CSR initiatives. In the case of the oldest and most established mining company, CBG, CSR programmes have been developed over decades and many of these initiatives have strong links to LCPs. For example, CBG, has created its own programme to train and employ both local individuals and small companies. In the process, CBG created 14 small companies in 2010, and provided them with training and ongoing assistance so that they could be used as contractors in its mining operations. In recent years, the objective has been expanded to make these companies more autonomous and provide the capacity for them to seek employment in other markets. However, when asked about how the company would embrace state-directed local content policies and on its view of the new funds, the respondent merely replied that CBG would continue its "own conventions" and voluntary payments. To date, CBG has not been involved in the BSTP and our interviews suggest that the company plans to continue to primarily address employment issues through its CSR strategies.

Alternatively, our interviews with representatives at Alufer revealed that the company has created its own database of local companies near its mining operations, providing an inventory of the capacities and skills that are available on the ground. Like CBG, both Alufer and GAC have provided training and employment programmes for individuals and local SMEs. In interviews with officials at all three companies, respondents expressed a strong commitment to these activities, describing them as important tools for responding directly to the enormous demands of the individuals in local municipalities. As one GAC official explained when asked about how the company plans to balance its CSR commitments with LCPs requirements:

[30] Interview with GAC representative, Conakry, 02 July 2019.

> I think that going into the future in the long term, we will still be doing a little bit of both. We will still have programs that we will run, because as part of our financing, I think that we have certain commitments about how we help communities around us.[31]

In interviews with mining company representatives, it was again revealed that political dynamics in local administrative areas were having a significant impact on LCP implementation. For example, interviews with officials at Alufer suggested that a political transition was taking place, where the older generation of administrators was being challenged by a younger cohort. Although Alufer representatives viewed this in a pragmatic way, they also expressed concern that this might impact LCP implementation. This position was reinforced by one government official from the ANAFIC office that is responsible for the distribution of the FNDL, who raised concerns about political transitions and the disruptions it causes to LCP implementation. He gave the following example:

> As you know, the mayor of Ratoma, has passed away. Now, for his succession, there is a conflict between two political parties. And we have to send them the remaining 30 percent of their subsidy from 2019 to their bank account, and there is nobody to sign!... so these are difficulties, the political situation, as now it is about the public funds. The 15 percent of the mining revenue, this is not the money of a funder anymore. This is a public fund.[32]

Thus far, it remains to be seen how, specifically, such political transitions will impact LCP implementation. However, in terms of direct interactions between the local political administration and the mining company, CBG has also criticized local authorities for trying to take control of its individual CSR commitments in terms of budget and finances. For example, one interviewee pointed out that local authorities wanted to manage the budget of some of CBG's infrastructure projects, and "some authorities wanted to do everything."[33]

In short, the focus on the mining companies' views and responses to LCPs revealed a number of crucial obstacles. Most notably, it became clear that mining companies had their own agendas, which were largely driven by the need to make profits. This, to some extent, was not compatible with LCP commitments, and even though mining companies may, in theory, be supportive of LCPs, some

[31] Interview conducted with GAC representative, Conakry, 02 July 2019.
[32] Interview with ANAFIC government official, Conakry, 05 July 2019.
[33] Interview with CBG representative, Conakry, 15 June 2019.

fundamental difficulties were noted. For example, it was apparent that the mining companies, especially CBG, were concerned about the increasing state presence that undermined their autonomy that had been created through their own CSR initiatives and arrangements in their mining localities. Consequently, the response of mining companies has been to create their own 'proto-LCPs' through CSR initiatives.

Overall, there remains considerable criticism and a lack of trust for the national and local government's new involvement in LCPs. Returning to the classification of LCPs in Guinea (Table 4), conversations with mining company officials confirmed that prior to state-directed LCPs, companies were committed to their own CSR initiatives that in many projects included LCP elements. However, whether or not the duality of LCPs can endure on a long-term basis is open to considerable debate.

Table 4: Types of private sector LCP involvement, including Guinea

Degree of private sector independence and involvement in terms of LCP creation and implementation	**Characteristics of LCPs**
High	LCPs as CSR projects and initiatives without government involvement
High	Voluntary LCPs, drafted and implemented by the government and private sector. No sanctions
Medium	Mandatory LCPs. Drafted and implemented by the government and private sector. With sanctions
Medium	Mandatory LCPs. Drafted and implemented by the government. Without sanctions
Low	Mandatory LCPs. Drafted and implemented by the government. With sanctions
Low	Tax-based LCPs. LCPs exercised by the government only, financed through mining tax revenues

Pre- 2013 & ongoing

State-directed LCPs

Source: Created by the authors, based on LCP literature review (Bridge 2004; Calignano and Vaaland 2018; Issabayev and Rizvanoghlu 2019; Kalyuzhnova et al. 2016; Lange and Kinyondo 2016; Macatangay 2016; Ngoasong 2014; Vaaland, Soneye, and Owusu 2012; White 2017).

Above all, the government needs to demonstrate transparency and mitigate corruption, in order to confirm itself as a credible new dominant actor that can provide viable LCP programmes. However, it remains to be seen how much autonomy mining companies will be willing to give up if LCPs remain state-directed, or if the government will live up to its own expectations to take charge. Ultimately, mining companies will be responsible for implementing any mining reform policy changes. If this can be combined with their own agendas, and if the government plays an adequate part, successful LCP implementation will be more likely.

5. Conclusion: Towards a more holistic LCP strategy?

In recent years, resource-rich countries across sub-Saharan Africa have entered a new era of post-neoliberal extractivism. Such moves towards so-called 'neo-extractivism' or 'progressive extractivism' contain re-distributive elements which aim to overcome the negative impacts of extraction and to provide inclusive resource-based development. Following this trend, mining sector reforms continue to be implemented, many of which prioritise LCPs as their centrepiece.

In the context of Guinea, this paper has aimed to deepen understanding of LCP mining sector reforms and their implementation. In critically exploring the country's current LCP trajectory, it has become apparent that both direct and indirect LCPs potentially offer significant opportunities to achieve more inclusive resource-based development. However, a variety of obstacles – ranging from economic to political to institutional – continue to frustrate progress and ensure that the benefits of LCPs do not reach their intended targets.

Adopting a range of strategies from the LCP experiences of other resource-rich countries, Guinea's LCP model has to date therefore yielded disappointing results. Following a 'mixed LCP path' that seeks to generate both direct and indirect impacts while allowing companies to maintain their CSR commitments alongside local content requirements, the government's message to mining companies has not always been clear. Although the Ministry of Mines claims its LCP requirements are mandatory, the guidelines in the mining code are not enforced with sanctions, allowing LCPs to be interpreted as voluntary. While this same situation has also been observed in other developing countries, it may also be indicative of a trend towards more flexible approaches where LCPs are 'softer' (Lange and Kinyondo 2016; Ovadia 2016). Other research has convincingly demonstrated that when LCP regulations are too strict, they can lead to negative impacts and criticism (Kalyuzhnova et al. 2016; Ramdoo 2015). However, the danger remains that a lack of strict enforcement and sanctions may also slow and hinder LCP requirements from being implemented at all.

The findings from this study reflect earlier observations by Knierzinger (2016) who analysed Guinea's 2013 mining code. The main message from this research was that there were serious concerns about the successful implementation of mining sector reforms, primarily because of administrative obstacles and a lack of effective monitoring and evaluation. Perhaps more seriously, however, Knierzinger argued that "in every region and préfecture, the administrative authority selectively applies the texts which correspond to their particular interests" (Knierzinger, 2016; p. 6). This dynamic of clashing interests, power and fundamental differences among administrators, illustrates how government actors are active agents that shape policies by way of their own views, agendas, and capacities. These dynamics must be considered when implementing any policy change, but this is particularly the case with LCPs, as a top-down national project that relies on local implementation. Individual administrators and stakeholders need to be considered and included in the LCP process to ensure successful implementation. If LCPs are viewed as an elitist, national project imposed centrally from Conakry, and the needs and capacities of local administrators, municipalities, and mining companies are not taken into account, the future of LCPs will be problematic, and their impacts will likely be disappointing.

In considering the response of the mining sector to LCPs, historical factors must also be taken into account, where the relationship between the Guinean state and private sector has waxed and waned over the years. Most recently, neoliberal extractivism has led to a minimization of state involvement, which Campbell (2009) has dubbed the *retraite de l'état* (state withdrawal) or *absence selective* (selective absence).[34] They identify this *retraite* as an unprecedented definition of the role of the affected mineral-rich state, which reduced state sovereignty and undermined legitimacy. This is particularly problematic in states such as Guinea, where only after liberalization has been implemented has there been a realization that there is a preference for a *re-réglementation* of the state, to play a more decisive role in the regulation and facilitation of investment. Recent mining sector reforms, including LCPs, suggest that the government is attempting to play a more decisive and regulatory role now. The new tax funds and quotas in the mining code, as well as the newly created institutions, show an unprecedented level

[34] Also see Campbell and Laforce (2010); and Szablowski and Campbell (2019).

of commitment by the Guinean government to be involved in the mining sector. This is the situation in theory. However, it remains to be seen how decisive and regulatory the Guinean state will be in practice.

Coinciding with the retreat of the state, evidence also suggests that the autonomy and rights that were given to mining companies during this period have strengthened the role that CSR-based initiatives have assumed in filling the 'development gap' in mining localities. Hence, there are mixed feelings about the return of the state, where in particular, the oldest mining company, CBG, seems suspicious to some degree. Likewise, Alufer and GAC, despite their openness and optimism for the new initiatives, have outlined their concerns about corruption. Trust will need to be established, but also more evidence is needed to ensure that the government is in the long-term committed and capable of successfully implementing LCPs.

Consideration must also therefore be given to the realities and interests of the mining sector, which in some instances clash with LCP commitments. Policy changes must be more inclusive, but must also reflect diversity within each stakeholder group. But as was clearly expressed by all three mining companies that we interviewed, they have no plans to let their CSR initiatives be replaced by state-directed LCPs. Hilson and Ovadia (2020) reinforce this position, acknowledging the 'blurred lines' between CSR and LCPs, concluding that LCPs "must be clearly distinguishable from CSR programmes." More insight into this discussion is needed to explore how LCPs and CSR might coexist, given the clear willingness of mining companies to continue and protect their own initiatives.

In short, achieving inclusive resource-based development is a long and complex path for extremely poor countries like Guinea. Specifically, the goal of implementing LCPs and transforming the country's immense natural resource wealth into viable opportunities and employment for its predominantly young population, remains a significant challenge ahead. As the bauxite boom in Guinea continues, and despite promising reform efforts, the inherent structure of extractivism and its unequal nature remain. LCPs are not implemented in a vacuum; they operate in complex environments with diverse and ongoing challenges, that need to be implemented hand in hand with further structural reforms.

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