

**RESOURCE NATIONALISM IN AFRICA: A NEO-GRAMSCIAN ANALYSIS OF
PETROLEUM-DRIVEN INDUSTRIALISATION IN GHANA**

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Abstract

The dissertation focused on three case studies in Ghana's oil and gas sector, namely, national policy response and hegemony; local content policy; and community engagement, contestation and social justice. It shows that resource nationalism emanates from the imposition of global capitalist production limits, the neoliberal hegemony of institutions, the domestic political elite's choices and somewhat the desires and actions of civil society movements and their articulation of Ghana's colonial past and the visions of early resource nationalism under Nkrumah's resource sovereignty. Using interviews from key stakeholders in the industry, documentary analysis, policy analysis, and as well as reflections on key field observations during the study period, the dissertations' findings chronicle the trajectory of oil's emergence in Ghana and its subjugation to specific political projects and class interests. The dissertations' key point of departure is that political elites, technocrats, and international capital created a power bloc which domesticates oil governance through discourses such as transparency, investment, and development. This power bloc functions as an integral state, mixing coercion and consent to reconcile international interests. Hence, resource nationalism appears not as a rupture with global capitalism but as passive revolution. The dissertation contributes to the furtherance of Neo-Gramscian theoretical concepts of hegemony, counter-hegemony, passive revolution, and the integral state in the context of resource governance in Africa. Empirically, it shows how the convergence of domestic elite interests and transnational capital determines the terms of Ghana's oil economy. The dissertation, therefore, argues that the concept of resource nationalism in Ghana is not a unified project, but an unfinished hegemonic project, a site of continual contestation between the logic of domination and subaltern resistance, accommodation and autonomy, within a global energy order that continues to evolve.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	xi
Chapter 1. Introduction and Background Study: Ghana, its Natural Resources, Hegemony and Transitional Energy.....	1
1.1. Resource Nationalism and Ghana’s Uniqueness in the Changing Global Order	1
1.2. The Research Puzzle	9
1.3. Objectives of the Study.....	11
1.4. Dissertation Argument	12
1.4.1. Main Argument:	12
1.4.2. Case Studies Supporting Main Argument:	13
1.5. Theoretical and Empirical Contribution	14
1.6. Dissertation Structure.....	18
Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework: A Neo-Gramscian Analysis of Resource Nationalism	21
2.1. Introduction	21
2.2. Demystifying Neo-Gramscian Approaches	23
2.2.1. Historical Materialism	27
2.2.2. Hegemony.....	31
2.2.3. Intellectuals and Ideology	35
2.2.4. Historical Bloc	39
2.2.5. Passive Revolution	40
2.2.6. Counter-Hegemony in a changing world.....	43
2.2.7. The Integral State (Power Bloc): Bridging the Global and the Local	45
2.3. Resource Nationalism in Africa: A Neo Gramscian Approach	50
2.3.1. Colonial Legacy and the Formation of an Extractive Power Bloc.....	50
2.3.2 Resource Nationalism and African States: Power Bloc, Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony	55
2.4. Conclusion	60
Chapter 3. Ghana’s Developmental Trajectory : Power Blocs, Hegemony, and Counter-Hegemony Before Oil Discovery	62
3.1. Introduction	62
3.2. Power Bloc: Colonial Hegemony and the Foundations of Dependency	64
3.2.1. Pre-colonial Era: Egalitarian Economy and Early Trade Links	64
3.2.2. Power Bloc in the Colonial Era: Resource Extraction and Dependency	66

3.3. Power Bloc and Post-Independence Era: the Struggle for Resource Control and Economic Sovereignty	71
3.3.1. Neo-Colonialism and the Reproduction of Power Blocs	71
3.3.2. Kwame Nkrumah's Strategy: Counter-Hegemony and the Power Bloc.....	73
3.3.3. Post-Nkrumah: Political Instability, Economic Decline, Structural Dependency and Elite Reconfiguration	81
3.4. Rawlings and the PNDC Military Era: Structural Adjustment, Counter-Hegemony and the Entrenchment of Neoliberal Hegemony	89
3.5. The Civilian Rawlings and John A. Kufuor's Eras: Ghana's Political Economy Before Oil, an Entrenched Neoliberal Hegemony	93
3.6. Conclusion: Hegemony, Counter-Hegemony and Developmental Trajectories	99
<i>Chapter 4. National Policy Response and Hegemony: The Aspiration of Resource Nationalism and Counter-Hegemonic Struggles</i>	<i>101</i>
4.1. Introduction	101
4.2. The History of Oil Search and Discourses: National Interest, Political Capture and Local Interest	104
4.2.1 Introduction: Framing Ghana's Oil Discovery and Forces at Play	104
4.2.2. The Urgency of Oil and Resource Nationalist Rhetorics	105
4.2.3. Elite Capture and Loss of Institutional Memory.....	108
4.2.4 Localised Demands: Chiefs and the Politics of Inclusion.....	109
4.3. Historical Structures and Intellectuals in Shaping the Oil Governance	112
4.3.1. Material Base: Oil Discovery and Dependencies.....	112
4.3.2. Role of Ideological Agents in Shaping Oil and Gas Governance.....	115
4.4. The National Policy Framework and Political Elite Complicity: Aligning Sovereignty Amidst Global Pressures	120
4.4.1. Background and Discourses on National Policy Framework.....	120
4.4.2. Overview of the Legal, institutional and fiscal framework	124
4.4.3. Policies/Laws Alignment with Neo-Liberal Global Standard and Entrenchment of Capitalist Hegemony	146
4.5. Civil Society Engagement: Counter-Hegemony or Co-optation?.....	169
4.5.1. CSOs' Contribution to Legal, Institutional and Policy Frameworks.....	173
4.5.2. Counter Hegemony and Contradiction of Transparency: Co-Optation or Accountability?	176
4.6. Conclusion	183
<i>Chapter 5. The Local Content Policy (LCP) in Ghana: Resource Nationalism or Neo-liberal Accommodation?.....</i>	<i>187</i>
5.1. Introduction	187
5.2. Genesis of Ghana's LCP: Origin in the Global Context.....	189
5.2.1. The Global Push for State-Led Industrialisation in Post-Neoliberal Era.....	189
5.2.2. Ghana's Local Context and Motivation for LCP	192
5.3. The Evolution of the Petroleum (Local Content and Local Participation) Regulations, 2013 (LI 2204)	196
5.3.1. A Brief History of the Legislative Process	196
5.3.2. Features of LI 2204 and the Limits of Resource Nationalism	197

5.4. The Impact of Ghana's LCP in the Oil and Gas Sector: Successes or Neoliberal Façade?	201
5.4.1. Institutional Development: Strengthening Governance or Symbolic Reforms?	202
5.4.2. Investment and local development: Meaningful Transformation or Peripheral Growth?	204
5.4.3. Human Resources Development: Empowering Locals or Enforcing a Labour Hierarchy?	207
5.4.4. Supply Chain Development and Value Addition: Shifting Ownership or Preserving IOCs Control?	209
5.4.5. Political Interferences, LCP Legislations , Regulatory Weakness, IOCs and Global Capital	219
5.4.6. Weak Local Business Capacity and Financial Constraints	225
5.4.7. Discriminatory Policies in Favour of IOCs	229
5.4.8. Local Fronting and IOCs Co-optation.....	233
5.4.9. Absence of New Project Post Covid 19: A Structural Setback for Local Content Implementation.....	236
5.5. Conclusion	237
<i>Chapter 6. Local Community Engagement, Contestation and Social Justice in Ghana's Oil Governance</i>	<i>240</i>
6.1. Introduction	240
6.2. Local Community Engagement: Between Co-optation and Contestation	242
6.2.1 Preliminary Engagement and Unfulfilled Political Promises	243
6.2.2 The Western Regional Chiefs Demands: Co-optation and Deflecting of Demands	248
6.3. Petroleum Revenue Management and Local Development: Limited Impact and Systemic Exclusion	252
6.3.1. The PRMA Formation and Preliminary National and Regional Consultation: An illusion of Local Participation	252
6.3.2. The PRMA and Weak Local Reinvestment Strategies	260
6.3.3. CSR as a Hegemonic Tool for Pacification of Oil Companies Operating in Ghana	264
6.4. Power Dynamics, Social (In)justice in Oil Producing Communities	273
6.4.1 The Intersection of Global Capital, State Power, and Local Agency	273
6.4.2. Economic Inequalities in Oil-Producing Communities	277
6.4.3. Social Impact of Oil Production	280
6.4.4. Ecological Impact of Oil Production	281
6.4.5 Structural Barriers to Equitable Oil Governance	284
6.5. Local Contestation and Its Limitations	286
6.5.1. Fear and Coercion: The Role of State Repression	288
6.5.2 Political Interference and Elite Co-optation.....	290
6.5.3 Fragmentation from Within: Intra-Community Divisions	292
6.5.4 Economic Dependency and the Struggle for Survival	294
6.6. Conclusion	296
<i>Chapter 7. Conclusion and Summary</i>	<i>300</i>
7.1. Introduction	300
7.2 Summary of Key Findings.....	301
7.2.1. National Policy Response and Hegemony	301
7.2.2. The LCP: Resource Nationalism or Neoliberal Accommodation?	303
7.2.3. Local Engagement, Contestation and the Limits of Resistance	304
7.3 Theoretical Reflections	306
7.4. Just Transitions and Climate Change in Africa: An Emerging Research Area	309
7.5 Conclusion: Navigating the Future of Resource Nationalism.....	310

References:	314
Appendix 1: Methodology	344
1.1. Introduction	344
1.2. Research Design	346
1.2.1 Neo-Gramscian Integration into Research Design	346
1.3. Data Sources	347
1.3.1. Primary Data	347
1.3.2. Secondary Data	347
1.4. Study Area	348
1.4.1. Research Region	348
1.4.2. Research Area	350
1.5. Data Collection Process	352
1.5.1. Exploratory Visits	352
1.5.2. Interviewing Key Players	352
1.5.3. Focus-group Discussions	352
1.5.4. Data Analysis	353
1.6. Research Question and Data Collection	353
1.7. Ethical Considerations	355
1.8. Limitations of the Study	355
<i>Appendix 2: Ethics Approval</i>	<i>356</i>
<i>Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form</i>	<i>357</i>
<i>Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Experts</i>	<i>358</i>
<i>Appendix 5: Interview Guide for Political Parties/Activist/Interest Groups</i>	<i>360</i>
<i>Appendix 6: Interview Guide for Oil Companies (Local/IOCs)</i>	<i>361</i>
<i>Appendix 7: Interview Guide for Community Members and FGD</i>	<i>362</i>
<i>Appendix 8: Interview List</i>	<i>363</i>
<i>Appendix 9: FGD Date and Location</i>	<i>369</i>
<i>Appendix 10: Policy Recommendations</i>	<i>370</i>

List of Tables

Table 1 Resource Nationalism Policies by Category	8
Table 2 A Summary of Taxation of Some Petroleum Agreements from Ghana's Oil Fields	153
Table 3 Summary of Ghana's 18 Petroleum Agreements.....	154
Table 4 Summary of Oil Production and Revenues Accrued from Ghana's Oil Sector from 2011 to 2023.....	157
Table 5 A Summary of a Decade of CSOs Activities in the Oil and Gas Sector.....	170
Table 6 Fundamental Local Content Provisions from the L.I 2204.....	199
Table 7 First three Years of Local Content Investment in the Oil and Gas Sector	215
Table 8 Summary of Local Content Supply Chain Investment	216
Table 9 Contracts awarded in Ghana's Oil and Gas Sector (2011-2020).....	219
Table 10 ABFA Distribution to the Priority Areas from 2011-2020.....	258
Table 11 Oil Companies Interventions in the Ahanta West Municipality	267
Table 12 Data Type and Means of Data Collections	348

List of Figures

Figure 1 Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (PRMA) Revenue Allocations	138
Figure 2 Percentage of oil revenues accrued from Ghana's fields oil from 2011 to 2023	158
Figure 3 PRMA 12 Priority Areas and Allocations	253
Figure 4 Citizens Preferences for ABFA Priority Areas by Regions in Ghana	255
Figure 5 Completed ABFA Projects From 2011-2018	256
Figure 6 Map of Western Region.....	349
Figure 7 Oil Producing Communities in Western Region of Ghana	350

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	- African Development Bank
ABFA	- Annual Budgeting Funding Amount
ACEP	- Africa Centre for Energy Policy
AfCFTA	- African Continental Free Trade Area
AFRC	- Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AMV	- Africa Mining Vision
ANC	- African National Congress
ASGM	- Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining
ASM	- Artisanal and Small-scale Mining
AU	- African Union
Bn	- Billion
BEE	- Black Economic Empowerment
BPD	- Barrels Per Day
BWIs	- Bretton Woods Institutions
CIT	- Corporate Income Tax
CPP	- Convention People's Party
CSCO	- Civil Society Coalition on Oil
CSOs	- Civil Society Organisations
CSPOG	- Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas
CSR	- Corporate Social Responsibilities
DRC	- Democratic Republic of Congo
DS	- Developmental State
E&P	- Exploration and Production Act
ECOWAS	- Economic Organisation of West African States
EDC	- Enterprise Development Centre
EIA	- Environmental Impact Assessment
EITI	- Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
ENI	- Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi
EPA	- Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	- Economic Recovery Program

ESG - Environmental, Social, and Governance
FDIs - Foreign Direct Investments
FGD - Focus Group Discussion
FPSO - Floating Production Storage and Offloading
GBA - Ghana Bar Association
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
GFS - Ghana Petroleum Funds
GHS - Ghana Cedis
GhSMEs - Ghanaian Small and Medium Enterprises
GIIF - Ghana Infrastructure Investment Fund
GIMPA - Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
GNPC - Ghana National Petroleum Corporation
GRA - Ghana Revenue Authority
GSGDA - Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
HF - Heritage Fund
HIPC - Highly Indebted Poor Country
IEA - Institute of Economic Affairs
IGC - Indigenous Ghanaian Companies
IMF - International Monetary Fund
IOCs - International Oil Companies
IOs - International Organisations
IPPC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISCs - International Service Companies
ISI - Import Substitution Industrialisation
ISSER - Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
JNOC - Japanese National Oil Company
JTTC - Jubilee Technical Training Centre
KIIs - Key Informant Interviews
L.I - Legislative Instrument
LCD - Local Content Directorate
LEED - Livelihood Enhancement and Enterprise Development

MDF - Minerals Development Fund
 MITI - Ministry of International Trade and Industry
 MNCs - Multinational Corporations
 MNEs - Multinational Enterprises
 MOE - Ministry of Energy
 MOFEP - Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
 MPA - Model Petroleum Agreement
 NDC - National Democratic Congress
 NETF - National Energy Transition Framework
 NGOs - Non-governmental Organisations
 NHIS - National Health Insurance Scheme
 NICs - Newly Industrialised Countries
 NIEO - New International Economic Order
 NLC - National Liberation Council
 NOC - National Oil Company
 NOGICDA - Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act
 NPP - New Patriotic Party
 NRC - National Redemption Council
 NRGI - Natural Resource Governance Institute
 NTLIS - Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism
 OFY - Operation Feed Yourself
 OPEC - Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
 PA - Petroleum Agreement
 PC - Petroleum Commission
 PFRD - Programme for Reconstruction and Development
 PIAC - Public Interest and Accountability Committee
 PNDC - Provisional National Defence Council
 PNDCL - Provisional National Defence Council Law
 PPE - Personal Protective Equipment
 PPP - Public Private Partnerships
 PRMA - Petroleum Revenue Management Act 815

PRMB - Petroleum Revenue Management Bill
PSA - Production Sharing Agreement
RAIDS - Resource-Based African Industrialisation and Development Strategy
SAP - Structural Adjustment Program
SF - Stabilisation Fund
SGMC - State Gold Mining Corporation
SLO - Social License to Operate
SMC - Supreme Military Council
SMEs - Small and Medium-scale Enterprises
SOE - State Owned Enterprises
SR - Surface Rentals
STMA - Sekondi - Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly
SWF - Sovereign Wealth Fund
TEN - Tweneboa, Enyenra, Ntomme
TNCs - Transnational Companies
TOR - Tema Oil Refinery
TUC - Trades Union Congress
UAE - United Arab Emirates
UENR - University of Energy and Natural Resources
UK - United Kingdom
UMaT - University of Mines and Technology
UN - United Nations
UNECA - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
URADEP - Upper Regional Agricultural Development Program
USA - United States of America
VAT - Value Added Tax
WARENGO - Western Regional Development Network of NGOs
WB - World Bank
WTO - World Trade Organisation
YPF - Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales

Chapter 1. Introduction and Background Study: Ghana, its Natural Resources, Hegemony and Transitional Energy

“Africa is a paradox which illustrates and highlights neo-colonialism. Her earth is rich, yet the products that come from above and below the soil continue to enrich, not Africans predominantly, but groups and individuals who operate to Africa’s impoverishment” (Nkrumah, 1965: 1).¹

1.1. Resource Nationalism and Ghana’s Uniqueness in the Changing Global Order

The global scramble for natural resources continues to shape the developmental trajectories of several resource-rich countries especially those in Africa (Arnold, 2009; Carmody, 2011). Many African countries rich in natural resources remain economically marginalised in the global capitalist system (Panford, 2017). This contradiction is the central premise of resource nationalism, which advocates for reforming natural resource governance to open economic sovereignty and industrialisation (Pryke, 2017). Resource nationalism has been a key policy for resource-rich African countries that want to harness their natural resources for industrial and socioeconomic development. Resource nationalism in the age of oil-fuelled industrialisation has become an increasingly attractive way to counter the structural injustices of the world’s resource economy. This dissertation is a case study of resource nationalism in Ghana, in which petroleum-based industrialisation is shaped by the tension between capitalist world market and local aspirations for resource sovereignty.

Ghana is an instructive case study for exploring resource nationalism in Africa. First, the discovery of oil in commercial quantities in 2007, turned the tide in Ghana’s economy and refocused attention on managing its resources (Darkwah, 2013; Obeng-Odoom, 2016). This occurred at a time of global structural change, a period marked by declining power of Organization

¹ This statement by Dr Kwame Nkrumah points to the contradiction that Africa is rich in natural resources yet remains impoverished.

of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), higher price volatility, and faster-than-ever global shifts to renewable energy.

Second, Ghana has a long history of extracting resources (especially gold and cocoa) through colonial-era dependency and an elite-dominated developmental path (Akabzaa, 2000; Panford, 2017; Andrews, 2019). The confluence of these historical and material conditions provides an opportunity to assess how Ghana's long and complex history of resource control, from Nkrumah's anti-colonial drive for economic self-determination (Nkrumah, 1965) to the neoliberal turn towards open markets and reform, shapes contemporary debates on the governance of natural resources.

Third, in contrast to many other oil-producing countries that pursued statist or authoritarian strategies, Ghana is a democratic state with a relatively stable political environment. Therefore, its resource nationalism emerges from a framework of democratic governance, institutional bargaining and public accountability rather than populist or coercive imperatives. This distinguishes Ghana from many other petro-states and challenges the notion that resource nationalism emanates solely from confrontational and authoritarian avenues or politics/political movement.

Fourth, Ghana's oil governance emerged during the era of the second wave of resource nationalism which began in the late 2000s (Caramento et al., 2023). This wave reflects what Nem Singh (2010) describes as "continuity with change" whereby rather than fully nationalising the sector, Ghana has sought to strengthen state regulatory capacity, increase public revenue through taxation and royalties, and promote local participation via avenues such as local content policies. Nonetheless, these reforms coexist with neoliberal market based governance and foreign investment strategies.

Fifth, Ghana being a “late oil” entrant, afforded it an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of earlier oil-producing nations (such as Nigeria) and replicate best practices of other oil-rich countries (such as Norway and the United Arab Emirate (UAE)). However, Ghana’s oil governance trajectory is constrained both by the legacies of colonial and postcolonial development and by the structural limits of the neoliberal global oil order. This global order is shaped by global financial institutions, International Oil Companies (IOCs), and complicit domestic elites. Hence, these historical, ideological, and structural dynamics make Ghana a valuable and instructive case of the contradictions of resource nationalism, especially in an age of uncertainty in the global energy order and Ghana’s future.

To use the oil wealth of Ghana for industrialisation, Ghana must balance the competing imperatives of world capitalist competition, domestic development goals, and increasing social expectations. Such a dynamic relationship of local and global demands can be understood from a Neo-Gramscian perspective, which interrogates the power of hegemony (Cox, 1983), counter-hegemony (Bieler and Morton, 2001) and historic blocs (Cox, 1983, 1987) to govern resources. This dissertation demonstrates that Ghana’s resource nationalism exemplifies the contradictions inherent in balancing global capitalist needs with domestic development goals. It contributes to the larger conversation of resource nationalism by analysing the way resource-rich countries such as Ghana deal with these tensions in the light of global energy transitions and changing power dynamics. The dissertation investigates the ways internal political dynamics alongside social pressures and multinational interests influence Ghana's approach to natural resource management. The dissertation situates Ghana's oil extraction within the framework of the global energy transition marked by changes in fossil fuels, increased oil prices, and renewable energy demands while it explores resource nationalism as a potential development strategy in today's world order.

The dissertation also demonstrates that resource nationalism may serve as a discourse and policy mechanism for asserting sovereignty and implementing industrialisation, but its adoption remains contested and deeply structurally bound.

The notion of resource nationalism in Ghana is not new. The country's first president Kwame Nkrumah, of course, had made the argument against Africa's reliance on capitalist nations. In *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism (NTLSI)* Nkrumah described how Africa's dependence on exporting raw materials to the industrialised world maintained its economic oppression. These resources are converted into commodities and sold on to African nations at exorbitant rates, making the Global North rich and Africa poor (Nkrumah, 1965). Therefore, resource nationalism for Nkrumah was central to breaking this exploitative nexus and creating economic sovereignty. There is no doubting the relevance of Nkrumah's dream today, when African states are still struggling with resource governance under a neoliberal global order. Ghana's resource nationalism, in the oil and gas industry especially, brings to the fore the conflicts between domestic ambitions for industrialisation and those posed by global capitalist rules. The role of IOCs, global financial institutions and transnational capitalist interests points to the challenge of resource sovereignty in an order that has been driven by hegemonic power. In this dissertation, I apply a Neo-Gramscian framework to study resource nationalism in Ghana's petroleum-led industrialisation. I show how Ghana's oil policies are dictated by the contradictions of the neoliberal global order, where political elites, as members of the historic bloc, are split between domestic development (home state interest) and the interests of transnational actors (such as IOCs). The findings suggest that often political elites have promoted IOCs interest at the expense of national and local interest. Yet there has been some amount of local benefit although

limited when compared with the aspirations of the various oil and gas policies under review in my case studies.²

Undeniably, Ghana continues to grapple with poverty and inadequate basic infrastructure; however, in the immediate post-independence decades of the 1950s and 1960s, Ghana, like many African states, pursued an ambitious national development agenda, (Mkandawire, 2001). Similarly, in the 21st century, several African states envision industrialisation as a path to development, pursuing state-led rather than market-led industrial policies (Lin, 2011; Stiglitz, 2017). These states seek to achieve this through their natural resources, such as minerals and hydrocarbon resources (Buur, 2013). The notion is that natural resources offer a formidable foundation for these states to harness and transform their various economies to attain development (AMV, 2009; Ovadia, 2016b). In West Africa, the Economic Organisation of West African States (ECOWAS) has a policy framework that synchronises the Africa Mining Vision (AMV)³ with the objective of resource-led industrialisation through value-addition or processing to gain maximum benefits. This objective is further supported by the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (UNECA, 2011). Ghana being a member of these organisations and regional initiatives initially viewed the oil discovery as an opportunity for economic diversification, especially given the volatility in global cocoa and gold prices (Gyampo, 2011).

However, the optimism diminished over the years, particularly as global oil prices dropped especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Additional challenges have arisen due to the declining

² In chapters 4, 5 and 6. I show how political elites have promoted global capitalist interest at the expense of national and local development.

³AMV was initiated by African Heads of State in February 2009 at the African Union summit to deal with Africa's predicament in the extractive sector. It has the goal of providing a policy framework to channel Africa's mineral wealth for African development.

power of the OPEC as a result of new actors such as the US production of shale, internal conflicts among OPEC members and the global shift towards renewable energy (Van De Graaf et al., 2016). Moreover, the decline in the leadership of OPEC presents new challenges for new oil-producing countries like Ghana in terms of the high price volatility. Such price volatility denies the state its ability to tap into oil revenues for long-term national developmental projects making the state susceptible to swing global oil market turning points.

Beyond price volatility, the global shift towards renewable energy challenges Ghana's new oil and gas sector. The energy transition agenda puts renewable energy above fossil fuel in energy production and consumption. Therefore, the fossil fuel withdrawal undercut oil's long hegemony (reign), which challenges the *status quo* by putting countries rich in renewable energy at the front of the energy transition (Bridge et al., 2018). The shift involves the restructuring of the world order: as oil-based economies decline, the shift in hegemonic power towards renewable energy increases (Manley and Heller, 2021). For Ghana the transition towards renewable energy does not suggests its exclusion from international economic structures but poses critical questions about its strategic positioning in the future. It is not a question of abandoning oil, but rather the use of its oil resources to pursue structural transformation, and to make decisions to consider the gradual but significant shift in energy preferences. Instead of focusing solely on joining the renewable energy movement, the strategic priority today involves developing the capacity to adapt to evolving energy trends through proactive resource management.

Nonetheless, the transitional energy shift as recent studies have shown, has led to “climate capitalism” a superficial response to climate crisis which ultimately maintains the capitalist *status quo* (Carroll, 2019; Fox, 2023; Griffiths, 2023; Surprise, 2024; Webber, 2024). It is based on this

background that this dissertation seeks to examine resource nationalism in Ghana amid global energy transitions through the Neo-Gramscian lenses.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the term resource nationalism follows Haslam and Heidrich (2016: 2) who define it as:

... a wide range of actions and policies through which the state seeks to enhance its influence over the development of the resource sector. In this regard, we include as resource nationalism three categories of actions: the maximization of public revenue; the assertion of strategic state control (ability to set a political or strategic direction to the development of the sector); and enhancement of developmental spillovers from extractive activity.

In the discussion of resource nationalism in Africa using the case of Ghana's oil and gas sector, this dissertation focuses on state actions and policies that sought the following as shown in table 1: (i) the maximisation of public revenue; (ii) the assertion of strategic state control (ability to set a political or strategic direction to the development of the sector); (iii) the enhancement of developmental spillovers from extractive activity.

Table 1 Resource Nationalism Policies by Category

Policy Category	Policies
Maximization of Public Revenue	- Increased royalties
	- Additional taxes and duties
	- Extra-legal pressures to increase voluntary financial contributions
	- Forced divestment of shares to the state (without effective control)
	- Limitation of tax exemptions and deductions
	- Increased rent collection through efficient management of existing state-owned enterprises
Assertion of Strategic Control Over the Sector	- Constitutional assertion of state's ownership of subsoil resources
	- Replacement of concession system with contracting/licencing regime
	- Forced divestment to the state of shares (majority ownership, with control)
	- Creation or renovation of state-owned enterprises
	- Full nationalization (and operational control)
	- Develop state-owned enterprises with operational capacity
Enhance Developmental Spillovers from Extractive Projects	- Require devolution of (tax) revenue to subnational jurisdictions
	- Require community engagement and corporate responsibility programming
	- Enhance responsiveness of consultation processes within environmental licencing regime
	- Foment supplier development (local-content requirements; technological transfer)
	- State-owned enterprises spearhead industrialization through contracting

Source: (Haslam and Heidrich, 2016: 225).

Although broad, this definition captures what resource nationalism has come to represent in contemporary times. However, it departs from the 1960s post-independence conception, when resource nationalism was more sovereigntist in character, as articulated by anti-colonial leaders such as Nkrumah (1965). Despite Haslam and Heidrich (2016) focus on taxation as a means of obtaining resource rent their definition best suits the Ghanaian context in a broad sense for conceptualisation of resource nationalism, especially the three elements pointed above. It is important to note that resource nationalism is not static but has evolved in various forms and shapes over the past six decades (Caramento et al., 2023); therefore, using Haslam and Heidrich (2016)

allows me to characterise the type of resource nationalism that is emanating from Ghana's oil and gas sector.

1.2. The Research Puzzle

This study is framed around the central question of why Ghana, despite passing proactive policies and governance structures, struggles to align its growing oil and gas sector with a nationalist development vision: natural resources-driven industrialisation, based on petroleum exploration and production. It further raises the question: How do the dynamics of the capitalist global economy, together with its historical bloc, challenge petroleum-based industrialisation given the push towards energy transition and climate change? Using a Neo-Gramscian lens, this dissertation critically examines the interplay of hegemony and counter-hegemony that shapes and challenges Ghana's developmental aspirations in the oil and gas sector. I argue that Ghana's approach to resource nationalism in the oil and gas sector is not the product of a unified national vision, it rather emerges from the interplay of capitalist constraints, neoliberal institutional norms, and the strategic choices of domestic political elites. Civil society and historical legacies such as Nkrumah's vision of resource sovereignty have served as a counter-hegemonic force to capitalist hegemony it is often constrained by elite alignments with transnational interests. These tensions highlight how structural contradictions in Ghana's resource governance constrain the transformative potential of resource nationalism within the new global energy order, yielding only limited gains. The Neo-Gramscian concepts of the transnational historical bloc, integral state and power bloc, transnational classes, counter-hegemony, passive revolution and internationalisation of the state shed light on these tensions.

It is important to mention a few preliminary research works in Ghana's oil and gas sector. Earlier studies examined the theoretical application of the debates on the resource curse (Acosta

and Heuty 2009; Gyampo 2011; Okpanachi and Andrews 2012; Kopinski, Polus, and Tycholiz 2013; Ayelazuno 2014; Obeng-Odoom 2015a). Further studies tried to suggest ways and means of avoiding the oil curse in Ghana (Debrah and Graham, 2015; Tuokuu and Kuusaana, 2015; Graham, Ackah, et al., 2019). Some researchers focused on the impact of oil and gas exploration and production on the city of Sekondi-Takoradi, and how the oil and gas has led to the gentrification of the city (Eduful and Hooper, 2015).

Recent studies have examined the impact of oil production and transportation on the “blue economy (sea)” and land in Ghana’s oil communities, by the dispossession of the means of “(re)production” causing “many deleterious environmental effects” leading to what is known as “ocean and land grabbing” (Ayelazuno and Ovadia, 2022: 676). A recently edited book by Acheampong and Stephens (2022) examined how Ghana has managed its oil resources and used oil revenues to promote inclusive economic growth and development since a decade of oil production. Although these studies have provided insight into the development of the oil industry in Ghana, there appears to be little or no work on resource nationalism in Ghana’s oil and gas sector from a Neo-Gramscian perspective. To date, little empirical work has been done on the changing nature of resource nationalism in Ghana and how global capitalist hegemony in a changing global order shaped and continues to shape the political aspect of resource nationalism in Ghana. This dissertation seeks to fill these gaps by examining three distinctive case studies. These case studies are: (1) national policy response and hegemony, (2) local content policy (LCP), and (3) community engagement and local contestation. I offer some policy recommendations on how to address some of the challenges pointed out in the case studies which I will share with civil society and advocacy groups.⁴

⁴ See Appendix 10 for policy recommendations

The main research question guiding this dissertation is: Why has Ghana's natural resource-driven industrialisation agenda not attained its full potential?

The specific questions are:

1. What global and local political and economic factors influenced policy formation in the oil and gas sector and how do these factors reflect broader tensions between local resource sovereignty and global capitalist pressure?
2. (a) What historical and strategic dynamics led to the creation and evolution of Ghana's LCP in the oil and gas sector? (b) How has the LCP influenced the sector's development and impacted local communities, particularly in terms of economic benefits, social equity, and empowerment?
3. How have local communities engaged with oil governance particularly in relation to revenue management, social justice and environmental sustainability?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

In the process of responding to the above questions, this dissertation will do the following:

1. Explain how Ghana's specific experience of resource nationalism has been shaped by the way in which its colonial and postcolonial history of sovereignty and state-led development interacted with the shifts taking place in the global political economy in the context of the late-oil era and energy transition.
2. Provide an in-depth analysis of the political and institutional landscape in which Ghana's oil and gas industry is governed by tracking how international norms of transparency and market-liberalism are co-opted to accommodate domestic political interests in policy framework such as the Petroleum Revenue Management Act (PRMA), the Exploration and Production Act (E&P) and the LCP.

3. Map the relationship between transnational and domestic elites, including IOCs, IFIs and Ghanaian political elites, to explore how they reproduce the neoliberal hegemonic order.
4. Explore the role of counter-hegemonic civil society and local communities in shaping or constraining oil governance outcomes in relation to distribution, participation and environmental justice.
5. Reflect critically on whether resource nationalism can work as a strategy of development in the context of energy transition, policy conditionality and structural dependency.

These goals reflect the overall aspiration of this dissertation to answer the research questions presented above by tracking how resource nationalism is being shaped by, and in turn reproducing both, global and national hegemony to explain the outcome of Ghana's resource-driven industrialisation project as one of partial transformation.

1.4. Dissertation Argument

1.4.1. Main Argument:

As outlined above (see page 9), this dissertation argues that Ghana's approach to resource nationalism in the oil and gas sector is shaped not by a unified developmental vision but by the interplay of capitalist constraints, neoliberal institutional norms, and elite strategic choices. Building on this argument, the subsequent chapters further examine how these dynamics operate within specific arenas of governance from national policy frameworks and local content implementation to community-level engagements to reveal both the limits and possibilities of counter-hegemonic action. In essence the current type of resource nationalism is about the contradiction of the hegemony of oil capital, as the Ghanaian political elites (or even African political elites) find themselves in the contradictory position of promoting the development needs of their country (being democratically elected leaders) on one hand, and on the other (and being

part of the integral state (power bloc) of the hegemony of oil capital)⁵, promoting the interests of IOCs and their home states.

1.4.2. Case Studies Supporting Main Argument:

Case 1 - The National Policy Response and Hegemony. This case shows that Ghana's policies in the oil and gas sector reflect a deliberate, yet constrained, attempt to assert sovereignty over oil and gas resources and promote economic inclusion and developmentalism, partially driven by civil society's counter-hegemonic efforts to challenge the dominance of TNCs/IOCs. However, these efforts are significantly undermined by the actions and inactions of Ghanaian political elites, whose priorities often align more closely with the interests of global capital than with the developmental objectives of resource nationalism. Despite the enactment of legal frameworks that aim at regulating the oil and gas sector, contracts and fiscal policies are heavily skewed in favour of foreign investors, with pro-capitalist licensing regime, tax exemptions, weak state participations which undermines the country's control over its resources. The persistent influences of global financial institutions and the constant prioritisations of investor interest over national development objectives raise critical questions about the viability of Ghana's resource nationalism in addressing structural inequalities and achieving sustainable development. Nonetheless, the case study shows that some development objectives were partially realised but subordinated to global capital and elite driven interest. Therefore, resource nationalism maintains some effectiveness despite its limitations. Hence, Ghana's version of resource nationalism is shaped by a precarious balance between sovereignty, capitalist dependency, and elite accommodation, which ultimately limits its capacity to address structural inequalities and drive meaningful development.

⁵ A claim to be substantiate later in this dissertation.

Case 2 - The LCP in Ghana: Resource Nationalism or Neoliberal Accommodation. Case study two reveals that Ghana's LCP, while framed as a tool of resource nationalism and state-led industrialisation, reflects broader influences from the post-neoliberal international order. Rather than being a fully autonomous or homegrown development policy, the LCP emerges within a global context that now selectively "permits" state-led industrial policies as part of the evolving neoliberal hegemony (Abrahamsen, 2000). Therefore, Ghana's LCP represents a localised manifestation of global capitalist accommodation, aimed at maintaining the structural dominance of IOCs while presenting a façade of national sovereignty. Yet LCP remains site of active contestation where outcomes are shaped by the interplay between domestic politics and external neoliberal hegemony.

Case 3 - Local Community Engagement, Contestation and Social Justice in Ghana's Oil Governance. Case study three demonstrates that despite Ghana's policy framework in the oil and gas sector, local communities often face unmet expectations highlighting the limitations of Ghana's regulatory approach in addressing socio-economic inequalities and achieving justice, a situation which has been characterised as social injustice by Ayelazuno and Ayanoore (2022). Additionally, local contestation has been constrained by fear of state law enforcement agencies, political interference, divisions within communities driven by party politics, limited social benefits from corporate social responsibility initiatives, and the everyday struggle to make ends meet. These factors have made the locals less interested in resisting the negative impact of the oil and gas sector on local livelihoods.

1.5. Theoretical and Empirical Contribution

The concept of resource nationalism has been extensively studied in the context of resource-rich developing countries, particularly in Latin America. Scholars have analysed various

forms and manifestations of resource nationalism, such as state-led industrialisation and movements for resource sovereignty (Mares, 2010; Pryke, 2017; Mares, 2022; Wattnem, 2023; Torres-Wong, 2023; Wattnem, 2023). In sub-Saharan Africa, several studies have focused on resource nationalism, some have discussed types of resource nationalism (Andreasson, 2015), and others have examined resource nationalism in Southern Africa (Caramento and Saunders, 2019; Saunders and Caramento, 2018). Caramento et al. (2023) further examined the resurgence of resource nationalism in Zimbabwe during the 2000s pointing to the demand for local participation and equitable benefit distribution in their mining sector.

Additionally, some scholars have explored how African states might achieve development by delinking from the West (Amin, 1990), while others have examined the right to development as a legally enforceable universal principle through the establishment of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) (Cheru, 2016). More recent work has investigated different forms of resource nationalism across Africa (Hickey et al., 2020). However, these studies, though foundational, rarely address specific nuances of resource nationalism in contexts such as Ghana's oil and gas sector.

This dissertation fills this gap by providing a comprehensive case study of resource nationalism in Africa using the Ghana's oil and gas sector through a Neo-Gramscian perspective, where hegemonic global capitalist systems play into the balance with local counter-hegemonic ambitions. The study contributes to Neo-Gramscian theory by illustrating how Ghana's oil sector demonstrates the persistence of hegemonic structures within global capitalism and the challenges faced by resource-rich states in asserting autonomy. Drawing on Cox (1981), Gill (1998) and Abrahamsen (2000), the dissertation examines how global capitalists' dynamics, transnational historical bloc, and the local elites work together to determine how Ghana's oil is managed.

Abrahamsen's insights on how development discourse and good governance serve as mechanisms of hegemonic discipline are particularly relevant here, as Ghana's legal and institutional reforms often celebrated as transparent or investor-friendly function within a broader neoliberal project that constrains transformative possibilities (Abrahamsen, 2000). However, the Ghanaian case is further complicated by the presence of limited but tangible benefits from these reforms, which blurs the lines between accommodation and resistance. Placing Ghana's resource nationalism within the international context, this study illustrates the inherent contradictions in the Ghanaian state's effort to balance sovereigntist tendencies while accommodating the demands of IOCs, donors and global market pressures.

Furthermore, the study examines resource nationalism policies in changing global energy orders and how democratic states are navigating their resource sovereignty within a capitalist global order (Cox, 1981). The study advances Neo-Gramscian concept by conceptualising the global energy transition as a reorganisation of hegemony (Manley and Heller, 2021; Bridge et al, 2018). The dissertation suggests that Ghana's dependence on oil revenues points to the weakness of its resource nationalism strategy as a response to international energy dynamics. Ghana's policies for instance, the PRMA and LCP represent attempts to assert control and redistribute wealth under limited investor-friendly, neoliberal governance framework whereby change is initiated inside the confines of hegemonic structures without rewriting the entire global capitalist system.

This dissertation interprets Ghana's resource nationalism efforts as indicative of a constrained form of transformation where changes are undertaken within dominant hegemonic structures without fundamentally disrupting them. Despite the counter-hegemonic demands of civil society and citizens for more control over extractive resources as a way to mitigate the power

of IOCs and transnational capital, this demand is limited by the neoliberal architecture of resource governance. Nevertheless, within these structural limitations, there are narrow but meaningful opportunities for state-led redistributive development. Instruments such as the PRMA's earmarking of oil revenues for social investment, the stabilization and heritage funds, and local content policies in upstream contracting (however unevenly applied) demonstrate that limited developmental gains are possible even within an investor-oriented global framework. Resource nationalism in Ghana, therefore, emerges as a contested terrain marked by both constraint and opportunity, where structural pressures coexist with openings for modest but significant state intervention.

Empirically, this dissertation offers a grounded analysis of Ghana's oil and gas sector by tracing how state policies, elite decisions, and civil society engagement shape the contested outcomes of resource nationalism. Drawing on three detailed case studies, it highlights the uneven implementation of reforms, the selective accommodation of global capital, and the structural constraints limiting transformative development. The study contributes original insights into how resource governance unfolds in a late oil-producing African state navigating global energy and neoliberal pressures.

Herein, I use primary and secondary data to build a detailed account of Ghana's struggle to use its oil resources for development in a changing world of energy and economics. The analysis used both primary and secondary materials to provide a solid empirical base. The primary data were from key informant interviews, key policy and legislative sources such as the PRMA, the LCP.⁶ Other oil and gas industry regulations were reviewed to determine whether they are compatible with resource nationalist agendas per the three features outlined by Haslam and

⁶ I discuss in detail in the methodology see appendix 1.

Heidrich (2016: 2); namely, (i) revenue maximisation; (ii) the assertion of strategic state control; and lastly (iii) the enhancement of developmental spillovers from extractive activity. The study relied on reports from all levels of Government as well as the GNPC, Ghana Gas Company and IOCs. Additionally, I and two research assistance conducted interviews in Ghana with policy experts, CSOs, community representatives, stakeholders who offered perspectives on Ghana's oil governance and the effects of this on development, social justice and environment. They also provided insight into opportunities and challenges in pursuing resource nationalism in Ghana. Secondary data were from historical documents and interpretive studies such as books on Ghana's resource governance history (on gold etc).⁷

1.6. Dissertation Structure

The dissertation comprises 7 chapters. After the introduction and background, chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework, which adopts a Neo-Gramscian approach. This analytical lens enables me to interpret Ghana's oil and gas policies not simply as national development strategies, but as responses to, and navigations within, the global order of entrenched hegemony, shaped by the dominance of capitalist state corporations established during the "new constitutionalism" era, in Gill's (1998) terms. This Neo-Gramscian analysis shows how Africa and by extension Ghana's approach to resource management and developmental goals interacts with hegemonic forces in the global economy, which continue to constrain Ghana's autonomy and sovereignty over natural resources as it seeks to develop using oil and gas. The Neo-Gramscian lenses serve as the basis for understanding the complex and often contradictory interactions between local agencies, global market forces, and the influence of IOCs in shaping Ghana's economy, particularly the oil and gas sector.

⁷ Appendix 1 which is the methodology gives details on my research methods and design.

Chapter 3 discusses Ghana's developmental trajectory, power blocs, hegemony, and counter-hegemony before oil discovery. Here, I discuss Ghana's history through a Neo-Gramscian prism, with a focus on the role of power blocs, hegemony, and counter-hegemony in shaping Ghana's political economy.

Chapter 4 presents the first case study of the dissertation, which discusses Ghana's national policy response and hegemony. I explore the various legal and institutional frameworks that were put in place to enhance proper resource management such as PRMA (which established the Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF)), Heritage Fund (HF), Stabilisation Fund), E&P Law. The chapter examines how hegemonic global pressures, elite political complicity, economic dependencies constrained resource nationalism. It also points to the role of civil society as both a counter-hegemonic force and a participant in the neoliberal world order.

Chapter 5 presents the second case study, focusing on LCP in Ghana within the context of resource nationalism and neoliberal accommodations. It examines the genesis, evolution, impacts, and challenges of the policy, highlighting the actors and factors that shaped its formation. I theorize LCP as a tool for resource nationalism that remains aligned with global capitalist structures, thus serving as an example of passive revolution in the Gramscian sense.

Chapter 6 serves as the third case study and focuses on local community engagement, contestation, and the pursuit of social justice in Ghana's oil governance. It examines the expectations and demands articulated by residents of oil-producing communities and explores how their initial optimism has been met with disillusionment. The chapter also interrogates the limitations of local resistance, highlighting how state coercion, political interference, intra-community divisions, and economic dependency have collectively undermined sustained contestation.

Chapter 7, the final chapter, presents the summary and conclusion. It also reflects on the global shift toward renewable energy and climate change, including Ghana's the need to consider renewables as an additional source of energy.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework: A Neo-Gramscian Analysis of Resource Nationalism

2.1. Introduction

This section is the theoretical framework where I lay a Neo-Gramscian theoretical foundation for explaining the contradictions in Ghanaian resource nationalism policy and practice. The Neo-Gramscian approach presents a critical analysis of the extent to which Ghana's oil and gas sector is intertwined within an enduring hegemonic framework entrenched by the global capitalist system. I argue that the prospects of resource nationalism in Ghana are limited by several social forces internal and external in the neoliberal world order making it difficult to attain. Employing a Neo-Gramscian approach allows me to explore the dynamic relationship between resources nationalism and the global energy landscape, pointing to the complexities encountered by resource rich countries in Africa such as Ghana in asserting their resource sovereignty in the midst of the global capitalist order.

Neo-Gramscian approaches frequently concerns the interplay between state power, global structures and social forces providing critical lenses to scrutinise Ghana's oil policies. Rooted in the work of Antonio Gramsci and expanded upon by scholars such as Robert Cox (1981), Stephen Gill (1998), and Rita Abrahamsen (2000) I adopt their Neo-Gramscianism as a critical framework to examine state dynamics alongside global structures and social forces. It moves beyond a state-centric or institutionalist view to focus on how hegemony is historically established, ideologically legitimised and sustained materially. This perspective suggests that hegemony is achieved not only through coercion but through consent, which is orchestrated through institutions, norms, and the alignment of transnational and domestic elites. A key contribution of this school of thought is the concept of passive revolution. This framework suggests that rather than being overtly transformed

through significant coercion, dominant actors co-opt and neutralise oppositional demands or counter-hegemony, through limited or minor reforms.

Abrahamsen (2000), drawing on the work of Gramsci and Cox (1981), analyses “good governance” as a disciplinary discourse in global neoliberal governance. She explores how this discourse shapes domestic political space while simultaneously depoliticising structural inequalities in postcolonial settings, demonstrating the operation of hegemonic projects through ideological normalisation and technocratic discourse. Her work which underscores the Neo-Gramscian focus on the interplay between consent and coercion and the role of discourse in stabilising global capitalist relations serves as an analytical framework for this dissertation.

Below, I lay out the concepts of hegemony, historical bloc, integral state (power bloc), passive revolution, and counter-hegemony centring their applicability to my research questions. This Neo-Gramscian approach builds on Gramsci's theories to show that power sometimes operates through coercive measures and constructed consent which emerges from alliances between state, capital and civil society groups. As such, these concepts offer a coherent and potent way of looking at how global political-economic orders are historically produced, ideologically legitimatised, and selectively challenged. I employ Neo-Gramscian scholarship tools to study how resource governance structures in Ghana operate on a transnational level and how actors work to legitimise and challenge or transform dominant power structures in the oil and gas sector.

In Section 2, I begin with an introduction to the Neo-Gramscian approach and its foundational concepts, followed by a discussion of historical materialism, intellectuals and ideology, and then hegemony and passive revolution. I proceed to examine the notions of historical bloc and counter-hegemony within the global order. In section 3, I introduce integral state as bridging concept between global forces and local forces which allows me to apply the Neo-

Gramscian logic of “power bloc” or “governing bloc” from an international level to the national and local context of Ghana’s oil and gas sector. Section 4 presents an overview of resource nationalism in Africa from a Neo-Gramscian perspective, highlighting the impact of power bloc, hegemony, and counter-hegemonic movements, as well as the inherent limitations of African states’ approaches to resource nationalism. Section 5 concludes with the application of these Neo-Gramscian concepts to the case of resource nationalism in Ghana. It indicates that resource nationalism in Ghana is both an avenue of struggle and an extension of global capitalist hegemony or power bloc.

2.2. Demystifying Neo-Gramscian Approaches

Unlike traditional Marxism, Neo-Gramscian approaches perceive the state as part of a broader socio-economic and ideological structure shaped by national and international forces. Robert Cox and Stephen Gill provide some foundational texts for this subfield (Cox, 1981; Gill, 1998). Cox’s explanations of Gramsci brought historical materialism into International Relations (IR) and International Political Economy (IPE), although Gramsci was more concerned with the power dynamic of domestic politics, social class and domestic political theory (Morton, 2007), Cox and colleagues who inspired the Neo-Gramscian approach look beyond the state and local actors (Cox, 1981, 1983, 1992; Gill, 1998). According to Cox (1981), the configuration of social forces, state formation and world order needs to be understood and analysed rationally, historically and dialectically. This perspective became foundational for studying global politics as the product of institutional arrangements, material capabilities, and ideological legacies. Therefore, a key contribution of this dissertation is its move beyond a strictly state-centred approach, by examining the wider range of factors that have shaped policies in Ghana’s oil and gas sector. While not

oblivious to the importance of the state, my approach like that of the scholars who have developed the field, is not state-centric.

Cox's seminal work, "Social Forces, States, and World Orders," stands as a foundational contribution to the Neo-Gramscian perspective in IR (Cox, 1981). In this paper, Cox critically engages with established theories of IR such as Neo-Realism, Liberalism and advocates for a critical theory which does not examine social and political relations in isolation but, as a whole (Cox, 1981). Cox emphasised the understanding of the interconnections between social forces, the state and global relationship. He encouraged scholars to move beyond studying isolated phenomena and instead examine the broader interconnections of social forces, state relations, and interactions that shape world orders.

Furthermore, a Neo-Gramscian approach studies the relationships between the state, civil society, the global economy, nonstate actors and how they operate together to maintain transnational power structures. Therefore, a Neo-Gramscian approach, as a strand of critical theory, argues that the contemporary world order is shaped by transnational processes and actors, such as global production and finance, that consolidate the power of an international neoliberal capitalist class (Budd, 2013: 65–66). This is an extension of the view of Gill (2008) when he examined the mechanism of global governance and the role of the transnational capitalist class in either challenging or sustaining it (Gill, 2008). Gill (2008), expanding on Cox's (1981) approach, adopts a transnational historical materialist perspective which analyses the emerging world orders and identifies potentials for progressive change. In essence, Gill (2008) focuses on analysing essential structural components including social forces dynamics as well as ideological and material conditions that determine global political and economic structures.

Another significant contribution of the Neo-Gramscian approach is the reconceptualization of hegemony as the organization of consent. Hegemony in this sense is not the imposition of a particular group or class by force, but rather the bringing into alignment of state, market, and civil society around a shared ideological project, making it hegemonic (Obamamoye, 2023). In global capitalism, this alignment takes place through the internalisation of neoliberal norms fiscal austerity, good governance, public private partnerships (PPP), transparency, liberalisation which is presented as “common sense.” This hegemony thus depoliticizes structural inequality and secures the power of elites (Gill 2008; Obamamoye, 2023).

Additionally, a central innovation in Neo-Gramscian thought is the concept of passive revolution, which theorizes the way in which those in power co-opt and defuse oppositional demands to rearticulate consent for the existing order, rather than through direct repression. Passive revolution has often been deployed to show how hegemonic groups and states transform, rather than maintain, but do so without rupturing the existing power structure. Scholars such as Stephen Gill (1998, 2008) show how contemporary neoliberalism “disciplines” states through transnational institutional and ideational means, in what he calls “new constitutionalism.” Two leading figures in this theoretical tradition are Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton, who have used this approach in several regions to analyse how social struggles shape or/and are shaped by global capitalism (Bieler and Morton, 2001, 2004, 2014). An important point from these scholars is that hegemony is both contingent and uneven. It is constantly (re)produced, (re)articulated, and challenged by civil society, class alliances, and institutional forms which makes it dynamic.

The Neo-Gramscian approach has been applied to several African countries by scholars. One scholar whose work has become seminal is Rita Abrahamsen (2000) who studied “good governance” discourse in African countries. Abrahamsen (2000) provides a Neo-Gramscian

reading of how neoliberal reforms are articulated through donor agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs), and local state elites in Africa as a disciplinary and depoliticized “technocratic practice.” This “governance” agenda, she argues, is an attempt to rearticulate consent for global capitalism in Africa, by the construction of a transnational historical bloc which governs through normalization, rather than coercion. This approach is directly relevant to the case of Ghana and its oil and gas sector, in that it shows how policy frameworks and governance strategies in Ghana are both domestic and global, shaped by the interaction of states, local firms and communities, donors, IOs and transnational capital.

For these reasons, a Neo-Gramscian approach is particularly suited to the present study of Ghana. By examining the dynamics of hegemony at both the national and global levels, this framework enables me to conceptualize the national policy space as a contested arena where struggles over order unfold, though not necessarily to successful resolution. It also provides a critical lens on resource nationalism, viewing it as often embedded within broader hegemonic projects that contain, rather than genuinely address, demands for change. I adopt this approach because it offers a grounded means of interrogating policy-making processes and community engagement in Ghana’s oil and gas sector. As outlined above, instead of presupposing a unified “national interest” or the objectivity of policy, the Neo-Gramscian perspective highlights the contradictions, compromises, and contestations that shape Ghana’s version of resource nationalism. Ultimately, the concern is less about whether a hegemonic project succeeds, and more about the nature of the project itself, how it manages, contains, or negotiates contradictions and resistance.

Therefore, relying heavily on these scholars (Cox, 1981, 1983, 1992; Gill, 1995, 1998, 2008, 2012; Morton, 2003, 2007, 2010; Abrahamsen, 2000; Thomas, 2011; Davies, 2010; Buci-

Glucksmann, 1980). I have identified the following central concepts that both structure and inform my empirical analysis: (1) historical materialism, to situate the oil and gas sector governance within the larger global capitalist transformations; (2) hegemony: to interrogate how, in the context of Ghana's oil governance, dominant ideas, norms and institutions, based on and premised by global neoliberalism, organise consent and legitimacy and structure state society relations; (3) intellectuals and ideology, to show how key policy actors both create and justify the dominant understandings of oil governance; (4) historical bloc, which examines the interconnection between superstructure and structure in Ghana's oil sector; (5) passive revolution, to explain how elite-led reforms and policy innovation can dilute, re-configure or otherwise contain oppositional demands to retain the structural primacy of transnational capital in Ghana's oil sector; (6) counter-hegemony, to explore the possibilities and limits of transformative politics from oil-producing communities; and (7) Integral state/power bloc, which bridges the gap between historical bloc of macro-IPE to the meso-level of national and local mediating between global structures and local political practices. By grounding the empirical chapters in this conceptual apparatus, this dissertation not only seeks to employ the tools of Neo-Gramscian analysis, but to contribute to it by demonstrating how the Ghana case helps us to understand the uneven, contradictory, and negotiated character of passive revolution and hegemony in practice.

2.2.1. Historical Materialism

Neo-Gramscian concepts are foundational in contemporary iterations of historical materialism. Historical materialism offers a critical lens for understanding material basis and class struggles which shape social relations, state formation and world order. Rooted in classical Marxist theory, historical materialism posits that the economic base shaped by social relations and forces of production ultimately determines the superstructure, which includes the legal, ideological,

political, and institutional arrangements that sustain a particular social order (Marx, 1859). Neo-Gramscian scholars expanded on this traditional Marxist concept by integrating Gramsci's notion of ideology, consent, and civil society, hence creating a critical understanding of how hegemony is created/constructed and maintained nationally and internationally (Cox, 1981; Gill, 1993; Bieler and Morton, 2014).

Gramsci's perspective on historical materialism, further elaborated by Cox (1983), suggests that the dominant ideology of a given period is shaped by the material conditions of production, existing social relations, and the power struggles among different classes and interests. This perspective is rooted in Marxist theory, which analyses the relationship between capital, the state, and society, emphasizing the role of historical knowledge in driving social and political change. This suggests that the economic base shapes the superstructure. The superstructure includes elements such as politics, culture, and ideology all these reinforce societal power structures. Gramsci differentiated between two primary levels of the superstructure; namely, civil society and political society (Forgacs, 2000). In his view, civil society consists of private organisations that shape or influence societal norms and the political society (state) which consists of institutions of governance and coercion. These two function together to maintain hegemony which is constantly reshaped by class struggles. Additionally for Cox's (1981) social forces, the forms of state and world order are historically dependent and dialectically interrelated leading to coinage of the term "historical structures" (Gill, 1993: 22).

Scholars such as Budd (2013), and Bieler and Morton (2014), have emphasised the importance of incorporating historical materialism into the Neo-Gramscian approach to address the structural constraints limitations in some Neo-Gramscian analyses. This integration responds to critiques that the approach tends to overemphasize agency, such as civil society and counter-

hegemonic movements, while neglecting the enduring influence of material and institutional structures (Silva, 2010; Cader and Sundrijo, 2023). Therefore, historical materialism within the Neo-Gramscian framework does not only emphasize economic structures but the nexus between material conditions, ideological formations and institutional configurations (Cox, 1981; Rupert, 1993). Since the 1980s, the Neo-Gramscian approach has evolved through the integration of Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and historic blocs with a structural critique of capitalism, providing a framework for analysing global transformations such as neoliberal restructuring and shifts in hegemonic power (Bieler et al., 2006; Gill, 1993; Kurt, 2019).

Additionally, the Neo-Gramscian approach uses historical materialism to explain how the global capitalist order reproduces and transforms itself. Neo-Gramscian scholars apply historical materialism to explain how both institutional forms and ideological norms are constructed and reinforced by material interests, and how they can, in turn, contribute to the maintenance or subversion of the existing order. Gill (1995, 2008) has, for example, argued that global economic governance institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO have helped stabilise neoliberal hegemony by institutionalising market rationalities into the regulatory and policy-making structures of national states. Morton (2007) has argued that passive revolution always occurs in specific historical material conditions and allows for the co-optation of oppositional forces without changes in the basic structures of power. Historical materialism accounts for the unevenness of capitalist projects across space and time. It also explains how the spread of capitalism is not uniform, but shaped by national configurations of class power, state capacity, and institutional forms. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of how global pressures are translated within specific national contexts to produce hybrid forms of governance and resistance (Bieler and Morton, 2004).

Therefore, from a Neo-Gramscian perspective, examining the historical or current power structures, economic systems and modes of production makes it feasible to unearth the underlying forces which shape contemporary ideology and hegemony. In sum, historical materialism, when employed as a conceptual framework within the Neo-Gramscian approach, provides a theoretical lens for explaining how hegemonic orders are formed, sustained or reinforced, and contested, ultimately leading to periods of crisis. This approach enables me to investigate the historical and material origins of hegemonic projects, and in turn, to develop a critical understanding of domination, consent and resistance within the current neoliberal economic system.

It is important to mention that my focus is on hegemony which is discussed in the subsequent section. However, I needed to show how historical structures and intellectuals shape or are shaped by hegemony. This has impacted how Ghana's oil and gas policies were framed and shaped by hegemony (influenced by historical structures, material conditions and intellectuals). I delve deep into it in my case studies 1 and 2 (i.e., chapters 4 and 5). In these chapters I corroborate the views of Mitchell (2011) on how the materiality of oil shapes political and economic structures of oil rich countries. His views on how many oil economies seek the interest of global capitalist actors rather than local developmental aspirations is particularly relevant to the Ghanaian context. The Ghanaian case is complicated by the historical connection to colonialism and its economic dependencies in post-colonial era. Fundamentally, in Ghana's example, oil production in 2010 is an expression of the persistence of material conditions that date back to colonialism. Extractive industries were once an imperial or colonial privilege, supporting a global capitalist order that preferred raw material exports over industrialisation. This dependence still exists today as Ghana's oil and gas industry plays out in an international market that is foreign-oriented. Such material conditions reinforce the reliance of developing countries on raw material exports, often at the

expense of their own industrialization. This system is shaped by neoliberal ideologies and policies of privatisation and deregulation. I also apply historical materialism in chapter 3 of the dissertation by situating Ghana's economic trajectory within the historical context of colonial and neo-colonial hegemony, as well as capitalist practices that have shaped its economic development and antecedents.

2.2.2. Hegemony

Gramsci conceptualises hegemony as social, cultural, and ideological power, coercion and consent which is contrary to that of the realist and liberalist who focus on economic and military power. This power is not solely exercised through aggression or violence as the realists have argued but can be through nuanced consent created and maintained by societal norms and culture (Cox, 1981, 1983). It also means leadership or dominance of one social class over others. This is not limited to economic dominance but extends into cultural, moral, and political leadership (Forgacs, 2000). Intellectuals play a role between structures of material power and forms of hegemonic reproduction. For Gramsci, intellectuals both the "traditional" and "organic" are those who give ideological form to class interests and play a key role in building the "common sense" through which hegemonic consent is constructed (Gramsci, 1971; Forgacs, 2000). Intellectuals operate through formal political spaces, but also across other institutions such as the media, religious organizations, think tanks, schools, and so on. During phases of passive revolution, intellectuals who align with incumbent or emergent hegemonic blocs are typically mobilized to advocate reformist ideas, reframe resistance, and co-opt or channel oppositional demands into a reshaped yet dominant hegemonic order (Morton, 2007). All these are foundational in the establishment of hegemony according to Gramsci (1971).

However, this is contrary to the neoliberal view of hegemony which focuses on the dominant role of the state in shaping the international system, whilst Gramsci emphasised the role of ideas and cultures in shaping power relations. In this regard, Cox (1981) points out that dominant ideas and norms constitute hegemony and solidify the dominant powers' status but are not imposed by great powers who dominate the international politics but are as a result of historical and material context (Cox, 1981). Cox (1981) expands on this Neo-Gramscian view by stressing the significant role of International Organisations (IOs) in legitimisation and reinforcement of a hegemonic world order. IOs are not merely neutral entities, rather they reflect and promote the interest of the dominant economic and social forces of the ruling class. Additionally, these organisations co-opt counter-hegemonic ideas, political elites and intellectuals from the non-hegemonic states allowing them to neutralise resistances and sustain or maintain the *status quo*. This process is fundamental to maintaining, sustaining, and reproducing hegemonic structures.

Gill contributes to the Neo-Gramscian approach by reconceptualising hegemony by reframing the current global order as one of "politics of supremacy," which emphasises the coercive and hierarchical nature of neoliberalism and neoliberal governance which undermines democratic process and popular consent (Gill, 1995). Furthermore, in the context of his paper "New Constitutionalism and Global Political Economy," by hegemony, Gill refers to the dominance of some economic and political ideologies that influence global governance structures (Gill, 1998). This is done through powerful states and transnational corporations (TNCs) who shape and influence policies and practices for their interest over weaker states and populations. Through the "new constitutionalism" TNCs operate in partnership with IFIs such as the IMF and the World Bank have become new players in establishing hegemonic practices, by leveraging their influence in economics to shape policies which reinforce their interests many times at the expense

of the democratic process and local governance. TNCs and IFIs advocate or push for policies that enhance market discipline such as limiting state interventions, supporting the interest of transnational capital, all these at the expense of local democratic processes. For example, during the 1980s and 1990s Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) forced African and Latin American nations into austerity and liberalization policies (Campbell, 2012, 2016) which favoured transnational capital and restricted their democratic economic control (Abrahamsen, 2000).

These TNCs and IFIs achieve all these through the following means: first, lobbying and political influences. They exert considerable leverage over policy formation via lobbying. In this process they actively engage with government officials and legislators to champion regulations and policies that are connected with their commercial interest. Such lobbying can result in the enactment of legislation that prioritises corporate interests over public welfare, effectively reshaping the political landscape to the advantage of corporate actors.

Secondly, these TNCs influence policies by partnering with government, particularly in developing countries, where they promote collaborations that encourage foreign investment. These partnerships often lead to implementations of favourable taxes, deregulations and other incentives which enhance corporate profitability while state intervention in the economy is limited (Gill, 1998:24). Thirdly, IFIs influence international agreements. These IFIs are central in shaping international trade agreements and investments such as the design of the agreement surrounding intellectual property right which ultimately favours corporate interest over local interest (Gill 1998:31-32).

Fourthly, IFIs control economic narratives by funding research, influencing the media narrative, and shaping public perception and discourses. This control allows them to promote

neoliberal ideologies and policies which promote market policies at the expense of state interventions and ultimately reinforcing IFIs' positions in the global economy.

Lastly, IFIs often contribute to the formation of regulatory frameworks governing several sectors. By offering consultation and expertise, they frequently shape regulations in ways that secure benefits for their operations, minimizing costs while maintaining competitive advantage. In many instances, IFIs intervene in national policy formulation to shape rules and policies that protect their profitability, minimize operational costs, and consolidate their long-term competitive advantage (Abrahamsen, 2000, Gill 1995, 1998; Cox 1983). Nonetheless, from a historical materialist and Neo-Gramscian perspective, their power control and power go beyond policy formulation and regulation. These IFIs are structurally rooted in the capitalist mode of production; hence, they control global value chains, appropriation of significant surpluses and the control of national revenue flows.

This dependency arrangement becomes evidenced in resource-rich countries such as Ghana, where the state relies on natural resources such as oil. Clearly from the views of Cox (1983), Gill (1995) and Abrahamsen (2000), as discussed above, the goal of IOs or TNCs is to exert control over the state and limit the interventions of the state at the expense of promoting neoliberal policies or agenda. Furthermore, these TNCs and their corporate actors exert structural power and control by locking states (particularly those from the third world) into global circuits of capital accumulation which interferes with local developmental agendas at the expense of global capital. This dependency becomes obvious in resource-rich countries such as Ghana where reliance on oil revenues created fiscal and policy dependence limiting policy autonomy in the oil and gas sector. Therefore, TNCs do not only exercise power through coercion or consent (i.e., ideational or regulatory), they also exhibit systemic material power as core agents in the reproduction of

global capitalist relations. The case studies in this dissertation trace these structural dynamics and show how they limit or constrain the prospects of resource nationalism in Ghana's oil and gas sector.

2.2.3. Intellectuals and Ideology

Intellectuals play an integral role in sustaining and transforming hegemonic order with both civil society and state. In essence the relationship between superstructures of ideology and politics is shaped by material conditions which lead to the formation of the historic bloc (Gramsci, 1971; Cox, 1981; Gill, 1993). Hence, the historic bloc is a configuration of social forces, institutions and ideas which establishes, and sustains a particular hegemonic order. In Gramsci's (1971) view, intellectuals disseminate ideas and values that sustain the existing superstructure, while also possessing the capacity to introduce transformative concepts that shape and reinforce hegemonic norms. Furthermore, Gramsci's concept of hegemony is based on the proposition that domination is not maintained by coercion alone but through consent of the subordinate class, which is cultivated, organised and disseminated by intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971).

Gramsci's usage of intellectuals does not refer entirely to academics and professionals but "the entire social stratum which exercises an organizational function in the wide sense whether in the field of production or in that of culture, or in that of political administration" (Gramsci, 1971:91). Gramsci's view on intellectuals is rooted in a proletarian perspective which suggests that while all individuals have the capability for intellectual, not everyone functions as intellectuals. Gramsci distinguishes between two primary types of intellectuals namely "traditional intellectuals" and "organic intellectuals". Traditional intellectuals are individuals such as scientist, philosophers and academics who are typically seen as detached from specific social class. They are perceived to have a sense of autonomy and independence from the dominant social group.

Organic intellectuals are those who are integral to the development of the new social class (Forgacs, 2000). Indeed, they emerged from and represent the interest of specific social class and align their ideas with their aspirations.

These intellectuals play a role in production, the correlation between intellectuals and production is nuanced and facilitated through the social structure of superstructures. They play a vital role creating, managing, and disseminating ideas through these structures. Gramsci argues that it is possible to assess the organic connection between intellectual groups and fundamental social classes. Intellectual function within Superstructures can be hierarchically organised showing their influences and integrations within society (Gramsci, 1971). In essence intellectuals play a dual role either by reinforcing ideological dominance of the rule of elite or by challenging it through the introduction of ideas that catalyse societal transformations (Reed and Garrido, 2024). Applying this notion to the international arena, Neo-Gramscian theorists examine how intellectuals which comprise economist, policy elites, civil society actors, technocrats, think tanks, and academics serve as agents of ideological production and dissemination. These intellectuals' function within and across institutions, playing crucial role in shaping what Gramsci called "common sense": a hegemonic worldview that appears natural, inevitable, and universally valid, yet is historically contingent and politically constructed (Gramsci, 1971; Cox, 1983). These intellectuals are central to articulating the ideological dimensions of hegemonic blocs, endowing specific class projects with broader narratives of legitimacy and necessity.

Scholars such as Stephen Gill (1995, 2008) and Robert Cox (1981, 1983) emphasize how ideologies are not secondary to material forces. Instead, they argue that ideologies are integral to the configuration and stabilization of hegemonic orders. In their view, ideational structures such as discourses of good governance, neoliberal efficiency, or global competitiveness function as

instruments of rule, delimiting the terrain of political problems and acceptable solutions within narrow ideological confines. These ideologies are created and circulated through a complex network of transitional policy institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organisation (WTO). Indeed, intellectuals embedded within these institutions play a critical role in constructing coherent narratives that reinforce the legitimacy of the prevailing order while discrediting alternative models of development or governance. Through expert knowledge production, policy prescriptions, and public communication, they shape the ideational terrain on which political struggle unfolds (Cox, 1987; Bieler and Morton, 2004).

A Neo-Gramscian focus on ideology also highlights the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. While ideologies often reflect underlying material interests and institutional configurations, they are not reducible to these factors and become sites of struggle. Consequently, intellectuals are not merely active transmitters of hegemonic values but may also serve as agents of change or social transformation. Notably this includes so called “counter-hegemonic” intellectuals those emerging from or aligned with subordinate classes and social movements. They tend to play a particularly critical role in challenging dominant ideologies by articulating alternative ideas for political and economic organization (Rupert, 1995; Morton, 2007).

Crucially, Gramsci’s key innovation lies in his recognition that intellectuals (and by extension politics) are not fully determined by material structures. Rather, intellectuals exercise a degree of autonomy in their functions and alignments. For example, “traditional intellectuals” often perceive themselves as independent of dominant class structures, and while they may align with the dominant class, they can, in different historical conditions, serve one or the other side of an on-going class struggle (Gramsci, 1971; Forgacs, 2000). This opens the analysis to the idea that intellectuals, even those associated with similar material interests, may, therefore, articulate

divergent or even competing views, and that these views may contain a range of nuances and internal contradictions.

Gramsci expanded the category of intellectuals beyond the individual to include institutions that perform an ideological function within civil society. Public institutions like the media, schools, religious organisations, sports clubs, and neighbourhood associations can all be viewed as operating as sites of ideological formation and dissemination. These institutions help manufacture consent, contribute to the production of dominant 'common sense' ideas, and, as such, play a crucial role in sustaining hegemonic power (Gramsci, 1971; Hoare and Nowell Smith, 1971). This conceptual expansion foregrounds the embeddedness of intellectual work in everyday social practices and opens the analytical space to consider how seemingly neutral or peripheral institutions may become crucial terrains of ideological contestation.

By focusing on how dominant ideologies become naturalised and reinforced through the work of intellectuals and the diffusion of ideas within civil society, the Neo-Gramscian approach sheds light on the subtle yet powerful processes through which consensus is manufactured and contested in both domestic and global politics. It, therefore, provides an analytical tool to not only identify elite-driven hegemonic strategies but also to understand the institutional and ideological complexity within which these strategies are embedded. By analysing the role of intellectuals in both reproduction and challenging dominant paradigms in Ghana's oil and gas sector, this framework offers me a means to explore the terrain of ideological struggle as a critical dimension of resource nationalism in Ghana's oil and gas sector. The next section discusses historical bloc.

2.2.4. Historical Bloc

Central to the Neo-Gramscian approach is the concept of hegemonic bloc and the interconnection between superstructure and structure. The historic bloc is defined as a confederation or coalition of social forces that sustains a hegemonic order through a combination of coercion and consent (Burnham, 1991; Cox, 1983). Similarly, the term has been used to refer to the alignments of social classes and ideologies that influence a historical state. It embodies the interaction between structure (economic relations) and superstructure (political and ideological aspects). The historic bloc is vibrant and politically contestable, characterising a coalition of numerous social forces that work together to establish governance forms at various levels (Bieler and Morton, 2001: 24).

Additionally, in the view of Cox (1983) “structure and superstructure form an “historic bloc” (Cox, 1983:167). The hegemonic world order is seen as a construction of the historical bloc and its organic intellectuals, and when it is created it serves as a social force to validate particularly sets of ideas, values, standards, and practices (Obamamoye, 2023). Clearly there is a foundational connection between historical bloc, structure (economic relations), superstructure (political and ideological aspects) which form hegemony or hegemonic order. In other words, the historical bloc is formed when these three elements unite - material interest, political institutions and cultural/ideological narrative enforced through the support of a dominant class. In this arrangement, the structure (material/economic relations) and the superstructure (political and ideological institutions) interact to establish and legitimise hegemonic orders such as the capitalist economic system. This system of domination is sustained not by coercion but by the consent of subordinate groups who accept and internalise the dominant ideology as “common sense” (Gramsci, 1971; Cox, 1983). The next section is a discussion on passive revolution.

2.2.5. Passive Revolution

This concept was initially articulated by Gramsci to describe a process of top-down, elite-led/ ruling class-led change or initiative that absorb and neutralise popular demands without fundamentally transforming existing power structures (Gramsci 1971). This is done to maintain the dominance of the ruling class and prevent radical upheavals or transformation. Unlike revolutionary upheavals which are often driven by the masses, passive revolution involves the reconfiguration of political and economic arrangements from the top in ways that prevent the interruption of the ruling class and preserve the dominance of the elite class.

Cox (1983, 1987) and Gill (1993, 1995, 2008) reintroduced the concept of passive revolution to explain the mechanisms of regulated societal transformation within the context of global capitalism. This Neo-Gramscian view underscores the strategies used by hegemonic entities in the global system to implement elite-centric reforms and incremental revisions to sustain their pre-eminence while neutralising any potential challenges to the functioning established order. The central argument on passive revolution by Neo-Gramscian scholars is their explanation of how hegemonic power especially those by IFIs and the capitalist class are used to manage crisis and contestation through selective incorporation or co-optation of dissent by deploying reforms which re-entrench existing neoliberal power structures and dominance without altering or changing their structural foundations (Cox, 1983, 1987; Gill, 1993, 1995, 2008; Abrahamsen, 2000).

Gramsci theorised passive revolution as a model of social transformation that is coordinated from above, often lacking mass mobilisation or revolutionary upheaval. In passive revolution reforms are implemented by the elite/ruling class to restructure or reorganise the political or economic order whilst at the same time reserving the essential relations of power and production. In the view of Cox (1983), passive revolution captures the way in which elites traverse crises by rearranging or restructuring social, political, and economic structures to prevent systemic

transformation. Structurally, passive revolution is enforced through state institutions, legal reforms or policies and economic restructuring which somehow appears as progressive yet serves the interest of the hegemonic bloc and re-establishes hegemonic orders. Some of these apparent changes are political liberalisations, technocratic decentralisation or somewhat developmental reforms which address symptoms without dealing with the root cause and systemic foundations of capitalist exploitation or inequalities (Cox, 1983; Morton 2007). Ideologically, passive revolution operates through the rearticulation of dominant neoliberal discourses. Political elites within the historical bloc presents these reforms as necessary, inclusive, transformative, employing vocabularies of modernisation, good governance and development (Abrahamsen, 2000). This approach manufactures consent by aligning popular or mass aspirations with elite interests, a process Gramsci refers to as “common sense.” Therefore, passive revolution is co-constituted by elite-led change which manages and reabsorbs change in the interest and terms of elites.

Gill (1993) further expands on this premise placing it within the context of dynamics of global governance and neoliberal reforms or restructuring, arguing that these processes and policies serve as avenues to engrain hegemonic supremacy under the guise of reform. This is the case because these so-called reforms are advocated through institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, WTO who lock states into policy regimes like trade liberalisation, fiscal austerity, deregulation, etc., in the interest of transnational capital. These reforms are introduced as necessary or technical for transformation, but they restructure the state-society relations weakening labour protection, reducing public spending and insulating economic policymaking which affects democratic contestation. This ultimately displaces alternative developmental models and reinforces global hegemonic order whereby hegemonic power is sustained through consent, institutional discipline and sidelining oppositional forces or dissent forces (Gill, 1993, 1995, 1998).

This corroborates Cox's (1987) view, derived from Gramsci's concepts and applied to the international arena, in which he theorizes that passive revolution is fundamental to sustaining the hegemony of global capitalism. Gill posits that IOs (e.g., the IMF, World Bank) function as instruments of hegemonic states, concocting reforms to soothe the global order while mitigating dissent. Furthermore, Gill (1993) introduced the notion of new constitutionalism to explain how neoliberal reforms serve as a passive revolution, inserting market principles within political frameworks. These so-called reforms, apparently progressive, are prominent in establishing the authority of transnational elites and marginalising counter-hegemonic efforts.

Passive revolution is often characterized by three key features, elaborated by Cox (1983, 1987) and later extended by Gill (1993, 2003). The first is elite-driven change: Cox (1983) emphasizes that transformation during passive revolution is initiated by ruling classes or transnational elites. Rather than addressing the root causes of inequality or civil unrest, such reforms aim to co-opt potential oppositional forces and preserve stability. The second consists of a blend of coercion and consent: Expanding on Gramsci, Cox (1987) argues that the dual strategies of coercion (e.g., legal constraints, repression) and ideological consent (e.g., narratives of progress) are inherent to passive revolution. Building on this, Gill (1993) illustrates how neoliberal global governance embodies this duality by institutionalizing market logic through policy frameworks while simultaneously suppressing resistance via SAPs.

Lastly, passive revolution prevents revolutionary rupture: Gill (2003) contends that passive revolution avoids systemic rupture by implementing controlled reforms, thereby neutralizing radical movements. This mechanism legitimizes dominant hegemonies while reinforcing systemic continuity.

Cox's (1987) and Gill's (1995) analyses of neoliberal restructuring in Global South economies provide clear examples of passive revolution. For example, Cox (1987) scrutinises the operation of SAP mandated by IFIs as instruments of passive revolution. These programs purport to facilitate development while enforcing austerity measures that solidify dependency and inequality. Similarly, Gill (1995) addresses neoliberal globalisation as a manifestation of passive revolution, wherein global capitalism incorporates marginalised nations and groups into market systems without modifying prevailing power relations. Such processes exacerbate global inequality but are presented as "progress." This leads to the next section which discusses counter-hegemonies in a changing world.

2.2.6. Counter-Hegemony in a changing world

Counter-hegemony is defined as the resistance against dominant power structures (historical bloc) and ideologies, which is in essence challenging the prevailing social, political and economic orders. It involves the creation and promotion of alternative approaches such as ideas and practices that oppose the hegemonic or historical bloc's norm established by dominant groups or states (Cox, 1992; Gill, 1991). Counter-hegemonic resistance may take cultural and ideological forms, in which alternatives are articulated as challenges to the *status quo*. They may also be political and economic. As Gill (1991) argues, counter-hegemonic forces often emerge in response to deepening social and economic inequalities, particularly when neoliberal policies and reforms intensify exclusion and marginalization. In these instances, counter-hegemony does not only resist dominant order rather it seeks to create a new historical bloc rooted in an alternative or different political, economic and social arrangements connecting it with organic intellectuals of resistance. Counter-hegemonic struggles are evident in debates and discussion over free trade agreements and economic regulations often proposed by transnational actors (Bieler and Morton, 2014). The

tension between globalization, embodied in neoliberalism, and national sovereignty arises as transnational capital exerts increasing influence over national policies, leaving many states struggling to maintain control of their economic and political systems. This dynamic has given rise to counter-hegemonic movements in Europe (Bieler and Morton, 2014). The counter-hegemonic movements seek to challenge the prevailing hegemonic order by proposing a more equitable distribution of power and resources, with the goal of promoting policy differences from those of the historical bloc, dominant or political class (Gill, 1991). While many counter-hegemonic movements seek to promote a more equitable distribution of resource and ensure social justice, not all are inherently progressive. Rather some have turned out to be advancing exclusionary alternatives, nationalist or authoritarian agendas which reject the dominant bloc by offering true emancipatory alternatives for the masses. Therefore, counter-hegemony although it refers to disruption of existing hegemony does not guarantee progressive emancipatory change yet serves as an avenue for political and ideological contestation.

Civil society also plays a crucial role as a counter-hegemonic force from the Neo-Gramscian perspective. Civil society is not a neutral space but an arena of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic contestation, negotiation and reproduction of alternative order. It is a crucial space where hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces interact. Civil society in this context involves networks of educational, religious, media organisations, voluntary associations, trade unions et cetera (what Gramsci described as organic intellectuals) that can either support the *status quo* or create support for a new hegemony (Ford and Newell, 2021). As pointed out that hegemony is maintained through the combination of coercion and consent (Cox, 1992), civil society is a space where consent is organised, and this involves aligning the interests of the dominant groups with those of the subordinate groups to secure consent (Bieler and Morton, 2014). Organic intellectuals

play a central role in this process through articulating, institutionalising, and circulating ideas with civil society. The Neo-Gramscian adaptation of Gramsci's conception of "war of position" explains counter-hegemonic strategies, whereby subordinate groups coordinate diverse sources of power to build alliances and expand their influence (Ford and Newell, 2021: 5). Hence, civil society and intellectuals are mutually connected. In this case, civil society serves as the institutional terrain that gives voice and traction to intellectuals' ideological alternatives. A successful counter-hegemonic bloc requires the establishment of a historical bloc within civil society involving several social forces around a common goal (Bieler and Morton, 2014). This approach is seen as bottom-up, since top-down strategies risk being co-opted by hegemonic forces to stabilise the *status quo* (Bieler and Morton, 2014). The interplay between civil society and counter-hegemony highlights the potential for social and political transformation. Civil society has demonstrated counter-hegemony through advocacy for transparency and accountability, promotion of local participation, environmental and social justice campaigns, global solidarity, and networking amongst other strategies. The next section focusing on a bridging concept of integral state.

2.2.7. The Integral State (Power Bloc): Bridging the Global and the Local

Neo-Gramscian approaches have made a significant contribution to IPE by re-centring questions of power, production, and ideology. The concepts of hegemony and historic bloc showed how social forces, states, and world orders can be seen as organic, mutually constituted phenomena in which a dominant configuration of material capabilities, ideas, and institutions is "internally coherent and congruent" (Cox, 1981: 128). The historic bloc was a useful concept for explaining the historical coherence of global capitalism: how transnational alliances between capital, states, and IOs have reproduced a world order that is advantageous for dominant classes. However, this

level of analysis is too abstract to understand how hegemony is enacted, contested, and adapted in particular national and sub-national settings. The processes through which the global logic of accumulation is mediated by domestic institutional and ideological arrangements fall outside the ambit of macro-level Neo-Gramscian approaches.

Neo-Gramscian theories often use at the global IPE level sometimes remain somewhat limited in studying developing and resource-dependent countries such as Ghana. Global structural explanations can highlight the important roles of neoliberal norms, donor conditionalities, and transnational capital in shaping national policy. However, they can overstate the relative power of external forces by treating the state as a passive and largely functional conduit of external domination rather than as a site of internal negotiations between domestic elites, bureaucracies, and social forces. Neo-Gramscian IPE needs a meso-level conceptual tool to help mediate between global structure and local political practices. This concept should be able to consider the continued effects of world-order dynamics, but also recognise that state institutions, ideologies, and civil-society formations “domesticate” and re-articulate those pressures. The concept of the integral state can provide this bridging function.

Gramsci’s concept of the integral state (power bloc) shows that the state is more than the apparatus of government or the coercive use of force; it is the ensemble of political and civil society through which a ruling group organises and reproduces its domination and its leadership over society (Bosteels, 2014). The integral state therefore expresses the unity of coercion and consent. Political society is the site of the state’s authority and coercive power: the ensemble of laws, administrators, judges, and security forces. Civil society is where consent is manufactured and organised. It includes schools, churches, unions, media, social and cultural institutions: the places where citizens are educated and socialised, where hegemony works through ideology to reproduce

the social *status quo*. Coercion and consent are thus different moments of the same process of social integration and class rule. The coercive element exists in every state, as do the forces of civil society that naturalise and moralise the state's authority. The modern capitalist state is thus the social relation by which hegemony is realised.

Buci-Glucksmann (1980) developed this line of thought by arguing that the integral state is the historical form of the bourgeois state. The bourgeois state and its form of domination is expressed through civil society, the field of ideological elaboration. As long as this state form exists, civil society is a necessary moment in the movement of capitalist production and reproduction. She elaborates that the expansion of civil society under liberal democracy does not weaken class rule but strengthens and diffuses it by pushing the functions of the state into all social institutions, making domination more dispersed and more consensual. Thomas (2007) builds on this perspective and interprets the integral state as the form of hegemony: the way in which the contradictions between the accumulation of capital and its legitimation are mediated. Crises do not automatically lead to the disintegration of the state. Instead, ruling groups seek to reorganise its material and ideological institutions to adapt to a new conjuncture. The integral state thus provides a lens to study not only the reproduction of hegemony but also its transformation in periods of crisis and transition.

Other works on neoliberal governance has extended this argument to the present day. As Davies (2010) argues, neoliberalism has not meant the withdrawal of the state but its recomposition. Authority is being exercised through complex networks of governance, partnerships, and "responsibilised" civil-society actors. These techniques manage and control social and economic life through market logics and seek to shape citizens as "self-governing" subjects who internalise market norms and values. The neoliberal state thus governs less through

commands and more through techniques of consent: transparency norms, audit cultures, public participation, self-regulation. Gill (1998) calls this “disciplinary neoliberalism” or a mode of rule that secures consent by embedding market rationality within legal and bureaucratic processes. The state’s coercive and disciplinary capacities are thus reinforced through a dense apparatus of moral and intellectual leadership that emanates from civil society itself. Governance is therefore the everyday expression of hegemony: domination taken for granted as administrative normality.

Extending from these insights, the integral-state framework allows a more grounded analysis of the ways in which neoliberal hegemony is articulated and institutionalised in national settings. It brings into focus the dialectical relationship between state and society. It directs attention to how policy reforms, participatory mechanisms, and transparency discourses are not just instruments of control but also a vehicle of consent. Civil society is not an external site of resistance to the state, but one of its constitutive dimensions: a moral and educative terrain where citizens internalise and consent to dominant norms even as they push for limited forms of resistance. The integral state thus opens up a vantage point from which to study both the durability and the potential fragilities of neoliberalism in a setting of dependency and uneven development.

If this framework is applied to Ghana, it allows for an investigation of how global neoliberal imperatives are translated into the national institutional architecture of oil governance. It does not treat Ghana merely as a state that passively responds to external forces. Instead, the country’s political class, bureaucracies, and civil society can be seen as active participants in the re-articulation of hegemony. The PRMA and the LCP represent the coercive and consensual dimensions of Ghana’s neoliberal integral state. On the one hand, their legal-regulatory provisions seek to secure investor confidence and fiscal discipline (the coercive moment). On the other hand, their participatory and transparency components seek to cultivate legitimacy and popular

acquiescence (the consensual moment). Through these mechanisms, global norms of market governance are internalised and moralised within the national political culture.

At the same time, the integral-state approach also points to the contradictions that arise from this arrangement. The expansion of transparency and participation does not automatically lead to popular empowerment but often to a greater integration of civil-society actors into the reproduction of neoliberal order. However, these spaces can also be the site of counter-hegemonic articulation when social movements, community groups, or policy advocates use them to contest inequalities or environmental harm. The integral state thus illuminates the ambivalent nature of reform: it simultaneously stabilises existing power relations while creating possibilities for their contestation. It shows how moments of crisis (oil-price volatility, the global energy-transition agenda) do not necessarily overthrow existing hegemony. Instead, they might trigger its reorganisation through incremental policy adaptation and rhetorical shifts. Such a process can be seen as corresponding to Gramsci's notion of passive revolution, a process of change within continuity, of transformation without rupture.

This dissertation therefore employs the concept of the integral state as a bridging concept between the global structure of neoliberal capitalism and the specific institutional and social dynamics of Ghana's oil sector. This concept enables the analysis to move beyond a structural-determinist perspective and examine how power is realised through the everyday practices of governance. By focusing on the interplay of coercion and consent in political and civil society, the integral-state approach shows how resource nationalism works both as a discourse of sovereignty and as a mode of accommodation to global capital. It also helps to explain why Ghana's oil-led development has had mixed redistributive outcomes: it has brought about some redistribution but continues to reproduce patterns of dependency. The concept of the integral state thus offers a way

to move beyond Neo-Gramscian analysis as a macro-theory of world order and refocus it as a meso-level analytical tool to explain how hegemony is lived, negotiated, and reconfigured in a particular national context.

Recent Neo-Gramscian analyses of fossil capitalism offer additional support for this argument. Hanieh's (2024) *Crude Capitalism* and Carroll's (2021) *Regime of Obstruction*, as well as Hanieh's (2022) edited contribution to *Socialist Register* Vol. 59 reveal the transnational alliances of energy corporations, financial institutions, and state agencies that constitute an emergent global historic bloc for accumulation through a combination of coercion and consent. These works position oil and gas as an integral part of the broader reproduction of capitalist hegemony and show how climate and transition narratives are co-opted to stabilise, not transform, the power of fossil-capital. Integrating these works further supports this study's application of the integral-state lens to account for the way in which Ghana's neoliberal state internalises these transnational structures of energy and finance.

2.3. Resource Nationalism in Africa: A Neo Gramscian Approach

2.3.1. Colonial Legacy and the Formation of an Extractive Power Bloc

Africa has vast reserves of natural resources. The past decade has seen a drop in commodity prices and the discovery of new hydrocarbon reserves across Africa (Graham and Ovadia, 2019). This phenomenon inspired significant interest from the AU and many international organisations, donor agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in exploring the potential for development driven by natural resources (Andrews et al., 2022). Nonetheless, the history of natural resource extraction in Africa has been defined by colonialism and exploitation, forming an extractive power bloc established by European imperial powers that positioned Africa as the periphery of the global capitalist order like the case of oil extraction in Nigeria (Campbell, 2016;

Idemudia, 2012; Obi, 2010a, 2010b, 2014). This legacy has shaped contemporary forms of resource nationalism, often described as a “third wave” with distinct features (Caramento et al., 2023).

Colonialism represented an alignment of economic structures, political institutions, ideological narratives, and class alliances, sustained by European domination and resulting in the peripheral positioning of African economies (Yates, 2012). This power bloc persists into the post-colonial era (Abrahamsen, 2000). It combined material dominance through resource extraction, capital accumulation, and exploitation with ideological consent, such as indirect rule and racial hierarchies, alongside institutional arrangements including colonial administrations, trading networks, religious organizations, and schools. Together, these elements reproduced and consolidated imperial rule as a coherent hegemonic order. Through the establishment of this power bloc, the fabric of Africa’s political economy became deeply embedded in colonial structures. As one scholar aptly observed, “[f]or half a century, foreign oilmen followed a colonial pattern of investment in Africa. Money came from Europe. Geologists came from Europe. Companies came from Europe” (Yates, 2012: 13). As Zalik (2004) argued, the web of alliances formed between imperial and transnational corporate forces in the late colonial and early independence era set a durable pattern of economic domination which was rearticulated in corporate “community development” and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes later on, depoliticising local grievances and reproducing colonial cleavages under neoliberal cover.

This begs the question: what was this “colonial pattern of investment”? This has been argued to be rooted in Africa’s long trade in raw material with the West, what Ayelazuno (2016: 48) explains as “the *longue durée* of imperialism and global primitive accumulation”. In essence the colonial economy arranged for the exploitation of raw materials for European industrialisation

which created a perpetual dependency on African resources for development, a global division of labour which kept African economy at the periphery (Amin, 1972).

In this regard, African countries were exporting raw materials to “core” capitalist states. This began in the 15th century when some European merchants came to Africa to trade manufactured goods and bought cheap raw materials and in some instances slaves (Amin, 1972). This extractive hegemony did not function solely by coercion; its legitimacy was sustained by a hegemonic narrative that imperialism brought development, civilisation and modernisation etc., and this narrative was reproduced through religious and educational institutions (Gramsci, 1971; Freund, 1988, 2016). Intellectuals embedded in the colonial civil society (i.e., administrators, missionaries and middlemen (clerks, chiefs, teachers etc., who were African) played important roles in making this power bloc acceptable and natural, turning it into “common sense” (Gramsci, 1971; Freund, 1988, 2016). These ideas would eventually mask the exploitative relations between the core and the periphery leading to a continuation of surplus extraction and labour exploitation without the need for coercion.

This power bloc of exploitation was not static but evolved with time through various phases such as “mercantile imperialism” a situation where “the dominant classes in Europe accumulated wealth primarily by means of trade” (Jones, 2003: 39). The next phase was “colonial imperialism” in the 19th century marked by indirect political rule and domination and the institutionalisation of extractive capitalism. In each phase, the power bloc evolved through changing elements and actors. It was sustained by shifting alliances between the colonial state, European capital, and local elites, all of whom were embedded in the material and ideological logic of the bloc. This system further spread into the post-colonial era in another form - described by Kwame Nkrumah as “neo-colonialism”. By neo-colonialism Nkrumah meant a facade of

political independence characterised by continued economic dependence and external control through IFIs and TNCs. Nkrumah shows how these non-capitalist countries (Africa and the global south) are inserted into the capitalist global system, furthering their continuous underdevelopment (Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah, 2020).

The impact of colonialism and neo-colonialism on the African continent cannot be overstated. Some of the raw materials exploited from Africa and other colonies were but not limited to the following: diamond and gold from Ghana and South Africa, oil from the Middle East, copper from Zambia, rubber from Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo or DRC) and some commodities for consumption like tea, sugar, coffee and cocoa (Ayelazuno, 2016). Although the primary motive for both formal and informal colonialism in Africa was to secure resources to address Europe's "economic problems," colonialism extended beyond resource extraction to include the exploitation of cheap labour and the creation of captive markets (Freund, 2016: 111). Indeed, "[b]eneath the surface of colonial political and administrative policy lay the unfolding process of capital penetration" (Freund, 2016: 111). This capitalist system "demanded the further development of commodity production and the circulation of goods from which firms in the metropolitan countries could benefit" (Freund, 2016: 112). This system remains up until now, of course in an adoptive capacity of global capitalism which reconfigures material relations, ideological formations and institutional structures to perpetuate the hegemonic dominance in the post-colonial eras (Cox, 1987; Gill 2008). African countries which are rich in natural resources barely benefited from their resource rather those that benefited were their colonial masters from the West.

The impact of colonialism amongst other factors pushed several countries in Africa to seek independence in the 1950s and 1960s. As argued by Nkrumah when he talks about Pan-Africanism quoting Vladimir Lenin in his preface:

The enormous dimensions of finance capital concentrated in a few hands and create an extraordinarily dense and widespread network of relationships and connections which subordinates not only the small and medium, but also the very small capitalists and small masters, on the one hand, and the increasingly intense struggle waged against other national state groups of financiers for the division of the world and domination over other countries, on the other hand, cause the propertied classes to go over entirely to the side of imperialism. "General" enthusiasm over the prospects of imperialism, furious defence of it and painting it in the brightest colours such are the signs of the times..."(Nkrumah, 1965: 7)

He further emphasised that oppressed, and less developed classes will never develop unless they "struggle against the external forces which have vested interest in keeping it [Africa] underdeveloped" (Nkrumah, 1965: 20). In his conception of African liberation and unity, he argued that "[o]nly a strong political union can bring about full and effective development of our natural resources for the benefit of our people (Nkrumah, 1961: 152)". All these sentiments represented a strong sense of Africans seeking to develop on their own without any external influence which would set the foundation for a persuasive case for resource nationalism in the post-independence era. Although many African countries obtained independence it was more of political independence with their economies connected to the fibre of the global capitalist economy which gained from the export of raw materials from Africa (Amin, 1972).

The colonial and post-colonial power bloc of resource extraction therefore survived in changed form, albeit contested, rearticulated and adapted; but it was no less powerfully rooted in the material imperatives of global capital accumulation. In its colonial form, it was an articulation of European trading companies, colonial officials and missions, and a relatively thin layer of local intermediaries and chiefs whose power was connected to the extractive economy. This became reconfigured into a post-colonial power bloc after independence. This was an articulation of transnational companies, IFIs, and elements of Ghana's own political and bureaucratic elites. This

bloc, for its part, was to preside over the transition from formal empire to dependency through the reorganisation of extraction. The new institutional forms were of aid, investment and integration into the world market, rather than the direct rule of empire. Interestingly, the waves of resource nationalisms in post-independence African countries were limited and impacted by the entrenched structural legacies of and ideological formations of this power bloc (Getachew, 2019). As Gramsci (1971) observed, the resilience of a hegemonic order lies in its fluidity its capacity to incorporate opposition, reconfigure alliances, and adapt ideologically ensuring that the power bloc is never a fixed system.

2.3.2 Resource Nationalism and African States: Power Bloc, Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony

The role of the African state in resource nationalism can be examined through the concepts of power bloc, hegemony, and counter-hegemony, as discussed in the Neo-Gramscian framework. In this approach, I examine African states within the global economic systems and structures instead of African states or states as a single unit of analysis. This internationalist approach looks beyond the internal factors by focusing on the global capitalist economy and pointing to the unfair international division of labour, technological gaps, and inequality between the core capitalist states and periphery African states (Ayelazuno, 2016).

Within this framework, the state is not simply a neutral actor within the international system, but rather a contested terrain that is simultaneously shaped by and shaping the interplay between local and global forces. As Cox (1981) observes, a distinctive state form emerges out of a specific historical structure, which is itself shaped by two essential elements: the social relations of production and the prevailing global order. The state machinery, and the individuals who direct it, cannot therefore be regarded as impartial wielders of power acting solely in the interest of

national welfare; instead, they operate within and reproduce broader structures of dominance (Cox, 1981:105).

This raises an important question: what social forces have shaped and continue to shape the formation of African states in the neoliberal era, where global capitalist relations of production and reproduction exert profound influence? From this perspective, the *raison d'état*, or *modus operandi* of state action, is not autonomous, but rather defined by the social forces that constitute the state itself. Cox (1981:128) accordingly argues that analytical attention must focus on these social forces and processes, and on how they shape the development, transformation, and orientation of the state.

Viewed in this light, African states are embedded within a wider global hegemonic order that conditions their policy space and significantly constrains their ability to pursue autonomous developmental agendas. The postcolonial African state, while formally politically independent, has remained economically integrated into the global capitalist system. This incorporation has taken place through new disciplinary mechanisms such as SAPs, debt conditionalities, and market liberalisation. These mechanisms reflect the priorities and interests of dominant global actors and institutions, often at the expense of African states' national development objectives (Gill, 1998; Abrahamsen, 2000). The changing nature of the power bloc comprising multinational corporations, IFIs, domestic enterprises/elites still shape the arena of resource governance in Africa. Several post-colonialist scholars emphasise the point that despite achieving political sovereignty, Africa's political economy is deeply integrated into the global capitalist system (Getachew, 2019; Nkrumah, 1965). These dynamics go a long way to undermine the prospect of resource nationalism in African countries with rich natural resources because these states tend to struggle to balance the demands of the global markets with their local developmental aspirations.

Thus, resource nationalism is not merely repressed by an external system, but it is reshaped by an external system and filtered through domestic power relations and institutions that are all part of the evolving power bloc.

Subsequently, hegemony affects the role of the African states in their pursuit of resource nationalism. The AMV demonstrates this dichotomy, that it is the African states' effort to reclaim their own resources and build development, but it is also an expression of global capitalist politics. While the AMV articulates a resource-led developmental project anchored in structural transformation and state-led governance, its practical implementation has often been constrained. These constraints arise from donor conditionalities, the neoliberal frameworks within which it operates, and the institutional weaknesses that continue to characterise many African states. Scholars such as Hilson (2020) point to the gaps between the AMV's transformative vision with its limited enforcement capacity, arguing that it risks being symbolic rather than transformative to address the political economies of Africa's extractive sector. Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah (2021) also emphasize how state incapacity and neo-liberal patrimonialism is obstructing AMV's reforms in Africa especially in Ghana's mining sector. It is this concern with conformity to neoliberal standards that renders the AMV too narrow in terms of its ability to subvert the hegemonic forms of the global economy. Such a clash is what Africa's governments need to overcome to keep pace with the needs of global markets and their development ambitions.

Despite the limitations of AMV such as institutional weaknesses, donor-driven neoliberal frameworks and elite technocratic control which affect its transformative potential, some African states have employed some counter-hegemonic strategies to reclaim or get back control over their resources. These include nationalisation policies (Caramento et al., 2023), local content systems and policies (Ackah and Mohammed, 2020), and contract renegotiations with multinationals

(Poncian, 2023b). Such policies, purport to challenge global capitalist hegemony and reclaim greater control over resource management, though their effectiveness remains questionable. Indeed, post-independence, many African states attempted to nationalise their resources which was referred to as the first wave of resource nationalism (Caramento et al., 2023).

Furthermore, African states have increasingly been adopting LCPs for local engagement in extraction. In some cases, this serves as a counter-hegemonic tool not just a technical regulation but a strategic step to redistribute resource rent, reassert state control and increase domestic capacity in the extraction of resources. In Tanzania, President John Magufuli introduced new mining reforms through the passage of legislation to review and renegotiate several mining contracts and the banning of unprocessed export minerals. This legislation also introduced a mandatory state stake in mining operations and established stronger procurement rules (Jacob and Pedersen, 2018). In South Africa, the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) law demonstrates attempts to enlist local players in the resource economy to limit the hegemony of foreign firms by empowering historically disadvantaged groups in the mining and energy sectors (Andreasson, 2015). In other cases, such as Nigeria, local content policies have facilitated the exit of transnational firms, shifting responsibility for toxic legacies to national capital (Bayelsa Report, 2024).

While some of these measures appear counter-hegemonic, such strategies are often constrained by structural and institutional constraints. The Tanzania mining regulation laws introduced by President Magufuli has been criticised for being overly demanding and deterring investors. The BEE of South Africa has been plagued with elite capture and corruption, with limited benefits for political supports and no broad benefits for communities for whom it was intended. Some general limitations of some of these counter-hegemonic policies are domestic

pressures, such as fragile institutions, corruption, and political elites. Even the neo-patrimonial state structure of most African countries complicates resource nationalist policies, since state institutions are often hijacked by elites for private interests rather than public ones (Ackah-Baidoo, 2020; Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah, 2021).

These limitations show the dialectical logic of counter-hegemony a situation whereby some adopters of LCP intend it as a genuine pushback against hegemony (i.e., international dominance) with the goal of fostering local participation, yet these policies must confront the unequal global economic structure, limited state capacities, elite capture, corruption etc., making it difficult to fully attain.

Therefore, resource nationalism in Africa presents a dichotomous situation for African states, which are operating within the structures of the power bloc on one hand and against the structures of the power bloc on the other hand. This means whilst resource nationalism appears to be (in principle) antithetical to the power bloc, at the same time it is constrained by it in the sense of the pressures of global capitalism and the internal weaknesses of African states. Hence, from a Neo-Gramscian perspective, resource nationalism cannot be understood as a uniform, one-size-fits-all, or fixed policy approach. Rather, it represents a historically contingent and politically contested process, shaped by the interplay of shifting hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces (Zalik, 2008). Broadly resource nationalism refers to state efforts or social coalitions to assert greater control over natural resources, through nationalisation, local content or regulatory reforms with the goal of increasing local participation. Nonetheless, its manifestation varies depending on the social forces and power bloc underpinning it (Caramento et al, 2023). In some cases, resource nationalism is articulated as state-led developmentalist project, as exemplified by Nkrumah's post-colonial policies in the extractive sector (Nkrumah, 1961), or Chavez's Venezuela (Pryke, 2017).

In other contexts, however, it manifests as a co-opted elite coalition oriented toward resource rent-seeking or as a symbolic gesture, lacking substantive structural transformation.(Cox, 1981; Poncian, 2021, 2023a, 2023b).

Neo-Gramscian approaches highlights the role of social classes, intellectuals, and institutional alliances in shaping the formation, content, and direction of resource nationalism. What appears as resource nationalism on paper may, in practice, reproduce neoliberal norms, particularly when it is embedded within neoliberal structures, as is the case in several African countries. In such contexts, resource nationalism often lacks counter-hegemonic potential and instead conforms to the very neoliberal order it ostensibly seeks to resist. For instance, African governments may adopt local content laws or renegotiate contracts under the banner of resistance, yet these measures frequently align with and serve the broader interests of global capitalism. Thus, resource nationalism should not be understood as a singular or uniform phenomenon; rather, it must be examined within the specific power bloc, international dynamics, and ideological struggles in which it is embedded in order to discern the form it takes and the interests it ultimately advances.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, a Neo-Gramscian theoretical framework was developed to analyse resource nationalism in Ghana's oil and gas industry, situating it within the broader structures of global capitalism. This framework provided the conceptual tools to examine how historical blocs, integral state (power bloc), social forces, and hegemonic as well as counter-hegemonic dynamics shape the form, content, and direction of resource nationalism. The chapter offered a preliminary discussion which reveals the duality of resource nationalism in Ghana: on one hand, a counter-hegemonic attempt at resource sovereignty, and, on the other hand, an entrenchment of the legacy

of the historic bloc of dependency and inequality. Some key arguments presented are, the impact of hegemony (power bloc) on Ghana's oil policies, the limitations of counter-hegemony and passive revolution. This discussion highlights the importance of adopting radical approaches that go beyond superficial reforms in order to address the structural imbalances embedded within the world capitalist system. This chapter, using Neo-Gramscian approaches, offered an important framework for how resource governance plays out in Ghana. Subsequent chapters build on this foundational chapter examining how these dynamics manifest in specific case studies (chapters 4, 5 and 6). This theoretical framework informed my methodology which can be found in Appendix 1. The dissertation is based on qualitative analyses of resource nationalism in Africa. The analysis is based on interviews with several actors in Ghana's oil and gas sector such as the GNPC, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFE), PC, researchers, policy experts and CSOs, etc. It is also based on empirical observations using content analysis, focus group discussion and purposive sampling interviews of members of the oil-producing communities.

The integral state (power bloc) thus offers the conceptual link between the transnational historic bloc of neoliberal capitalism and the national ensemble of powers and institutions which mediate it. In the next chapter, I use this lens to historicise the development of Ghana's political economy, and in particular the ways in which the various power blocs and state projects which succeeded one another in Ghana - colonial, Nkrumah's nationalist developmentalist, and neoliberal reform - established the institutional and ideological parameters of the contemporary integral state which manages the oil economy.

Chapter 3. Ghana's Developmental Trajectory : Power Blocs, Hegemony, and Counter-Hegemony Before Oil Discovery

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I examine Ghana's developmental path through Neo-Gramscian lens pointing to the role of power blocs, hegemony, and counter-hegemony and how these factors shaped the foundations of resource nationalism in Ghana before the discovery of oil in 2007. I argue that Ghana's cyclical economic crises are deeply rooted in hegemonic structures established during the colonial era and entrenched through neoliberal hegemony. Although political instability and some internal governance issues also contributed to this, the fundamental influence of external forces working through the global hegemonic bloc have remained central in shaping Ghana's economic history and resource nationalism aspirations.

It is essential to understand Ghana's developmental history, particularly before the discovery of oil, as antecedents to the current predicament facing the oil sector. This foundational trajectory largely shaped its current socio-economic situation. Although times have changed and multiple factors may account for Ghana's current predicament, the enduring impact of colonialism and neoliberalism remains significant. These have been central themes highlighted in the preceding chapters of this dissertation. The post-independence era, though exciting, led to three decades of disappointing economic growth, granted that in the early 2000s, signs of economic recovery began to emerge (Aryeetey and Kanbur, 2017). Ghana's economic history has largely been marked by prolonged periods of weak performance, punctuated by occasional episodes of recovery. According to Aryeetey and Kanbur (2017: 4), many of these downturns were linked to "poor economic policies and weak economic management." This suggests a clear nexus between Ghana's persistent economic challenges and issues of fiscal discipline, policy design, and

budgetary management. Nonetheless, the discovery of oil in 2007 and the commencement of production in 2010 had a significant impact on Ghana's economy. In 2011, GDP growth surged to 15%, with the non-oil sector contributing 9.4%. Similarly, in 2013, oil played a major role in achieving a growth rate of 5.4%, compared to 3.9% from the non-oil sector (Fosu, 2017). Yet, Ghana has been faced with several continuing fiscal and external deficits leading to over 17 visits to the IMF for financial support (Acheampong, 2022). It is from this background that this chapter seeks to examine Ghana's economic policies, developmental trajectory, and some signs of resource nationalism before the advent of oil.

This chapter is organised as follows; I start with the power bloc of colonialism and the foundation of materialist exploitation and dependencies, focusing on the material basis of colonial hegemony which ultimately became foundational to colonial dependencies on Ghana's natural resources. I also discuss the various power dynamics and changes in the power bloc. I then move to the post-colonial era/ independence era and the struggle for economic sovereignty and resource control, where I point to the continuation of the colonial power bloc in a form of neo-colonialism and several resource nationalist efforts particularly during Nkrumah's era, and the counter-hegemonic power bloc he tried to establish which was challenged by structural dependency, political instability amongst others. I then turn to SAPs and the entrenchment of neoliberalism, showing how many nationalist aspirations became diluted under subsequent regimes. The discussion also examines the class alliances from which both military and civilian governments emerge, as well as the power blocs they support, contest, or seek to construct. The next section discusses Rawlings as a military leader and the power bloc he supported and his counter-hegemonic aspirations, I point to the challenge to his counter-hegemony and the rise of neoliberalism under the PNDC administration. This is followed by the penultimate section on

Rawlings civilian administration and the Kufuor administration pointing to the entrenchment of structural dependencies because of IFIs conditionalities. The conclusion summarises the continuities of hegemonic structures and counter-hegemony in Ghana's developmental trajectories.

3.2. Power Bloc: Colonial Hegemony and the Foundations of Dependency

3.2.1. Pre-colonial Era: Egalitarian Economy and Early Trade Links

Before its incorporation into the British Empire, Ghana, then the Gold Coast, was largely a village-based subsistence economy. It was characterised by a land-tenure system often described as more egalitarian, which “prevented the emergence of a land-owning class and the appropriation of an economic surplus” (Hymer, 1970: 33). This meant that, as captured in the Ghanaian proverb “[a]ll power lies in the land,” the economy was organised around a dominant land-based system in which land was distributed relatively equally. Families held full rights of use and, in most cases, paid no rent, while in a few instances only minimal payments were required (Hymer, 1970: 34). This was a right of every community member. The absence of/or no rent has been argued to be due to the abundance of land combined with low population density. Land in pre-colonial Ghana was certainly not free; ownership was closely guarded, and those without rights to land were often required to pay rent or, in some cases, serve as slaves or retainers in order to gain access to it. As argued by Jones (1936), West Africa's land tenure system was devised to protect against any form of “artificial scarcity” making sure that land was not captured by and managed by a few therefore giving access to everyone to use it. Indeed, to quote Jones (1936) “[t]he temporal lord scarcely exists on the West Coast (now West Africa), and there is no conception of whatever of a landlord in the European sense (cited Hymer, 1970: 34).

Pre-colonial Ghanaian economy was anchored on the sales of kola nuts, ivory, and gold. Before the arrival of the Europeans, particularly the Portuguese, there were established patterns of trade and networks of trading in the current location of Ghana (Daaku, 1972). There were many networks of trade within Africa which integrated the continent into the world economy. The contact between present-day Ghana and the outside world was based on the gold trade that connected West Africa with Western Europe through North Africa, a network dominated by the various Arab caliphates beginning with the Umayyad Caliphate (661–750 CE) and later the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258 CE) whose dominion over North Africa and the Maghreb made possible over a millennium of trans-Saharan trade after the Arab conquest of North Africa in the eighth century (Hymer, 1970; Levtzion and Hopkins, 2000). These extensive trade networks contributed to the rise of powerful empires in Africa, including Songhai, Ghana, and Mali. When the Portuguese arrived at the Gold Coast, historical records indicate that they encountered traders from the Mali Empire and observed a well-established commercial economy, particularly centred on the gold trade. Much of this gold was exported to North Africa in exchange for cloth, a system that proved especially attractive to the Europeans. The Europeans broke the Arab gold trade monopoly when they established direct contact with the production source in the current location of Ghana. They then built forts. The Portuguese were challenged eventually by English and French marauders, followed by the Dutch in the sixteenth century. This became the foundation of the colonial economy and colonial export from Ghana to Europe. Indeed, the introduction of the colonial export economy eroded the egalitarian forms of the pre-colonial Ghanaian economy such that “the new forms of wealth” came from:

Capital accumulation and education created new possibilities for inequality of income. In the process, some became much richer than others, and the community became stratified accordingly. There was, and is, no mechanism for maintaining a balance among the new forms of wealth, corresponding to the balance in land ownership maintained by the traditional economy (Hymer, 1970: 50).

This also became the foundation of the establishment of an economic dependency in which Ghana's raw materials and resources were exploited by imperial powers predominantly from Europe.

The origins of this relationship, however, pre-date colonialism proper and can be traced back to the Atlantic Slave Triangle, which was a system of the first global circuits of accumulation interlinking Europe, Africa and the Americas (Austin, 2005). As part of this circuit, the extraction of enslaved labour and raw materials from Africa to feed the industrialisation of Europe took place with manufactured goods and capital being returned to the coasts of Africa in a dependent relationship. This first modern capitalist world-economy institutionalised the unequal exchange, positioning West Africa in a position of subordination in a system of global production (Whatley and Gillezeau, 2011). The economic and social disarticulation which resulted from the slave trade pre-figured the extractive logic which was later to be intensified with colonial rule.

3.2.2. Power Bloc in the Colonial Era: Resource Extraction and Dependency

The power bloc that emerged during the colonial era in the Gold Coast was established via the introduction and use of indirect rule to govern and rule through traditional authorities. Historians of the Ibadan School (Ajayi and Alagoa, 1974; Ajayi and Crowder, 1985; Boahen, 1975) are most known for their discussions of how indirect rule perpetuated colonial hegemony by co-opting chiefs and other African authorities into the state. Extending this historiography, Mamdani's (1996) *Citizen and Subject* famously theorised indirect rule as the source of Africa's "bifurcated state", where colonial government created both citizens (subject to civil law) and subjects (subject to customary law). In this arrangement, a racial and spatial hierarchy was naturalised, and local consent for the colonial order was manufactured by co-opting traditional

authorities. In Gramscian terms, this system was the colonial integral state, fusing coercion and consent by reconfiguring indigenous authority into a vehicle of imperial hegemony.

Local Chiefs in the Gold Coast were variously empowered across the regions to carry out the rule of law, simultaneously weakening other indigenous elites and patterns of local legitimacy (Abass, 2023; Forjwuor, 2023; Nyarko, 2023). As some authors have also observed, indirect rule was not simply decentralisation but was a legal and political means to manage dissent and maintain imperial rule via local actors (Stone, 1974; Crook, 1986; Brempong and Pavanello, 2002). Indirect rule was also often regionally differentiated: northern traditional authority structures and modes of order were often retained, while in the south they were often “reinvented traditions” to shore up the legitimacy of colonial state (Gocking, 1994; Thomas, 1974; Wiemers, 2017).

Additionally, missionary education further shaped the Westernised African elite in the Gold Coast. Policies largely favoured European cultural values, privileging Christian, colonial, missionary schools. Education levels remained low, but literacy was more common in the south and this further marginalized northern populations (Ofori-Attah, 2006; Kambala, 2023a). While education created a space for nationalist consciousness and political mobilisation, later on (Asante, 2020; Nwauwa, 2020) it also inculcated colonial ideologies and created a stratified and uneven social order. This was especially so in terms of gender and the continued under-representation and low access for women to education, which further compounded patriarchal structures (Adu-Gyamfi and Osei-Egyir, 2023; Hern, 2021). The education system, in this sense, created not only a mechanism for colonial hegemony, but also a contested and possible counter-hegemonic space for new ideas (Kea et al., 2003; Woets, 2014).

Furthermore, civil service stratification was essential in reproducing colonial hierarchies. Gold Coasters were often in the lower ranks, while most leadership roles were kept for Europeans.

Africans who entered the colonial civil service often did so under racialised conditions, which not only limited their opportunities but also created a social distance between them and other indigenous communities and classes (Forjwuor, 2023; Malisa and Missedja, 2019). These bureaucratic structures of the colonial civil services constituted a broad reflection of the structure of the empires which was a rigid, racialised hierarchy, more attuned to reproducing loyalty to imperial authority than legitimacy on the ground (Kunkel, 2018; Lange, 2009).

Subsequently, power relations during this era were characterized by resistance and collaborations. Complex and often fragmented relations in which chiefs and elites often followed a politics of accommodation and shared power, trying to retain some of their agency and influence (Abass, 2023; Dawda and Dapilah, 2013). Resistance to colonialism and the politics of the colonial state were multifaceted: from opposition politics to legal and constitutional activism and cultural resistance (Sackeyfro, 2014). There were also power struggles and contestations that led to a certain institutional fragmentation and, eventually, a clientelist and factional politics that impeded effective opposition to imperial rule (Stone, 1974). At the same time, and as many scholars point out, colonial power and authority was not simply imposed but was negotiated and contested at all levels; through competing claims to tradition, identity and legitimacy (Denisova, 2020; Stacey, 2022).

Together, these different processes had a profound effect on social hierarchy. Colonial policies created elites and favoured others over various other social groups. For example, it disfavoured traditional authorities, and those at the rural grassroots (Abass, 2023; Nyarko, 2023). Education and the colonial civil services became the main vehicle for upward mobility and prestige. However, the civil service route to social mobility was narrowly defined and often exclusionary; particularly, for women and northerners (Adu-Gyamfi and Osei-Egyir, 2023;

Kambala, 2023a). The legacies of these relations and colonial social engineering can be felt to this day in postcolonial Ghana, not only in terms of patterns of governance and development, but also elite formation (Kambala, 2023b).

During the colonial era, there was extraction of several resources for the development of the West at the expense of the colony. In particular, cocoa and gold became core to this economy, with exportation of cocoa central to the financing of state infrastructure and colonial administration (Austin, 2005). This became the material basis that shaped the economy of the Gold Coast. This material basis of resource extraction was the *modus operandi* of colonialism. Nonetheless, this extractive system in the Gold Coast was not built solely on coercion; it was sustained through several avenues such as a combination of economic incentives, racially stratified civil services, missionary education, and indirect rule via traditional authorities (Abass, 2023; Forjwuor, 2023). These institutions contributed to establishing and securing the consent of a growing African intermediary class in the process of reproducing imperial hegemony (Abass, 2023; Forjwuor, 2023).

In 1919 Sir Gordon Guggisberg was put in charge of the Gold Coast. There were 20 years of economic growth because of the returns from cocoa exports, and the goal of the Guggisberg administration was to sustain this growth (Aryeetey and Kanbur, 2017). To further develop the infrastructure of the colony and enhance production and exportation, he introduced the 10-year development plan (1920-1930) to transform the economy from relying solely on cocoa to other commodities. This is so because in 1920 the economy relied solely on cocoa which constituted 83 percent of exports. One of the goals of the Guggisberg administration was to diversify the agriculture sector due to the volatility of cocoa prices on the global market (Aryeetey and Kanbur, 2017). The administration sought to focus on other crops such as rubber, rice, coconut, oil palm

and others. Nonetheless, most of these policies were unsuccessful due to several factors such as a lack of research on the part of the administration and the outward-looking approach of the administrations (Aryeetey and Kanbur, 2017).

One of the central goals of the Guggisberg administration was to extract as many resources as possible from the colonies to develop the British economy, a strategy reflected in its outward-looking economic policies. This orientation later became institutionalised within the global hegemonic order of the post-colonial era in the form of neo-colonialism. Hymer (1969) argues that the colonial administration's policies were largely unsuccessful and even retarded the economic growth of the Gold Coast. According to him, the administration "extracted a large surplus from the Ghanaian private sector, which was the main driving force of the economy, but gave little in return and often acted to frustrate the development of Ghanaian capital" (Hymer, 1969: 1). This, as Nkrumah (1965) observes, ultimately undermines efforts to achieve genuine economic independence and reinforces the structures of neo-colonialism.

In essence, the power bloc that was established during the colonial era was both materially manufactured and ideologically rooted on colonial hegemony. This formation was developed largely over the colonial period through successive layers of economic extraction and integration, hierarchical systems of education, racialised modes of administration, and the co-optation of segments of the local elite. The structure was not accidental; it was rather a necessary means to enforce stability, or, as Gramsci would put it, rule by a combination of coercion and consent (Gramsci, 1971; Cox, 1983). This power bloc, consisting of colonial administrations and institutions and local elites - was complex and multi-layered and helped sustain colonial rule. In the contemporary period, its institutional legacies constrain postcolonial sovereignty and resource nationalism.

3.3. Power Bloc and Post-Independence Era: the Struggle for Resource Control and Economic Sovereignty

3.3.1. Neo-Colonialism and the Reproduction of Power Blocs

The power bloc that was established during the colonial era in the Gold Coast extended into the post-colonial period. This power bloc was a constellation of material structures, ideological systems and institutions which placed Ghana at the periphery of the global system (Gramsci, 1971; Cox 1983,1987). This establishment included trading partners from Europe, colonial administrators, Christian missionaries and an emerging class of local elites and intermediaries (Abass, 2023; Forjwuor, 2023; Nyarko, 2023). Although Ghana obtained independence in 1957, its core material and ideological structures from the colonial power bloc were reconstituted through a new mode of global integration known as neo-colonialism. As has been argued, the post-WWII international order formalised colonial hierarchies into a newly decolonised world in which independent African states like Ghana were structurally integrated into the neo-colonial global system and its power bloc (Nkrumah, 1965; Cox, 1987; Getachew, 2019). This power bloc was characterised by a complex interplay of economic influence, political control, and social or cultural impact controlled by former colonial powers and multinational corporations (Abrahamsen, 2000).

In terms of the economic influences, it manifested in the following ways: first is the role of multinational companies in Ghana's extractive sectors especially in the mining, oil and agriculture sectors. These MNCs limited local economic autonomy fostering dependencies on foreign capital and expertise (Langan, 2017). Second is the problem of trade imbalance, arising from Ghana's incorporation into an unequal global system. This imbalance, inherited from the colonial era, positioned Ghana primarily as an exporter of raw materials and an importer of finished goods (Getachew, 2019). Lastly, the debt and austerity programmes such as SAP which is imposed

by the IMF and the World Bank in the 1980s further entrenched neoliberal economic policies in Ghana. These reforms affect the state capacity and redirect national priorities towards debt servicing instead of economic transformations (Abrahamsen, 2000).

With regard to political factors, neo-colonialism has also functioned through the maintenance of political influence by former colonial powers. Despite formal sovereignty, Ghana's policy choices have continued to be heavily influenced by bilateral and multilateral donors (from the West) whose development assistance and diplomatic engagement have quietly but effectively pressured the state to maintain allegiance to the geopolitical and economic interests of the former colonial powers (Haag, 2012). The postcolonial period has mostly retained colonial state structures which include centralised authority and bureaucratic elites as well as limited citizen participation mechanisms. Global capital and donor agencies have utilized these institutions to preserve hierarchical decision-making while restricting opportunities for democratic contestation (Nyarko, 2023).

In terms of social factors, neo-colonialism has also perpetuated the reproduction of power blocs through social and cultural institutions. The colonial legacy of Ghana's education system, for instance, continues to be largely Eurocentric in its epistemologies, curricula, and language practices, privileging Western knowledge while marginalising indigenous values and histories (Bonney and Shad, 2023). In doing so, the system reproduces the dominant ideology of the global neoliberal order by embedding "liberal values" within social relations, thereby constraining the space for radical forms of resistance (Gramsci, 1971). Additionally, social stratification that was partly produced under colonial rule through racial and class-based distinctions in the civil service, land access, and urban residence has also persisted under neo-colonialism. The policy-making domain is chiefly controlled by bureaucratic elite classes who have received their education from

Western institutions and been socialized within neoliberal technocratic principles. These elites who prioritise global institutions above the local people maintain exclusionary practices that block potential revolutionary reforms (Nyarko, 2023).

Neo-colonialism has not been a simple, seamless process of reproducing power blocs as in the colonial period. These blocs persist through continuous transformation into new institutional and ideological frameworks that display both enduring traits and internal inconsistencies (Abrahamsen, 2000). IOCs also benefit from international investment treaties and trade agreements that favour their interests and secure profit repatriation in exchange for investment, effectively hamstringing the state's efforts to assert greater control. As Mitchell (2011) argues, such arrangements often embed oil-producing countries even more tightly into the circuits of global capital rather than enabling structural transformation. Local and civil society movements have sought to push back against this arrangement but face challenges of state repression and the ideological power of neoliberalism that frames dependency as development and market logic as inevitable. Neo-colonialism has worked not by breaking from the colonial order but by reproducing and deepening its material and ideological structures in the postcolonial era. Although formal independence marked a shift from colonial rule, it perpetuated the power bloc which in turn-maintained dependency and elite control while blocking autonomous development.

3.3.2. Kwame Nkrumah's Strategy: Counter-Hegemony and the Power Bloc

When Ghana obtained independence from the British on 6th March 1957 it had £ 250 million available in its national reserve. Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the Prime Minister, wanted to reverse the colonial economic order by replacing it with a self-sustaining, nationalist or resource nationalist economic order. Therefore, he established a developmental plan for the expansion of infrastructure and the provision of several social services. This was known as the Five-Year

Development Plan (1959-1964), which included the development of hydropower in Ghana. This hydropower was to supply power for the industrialisation of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to process raw materials like cocoa, gold, bauxite etc. Nkrumah's industrial approach is often described as diverging from the model pursued by Great Britain (Hymer, 1969), as it was informed by a more critical perspective that leaned towards socialist ideologies, which he sought to implement through his industrial policies as president of Ghana (Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah, 2020).

Nkrumah preferred Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) whereby goods were manufactured domestically for domestic use rather than importing finished products from abroad. This radical approach marked a clear departure from Ghana's colonial economic system, which had been structured almost entirely around the extraction of raw materials for the benefit of the imperial hegemonic order. His ISI was a reversal of colonial dependencies and a building up of the national industrial base and reducing reliance on imported goods. At the centre of this was his massive investment in SOEs in major sectors such as agriculture and energy. One major investment to boost industrialisation was the Volta River Project which included the building of the Akosombo Dam. Not only did this offer electricity required for industrialisation, but it was also symbolic of Nkrumah's ambitions to use the natural resource of Ghana for rural economic development. It was an electrification project serving as the foundation of industrialisation (Biney, 2011). The total capital projected for the dam was £ 100 million which was roughly 20% of Ghana's GDP at the time. The project was partially financed by the state and the World Bank and companies such as Kaiser Aluminium benefited from the long-term smelting (Biney, 2011; Jedwab and Osei, 2012).

Nkrumah's ISI programme should not be read simply as an economic policy of decolonisation, but rather as a hegemonic project of state formation and power reconfiguration in

the now independent integral state. Like in the Latin American and Asian cases, Ghana's ISI experience can be understood as a statist-elite attempt to turn the page on dependency, to develop domestic industrial capacity, and to take control over the commanding heights of the economy (Grinberg, 2022). At the same time, however, it too reproduced the intrinsic contradictions of such a strategy between nationalist projects and the structural limits of global capitalism. The ISI period thus also amounted to a struggle between two power blocs: a new, emergent bureaucratic-capitalist elite bent on the modernisation of the country from above and a popular nationalist movement seeking inclusive development from below. In this sense, too, the paradox of Ghana's development path was prefigured: the very path into dependence on commodity production and exports could become the path out, provided that the state could regain control over the sector and the extraction and distribution of its surplus value, and provided that the economy could be diversified. Whether this process could be driven by statist elites or would have to be transformed into a truly collective and popular project of development remained a question that would reappear in later forms of resource nationalism in the oil era.

Nkrumah developed industrial zones such as Tema Industrial City where the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) was located to refine oil in Ghana and the Tema port for the ISI policy (Biney, 2011; Jedwab and Osei, 2012). The state mobilised more than £300 Million in capital expenditure which was equivalent to 25% of GDP used for massive investment in public infrastructure development and modernisation, building roads and hospitals (Biney, 2011; Jedwab and Osei, 2012). Based on these achievements, scholars such as Getachew (2019) argue that Nkrumah and other post-colonial leaders pursued the broader ambition of creating pan-Africanist societies, where newly independent states sought to escape the legacies of colonial dependency and assert their sovereignty within the global system. This pan-Africanist project can thus be seen as counter-

hegemonic to the colonial world order and its power bloc, laying the foundation for Nkrumah's industrialisation strategy, which sought to challenge global hegemony by establishing a new social order through state development initiatives and public ownership instead of traditional neoliberal market-driven practices.

Nkrumah's development project was not a spontaneous or isolated phenomenon; rather it was deeply embedded in a politics of forming a counter-hegemonic power bloc, which sought to directly address both internalized histories of colonial dependency and externally, the dominance of global capitalism (Nimako, 2015). The social forces at the base of this particular power bloc included a growing bureaucratic and technocratic class, the organized workers (largely under the aegis of his political party the Convention People's Party (CPP) and its union affiliates such as the Trades Union Congress (TUC)), and a segment of the rural peasantry mobilized via state-led agricultural extension services (Biney, 2011). These social forces (themselves not uniform in their interests or orientations) were woven together by the CPP-state project of national transformation (moving from the colonial economy to one based on national industrialisation, self-reliance, and Pan-African solidarity) (Nkrumah, 2021).

Furthermore, Nkrumah's industrial approach was informed by his theory of class struggle. In his book *Class Struggle in Africa* (Nkrumah, 1970), he argues that African society was not a classless society, but rather African society's class was impacted by imperial and colonial exploitation. For Nkrumah, independence was not simply the end of these relations, but the formation of a new comprador class of local elites (civil servants, the military and comprador capitalists) acting as agents for international capitalism. The project of counter-hegemony for Nkrumah was the construction of a new power bloc based on the popular masses (workers, peasants, progressive intellectuals and anti-colonial petit bourgeois forces) organised against the

neo-colonial bloc of the comprador bourgeoisie. This would then lead to the reorganisation of state and economy on socialist lines. As he put it: “The class struggle is the motive force in the history of all class societies. And in Africa today it is the working people who must take over the struggle...”(Nkrumah, 1970: 37). Nkrumah’s ISI project and vast state-led investment was a political project of class realignment - to shift the balance of power away from the colonial/neocolonial bloc to a sovereign popular bloc.

In this sense, the Nkrumah’s power bloc was a coalition of social forces in which a project of reshaping Ghanaian society’s material and ideological superstructure could be elaborated. The key here is consent the building of a new national-popular consensus (through a combination of state ownership of major industries and productive forces, infrastructural investment (building of Tema, Akosombo Dam, industrialization drive etc), and a new African socialist consciousness rooted in state-led educational reforms, a Pan-African cultural and institutional ethos etc.) as a necessary means to support an alternative development path (Nkrumah, 1962, 1970). In other words, Nkrumah’s strategy and political project was itself a Gramscian “war of position” against the global capitalist order and was predicated on a specific set of social forces seeking to displace the existing (colonial) hegemonic structure. This will influence the type of resource nationalism that he will pursue; the Nkrumah-led government saw it fit to nationalise almost all the mines under a single company called the State Gold Mining Corporation (SGMC). This was in line with the government’s ideology of “scientific socialism” and “work and happiness”. SGMC was responsible for managing and appropriating all mineral resources in Ghana as this was part of the state capitalism strategy (Agbesinyale, 2017: 35). To corroborate this one expert explained:

Nkrumah stands tall, very much unparalleled with the rest. And his vision was really one of value retention. Value retention by ensuring that the state actually supervises and controls all its God-given mineral resources. So, we have state owned mining companies, and the rest established to extract the resource for the country. And let me say that Nkrumah’s approach and ambition for our natural resources, particularly gold and the rest, is quite consistent with international best practices. Just that there is a slight variation, which I will point

out shortly. But the international best practices I speak of are that all over the world, countries that have been able to leverage on their resources for their collective benefit as a people, are those countries who are not playing the role of spectators but are actively involved in the extraction of the resource. Through that, you get a great deal of value retained within the national economy...so process, refine the gold and export it (Key Informant Interview, November 20, 2022).⁸

Nonetheless, some of Nkrumah's development projects faced setbacks like the Seven Year Development Plan (which was previously called the five-year development plan) : first, the fall of cocoa prices in the international market in 1961, since the projected revenues from the proceeds were intended to finance some of these developmental projects. Second, there was also a significant increase in the cost of capital; for instance, between 1950 and 1961, prices rose by about 25%. Lastly, Nkrumah's socialist approach faced several criticisms, chief amongst which was that it harmed the private sector and private investment (Aryeetey and Kanbur, 2017).

However, some have argued that Nkrumah preferred foreign investors over local businessmen for political reasons, particularly his fear of political opposition. Yet, Nkrumah's mistrust of a growing bourgeoisie should not be dismissed as mere political paranoia. It can also be understood within the context of his efforts to create space for statist developmentalism in the absence of an organic indigenous capitalist class capable of assuming the risks and responsibilities of driving industrial transformation. The Volta Project has often been cited as motivated by political interest rather than economic, but time has proven its economic importance to the nation providing most of the nation's energy up to date. In this light, it can be understood not as a simple political investment, but rather the means by which Nkrumah sought to inscribe a new economic rationality (grounded in self-reliance and structural transformation) on the postcolonial state apparatus as an alternative to the externally dependent power bloc of the colonial state (Biney, 2011; Aryeetey and Kanbur, 2017).

⁸ Interview #12.

Despite Nkrumah's effort to challenge the neo-colonial power bloc his efforts were truncated when he was overthrown in February 1966. This was a significant rupture in Ghana's socio-economic and political aspirations. A disruption of not only leadership but social forces and class alliances that Nkrumah established to shape the direction of the state. The fall of Nkrumah led to the disintegration of the counter-hegemonic power bloc he sought to create a bloc composed of state bureaucrats, pan-Africanist intellectuals, labour movements with socialist orientations and peasant-producers cooperatives (Biney, 2011). The power bloc was held together by the promise of structural transformation through Nkrumah's state-led industrialisation policies and post-colonial resource sovereignty. Nonetheless, it was saddled with internal contradictions which emanated from tensions: between bureaucrats/technocrats and workers, ideological aspiration of Pan-Africanism and fiscal realities, state control and informal network of power (Akonor, 2006; Biney, 2011; Getachew 2019).

Nkrumah's developmental approach was externally challenged by global capitalist forces - the system dominated by Western powers and global financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. These organisations promoted neoliberal policies such as fiscal restraint, liberalisation of the economy and limited state interventions (Abrahamsen, 2000). These were in sharp contradiction with Nkrumah's socialist developmental agenda. In 1965, when Ghana faced an economic crisis, Nkrumah was pressured to begin negotiations with the IMF. These talks were regarded as both secretive and belated, given Nkrumah's well-known socialist stance (Akonor, 2006). There were several economic conditionalities which the IMF presented to the Nkrumah administration such as: limiting government expenditure, a halt on new projects, cut in the producer price of cocoa etc., (Akonor, 2006: 21).

The Nkrumah administration surprisingly “agreed in ‘principle’ to the economic policy recommendation” of the IMF, nonetheless, for political reasons it is said that Nkrumah did not want to be associated with it (Akonor, 2006:22). This was because Nkrumah recognized that such a step risked alienating his core domestic support and undermining the ideological integrity of his government. As negotiations delayed his government was overthrown without the implementation of any of these IMF measures (Akonor, 2006:22). His overthrow cannot be explained solely as policy misstep or due to fiscal challenges at the time. A critical reflection reveals that his regime was built on a fragile power bloc that attempted to challenge the neo-colonial forces working against his counter-hegemonic policies. Hence, his counter-hegemonic bloc was challenged by contradictions both domestically and externally. Domestically there were contradictions like the growing autocracy and repression, limited populism, alienated local capital and detention of political opponents (Omari, 1970). Externally, the contradiction stemmed from pressures exerted by the global capitalist system, which stood in opposition to Nkrumah’s statist and socialist approach.

As Getachew (2019) points out, external pressures on post-colonial leaders and nations were not accidental but a deliberate approach by the global capitalist system to maintain their hegemony. Indeed, Nkrumah’s steps to insulate Ghana’s economy from neo-colonialism were met with suspicion by the West and IFIs who feared the impact of Nkrumah’s policies and post-colonial drive and increasing independence of several African states in the 1960s.

Additionally, segments of the Ghana military and professional classes those left out during his administration grew disillusioned as revealed by the US intelligence report that there was “persistent military dissatisfaction” and several plots within the officer’s corps noting the possibility of a coup would require the support of the army (Office of the Historian, 1966). Many

of these officers had been trained abroad and were uneasy with Nkrumah's Pan-African alignment with Eastern bloc states. Some reports suggest that the coup may have received support from the CIA and was motivated by a desire to re-establish Western affiliation (Brittain, 2018). The military faction found a common cause with disgruntled business elites and technocrats who saw Nkrumah's statist ISI approach as affecting Ghana's integration into the global economy (Asante, 2025). All these factors contributed to a coordinated internal overthrow by the army and the elite who were aligned to neoliberal interest.

3.3.3. Post-Nkrumah: Political Instability, Economic Decline, Structural Dependency and Elite Reconfiguration

After the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966, the Ghanaian state entered a prolonged period of political instability which was marked by short-lived civilian and military governments. This was the end of the state-led industrialisation project and, more fundamentally, a break with the counter-hegemonic power bloc Nkrumah had attempted to build. The Ghanaian state entered a period of long political instability and elite reconstruction. These political instabilities were not just spontaneous but a reflection of the structurally rooted contestation over Ghana's developmental trajectories within the global capitalist system. Until the 1980s there were many short-term developmental plans which were unsuccessful because of consistent political uprising, low productivity of industry, and unprecedented economic mismanagement (Aryeetey and Kanbur, 2017).

Nkrumah's government was replaced by the National Liberation Council (NLC), who were made up of disaffected military personnel, civil service technocrats and comprador bourgeoisie. Their leader was General J. A. Ankrah but he was later replaced by General A. A. Afrifa. The NLC rejected the socialist policies of Nkrumah and approached the IMF with a different attitude than that of Nkrumah (Akonor, 2006). The NLC's ideological disposition marked a clear shift from

Nkrumah's socialist inflected economic nationalism. As Aryeetey and Kanbur (2017) have shown, the new regime adopted a more liberal and market-friendly approach to economic policy, in line with the expectations of Western donors and IFIs.

Immediately after they overthrew the Nkrumah, the NLC government set up a seven-member committee headed by Mr. E.N Omaboe a former leading member of the Nkrumah administration to appropriate the "misguided economic and financial policies" of the Nkrumah government (Akonor, 2006: 25). This arguably was an indication of the internal disagreement on Ghana's economic policies between Nkrumah and some technocrats such as Omaboe (Akonor, 2006: 25). It is recorded that four days after the NLC coup, on February 28, 1966, the Governor of the Bank of Ghana sent an urgent cable to the then Managing Director of the IMF, P. P. Schweitzer, requesting immediate support. A few months later, on May 13, 1966, the NLC dispatched a committee to the IMF to apply for a loan. After three days of negotiations, they secured \$36.4 million, which came with conditionalities such as reducing government expenditure, restricting central bank financing, and other austerity measures (Hutchful, 1987: 67). These were the very conditions that the Nkrumah government had resisted for ideological and political reasons, which had delayed Ghana's engagement with the IMF prior to his overthrow. Such actions reinstated the dependency structures characteristic of the neo-colonial hegemony of the power bloc. The shift occurred because technocratic tensions existed within Nkrumah's original coalition, and many of these actors were incorporated into a new post-coup power bloc more closely aligned with the interests of international capital. In those days, the overall economy of Ghana was poor and even though the country recorded a trade surplus from 1967 to 1969 it was not something that could be sustained (Bawumia and Halland, 2017).

Three years after the beginning of military rule, democratic elections were held in 1969 which saw the return to civilian rule, with K. A. Busia leader of the Progress Party (P.P.) becoming prime minister. Busia's power bloc, like that of the NLC, was aligned with pro-capitalist and market-liberalisation policies. His political party P.P. had a strong connection with the political party United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), a party that Nkrumah broke away from and banned later in his administration when Ghana was made a one-party state in July 1961 (Biney, 2011). The social constituency of the Busia's administration's bloc consisted of professional elites, foreign-trained technocrats, and segments of the rural commercial elite, particularly from the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions, that had vested interests in market liberalisation and reducing the state's direct control of the economy (Arthur, 2009). Therefore, Busia's government's economic policies were that of increased liberalisation of trade and exchange regime encouraging economic growth based on investment (Herbst, 1993). By 1971, the Ghanaian economy was crumbling again, and the Busia administration had within two years incurred debt which was equal to that of Nkrumah's nine years (Killick, 2010). The government then approached the IMF in December 1971 for financial assistance. The IMF recommended that the Busia administration send an invitation to a group of Harvard Development Advisory Service (DAS) to take over the economic policy formulation at Ghana's ministry of finance (Libby, 1976). The Busia government on December 27, 1971, complied with the proposal of the IMF under the influence of the DAS.

This is a clear instance of power bloc and intellectuals co-opting the economic policy of Ghana for the purpose of integration into the global hegemonic world order. The material basis for this alignment was the economic crisis that Ghana faced, which compelled the government to seek an IMF loan out of desperation. The role of the DAS provides a classic example of the structural power of state institutions within the superstructure, shaping Ghana's economic policies to align

with the prevailing neoliberal hegemonic world order. Such integration further entrenched Ghana within the global capitalist system, creating cyclical dependencies on the IMF and World Bank for financial support. It also provided a channel for Western ideologies to influence Ghana's economic policies, thereby reinforcing the hegemonic control of global capital. The question which begs answering is whose interest are those experts from the West working for? What is the latent (hidden) reason for their policy suggestions or advice?

In attempting to construct a new power bloc centred on market liberalisation and international capital, Busia's regime lacked broad-based societal consent. Coupled with widespread economic hardship, these factors contributed to its overthrow in 1972 by a military government, the National Redemption Council (NRC), led by Col. I. K. Acheampong. The regime appeared on the scene in response to growing dissatisfaction with the Busia government from junior military officers, the rural poor, and other petty bourgeois groups opposed to the liberal economic policies and fiscal austerity measures. It formed a power bloc drawing its strength from the military junior officers, rural poor and state bureaucrats who were marginalised during the Busia administration (Chazan, 1983; Nugent, 1995).

The Acheampong administration sought to reverse the economic problems inherited from the Busia administration by adopting a more nationalist, state-led developmental approach (Akonor, 2006). His policy measures including repudiating foreign debts deemed "tainted" by corruption under the previous administration, nationalising major shares in foreign-owned companies, and promoting self-reliance through initiatives such as the "Operation Feed Yourself (OFY)" programme. The OFY was presented as efforts to challenge the global capitalist hegemonic order and reduce Ghana's dependency on external powers. The administration sought to reclaim economic sovereignty by consolidating state control over key sectors such as mining,

banking, and insurance. Nonetheless, these counter-hegemonic actions were not enough to upset the structural problems Ghana faced. Inflation surged to 116.5% as the government resorted to printing more money to address fiscal deficits. Acheampong resisted devaluing the Cedi, viewing it as a symbol of national pride, which further exacerbated the inflationary pressures (Akonor, 2006: 29). These actions alienated international institutions such as the IMF. Despite Acheampong's nationalist policies and the creation of new state enterprises, Ghana's structural dependence on primary commodity exports persisted. The economic dependencies established during the colonial era, and carried into the neo-colonial period, remained largely unaltered. Consequently, the regime's nationalist agenda operated within a constrained global hegemonic order, where power was concentrated in international institutions and embedded technocratic norms (Chazan, 1983; Nugent, 1995). This is an illustration of how weak and internally fractured blocs struggle to assert control and sovereignty in a neoliberal world system defined and shaped by colonial economic legacies.

It is worth mentioning that after 3 years in office Col. Acheampong (later promoted to General) replaced the NRC with the SMC (Supreme Military Council) in 1975 consisting only of military officers. In 1978 there was a palace coup which led to a change in the leadership of the SMC I with General F. Akuffo taking over from General Acheampong and forming SMC II (Hutchful, 2007). General Akuffo's government is an example of an inherent contradiction of a government trying to stabilise economic affairs under external threat and social and political instability at the same time. After the palace coup, the Akuffo regime inherited an economy in desperation: high inflation, balance of payment deficit and widespread liquidity (Hutchful, 2007). Being greatly influenced by the IMF the government introduced a stabilisation package in August 1978 which was financed by SDR 53 million standby credit (Hutchful, 1985). The goal of this

package was to restore fiscal discipline, tackle inflation and improve Ghana's balance of payment deficit by implementing structural adjustment measures.

In fact, none of these measures undertaken by the General Akuffo's SMC II regime resulted in any significant economic recovery. This was due to the structural and dependent nature of the regime in relation to international finance capital and the narrow margin of manoeuvre it had on key economic policy decisions. The collaboration of the regime with IMF's 1978 stabilization package was a classic case of passive revolution as it embraced externally driven reform measures to resolve the crisis without addressing its structural origins. The IMF package centred on macroeconomic stabilization, devaluation and the export of raw materials to the benefit of the TNCs and the power bloc rather than investing in productive capacity, infrastructural development or self-reliant development path (Hutchful, 1985; Konadu-Agyemang, 2000).

Above all, these decisions could not have been possible without considering the class composition and political role of the Ghanaian military. Chazan (1983) and Hutchful (1997) amongst others have argued that by the late 1970s the officer corps had metamorphosed into a new politico-economic class with its source of legitimacy located in its control of state power and its monopoly of violence rather than an organic social alliance. The military as an institution was highly divorced from the working and peasant classes but directly engaged in the running of the state and the distribution of patronage. Senior military officers and bureaucrats who ran the state, often had direct personal interests in SOEs, import licences and foreign contracts and were increasingly fused with a class of elite technocrats and IFIs and less with nationalist constituencies.

The effect was the production of a new military-technocratic power bloc that maintained its hegemony through bureaucratic power and foreign capital rather than through class compromise and social consent. The Akuffo regime was itself a product and supporter of the postcolonial

comprador class that had been co-opted and incorporated into international capital and its circuits of accumulation and lacked the ideological means at the time of the economic crises to connect with masses. The inability of this bloc to solve the crisis created a hegemony crisis and an economic vacuum that helped to create the political space and conditions for the 1979 junior officers' coup by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) under the leadership of Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. We can read this coup as a crisis of the inner cohesion of the military bloc and the rise of intra-class competition as junior officers often recruited from lower social class backgrounds and more connected to the voices and interests of the popular classes, revolted against the privileges and failures of the senior officer class and bureaucrats. Far from being neutral arbiters of the state, the military institution in Ghana represented the interests of different class fractions, and its eventual divisions became a reflection of the deeper class contradictions within the postcolonial state.

The AFRC intervention was marked by a strong anti-elite component and could, be seen as a moment of attempted counter-hegemonic rupture, one where demoralized subaltern element within the military establishment mounted a challenge to the externally aligned elites tied to international finance capital and postcolonial capitalist accumulation. At the same time, the AFRC's radicalism was never rooted in a counter-hegemonic social bloc. If Rawlings had the support of important segments of the population, notably students, youth associations, and poor urban dwellers, his populist revolt was not institutionally anchored nor predicated on a sustainable class coalition reorganizing the state on new terms (Hutchful, 1997; Luckham, 1994).

The "Housecleaning" exercise, public executions of high-ranking military officers, and the seizing of their corruptly acquired fortunes was, in this sense, an attempt at symbolic discrediting of the previous military regime (Oquaye, 1980). The AFRC's interventions remained to a large

extent symbolic. Rawlings handed over power to a democratically elected civilian administration under Hilla Limann in September 1979, a gesture symptomatic of populism's fragile rupture in the absence of a historically specific structured power bloc, an alternative alliance rooted in different forms of production and class (Hutchful, 1997).

Dr Hilla Limann won the elections and formed a new government in September 1979. The Limann presidency is another example of frictions between external economic pressure and domestic political demands. The government assumed office during a time when the economy was in full crisis characterised by inflation, a trade deficit, reduced export revenues as cocoa prices fell and the cedi depreciated (Akonor, 2006). To solve these economic problems, he engaged with the IMF in January 1980 to obtain a \$400 Million credit agreement (Akonor, 2006). This stabilisation credit came with several typical IMF conditionalities. During Limann's administration, the IMF was widely associated with unpopular austerity measures, which many African states sought to avoid. Consequently, Limann resisted devaluing the Cedi, fearing that such a move could provoke public unrest and lead to his overthrow, as had occurred with previous governments (Akonor, 2006). From a Neo-Gramscian view, the Limann government predicament is yet another reflection of a government facing structural constraints imposed by the global capitalist hegemonic bloc because of Ghana's integration and dependencies on the West. These dependencies are further entrenched by IFIs such as IMF with their classic austerity measures which affect the state's resource sovereignty agenda. Moreover, Limann's refusal to devalue the Cedi in defiance of IMF requests highlights the contradictions and tensions between global hegemonic pressures and domestic political decision-making.

Limann was concerned about the political and social ramifications of these reforms, yet his regime had not built an organized social base or organic alliance with the subordinate classes that

could mount an effective challenge to these structural imperatives of the world economy. In the words of Chazan (1983), the technocratic elites of the Ghanaian state were more or less trapped within the ideological and institutional boundaries of the international financial regime. In other words, Ghana's structural economic dependency, due to its colonial past and narrow export-oriented economic base, was not conducive to developing the necessary autonomy for long-term, structural changes in economic policy (Akonor, 2006). This finding is in line with Cox's (1987) notion that global hegemony works through the institutions and associated norms that shape a state's practices and preferences. In fact, Limann had been unable to construct a counter-hegemonic social bloc with the capacity to offer a viable alternative to this order, making his regime a sitting duck for Rawlings' coup in December 1981.

3.4. Rawlings and the PNDC Military Era: Structural Adjustment, Counter-Hegemony and the Entrenchment of Neoliberal Hegemony

Rawlings and the PNDC took overpower from Limann in 1981 at a time when Ghana's economy was in crisis. At the beginning of the PNDC's administration, the government pursued counter-hegemonic policies with nationalist rhetoric with his administration leaning towards a socialist government (Hutchful, 2007). Most of its policies were anti-imperialist, since Rawlings made few visits to Cuba to see Fidel Castro (Kumah-Abiwu, 2016) and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya (Haruna, 2023) because they shared similar ideologies at the time. This ideological leaning suggested an initial break from the path of dependency within the global capitalist system.

The PNDC's early support came from certain segments of junior military officers, urban youth, leftist intellectuals, radical students, and workers who felt betrayed and let down by previous regimes (Hutchful, 1997). Their disillusionment with the corruption of previous regimes united them to reject the capitalist system and elite rule. These conditions provided the foundation for the emerging bloc, which aimed to reconstitute the state in a manner that prioritized the interests

of the masses. Nevertheless, this bloc was fractured or lacked coherence, was resource constrained and institutionally weak. It experienced structural constraints a broken treasury, dwindling exports, drought and repatriation of Ghanaians from Nigeria which added to the population burden. The economic conditions forced the administration to set up the National Economic Review Committee (NERC) to assess the economic condition of the country and suggest appropriate solutions.

The committee was composed of technocrats, including individuals from previous administrations. Notable members included Dr. Joe Abbey, an economist and former adviser to the Acheampong and Akuffo governments, and Mr. Kwesi Amoako-Atta, who had served as Nkrumah's finance minister before later joining the Busia administration and supporting its adoption of IMF stabilization policies during periods of economic crisis. The Committee also included economists such as Dr Kwesi Botchwey, the governor of the central bank Dr J.S. Addo, Dr Ato Ahwoi, Dr Abudu and Dr. Erbynn (Akonor, 2006). The composition of this committee mainly bureaucratic elite, reflected a pragmatic shift in the PNDC's trajectory from revolutionary rhetoric towards technocratic management. This was an indication of the reconstitution of Ghana's ruling bloc around technocratic authority, international legitimacy, and structural adjustment (Hutchful, 1997, 2007).

The committee recommended that the government seek financial assistance from the IMF and World Bank, along with acceptance of the accompanying conditionalities. These conditions were designed to restore balance of payment, bring macroeconomic stability and reintegrate Ghana into the global financial system. Nonetheless, they imposed short term social cost on the working class, rural poor, informal sector and the masses a bloc that supported the PNDC. This was going to be a disappointment for the PNDC supporters. Indeed, the initial proposal faced rejection by some of the leaders of the PNDC arguing it was a betrayal of their core values which was anti-

imperialist. This was because the PNDC was formed by junior officers and radical intellectuals who stood for “social democracy” what they deemed grassroot democracy which is democracy for the people (masses) and not for the elite (Hutchful, 1997, 2007). Therefore, their initial rejection can be explained follows; the SAP conditionalities were hegemonic projects in that they were not technical fixes to a market failure but ideological and material instruments of class compromise through which the global capitalist order reestablished its hegemony over a dependent postcolonial society. Hence the PNDC’s initial resistance demonstrated another counter-hegemonic resistance to external pressures in a structurally dependent economy.

Despite its initial rejection of the IMF's SAP for being against Ghana's national interest, the worsening economic situation forced the PNDC to adopt structural adjustment measures. Not just that, but according to Abrahamsen (2000) the PNDC’s agreement to IMF conditionalities and SAPs emerged from transnational institutional disciplinary strategies and not solely from local economic crises. Neoliberal governance was promoted as the exclusive solution through this project which integrated domestic elites and shifted political dialogue concepts of efficiency, stability, and reform. Additionally, Boafo-Arthur (1999) contends that the PNDC had to eventually concede to IMF and World Bank SAPs, not by ideological conversion, but due to structural economic collapse (precipitated by drought, mass expulsions, declining exports, hyperinflation), which in turn forced the regime to abandon its own ideological position. Legitimated by socialist discourse and popular support of junior officers, students and the labour movement, the PNDC's power bloc was internally fractured as technocratic elites emerged who gravitated towards the IMF/World Bank.

The PNDC then announced on December 30, 1982, its nationalist policy called the Programme for Reconstruction and Development (PFRD) a four-year plan to restore productivity

and promote economic and infrastructure development in Ghana. The goal of this policy was to realign Ghana's economic policy towards a nationalist and anti-imperialist lines (Herbst, 1993). I view this as a form of counter-hegemonic position that was unsustainable, ultimately leading back to a cycle of dependency on the dominant power bloc. The PFRD was founded on five pillars: reassertion of the role of the state in development planning; rehabilitation of SOEs; increase in agricultural production and food self-sufficiency; reduction of external dependency through ISI; and expansion of public provisioning of social services (education and health) (Haynes, 1991; Hutchful, 1985, 2007; Hutchful and Staff, 2002).

The PFRD could not succeed due to financial limitations and poor planning and coordination. Ghana possessed restricted fiscal capacity for programme implementation because of its low foreign reserves, heavy external debt burden and repercussions from the global recession. Hutchful and Staff (2002) describe the PFRD as primarily a declaratory framework rather than a comprehensive plan for action. Specific implementation strategies were not defined in the programme which resulted in a failure to gain donor support. It failed to obtain foreign investment, or the aid needed to finance public expenditure and infrastructure. Additionally, the social base for the programme was narrow and fragmented. Initially it received backing from the masses (youth, students, radical professionals); however, the absence of a strong national middle class together with a fragmented working-class alliance limited the extent of this programme's support. The programme failed partly because of the ideological clashes between the PNDC's radical cadres and pragmatic technocrats.

Indeed, while PERD represented a bold decision of the PNDC government it could not address Ghana's economic problems. In 1983 Ghana faced its worse economic hardship forcing the PNDC to embrace the IMF. Hence, in April 1983 the government announced it had accepted

the IMF stabilisation pack. Some of the conditions were devaluation of the currency, removal of subsidies, cancelation of price control, amongst others (Akonor, 2006). This was a clear indication of Ghana's integration into the neoliberal global order championed by the power bloc (IFIs) such as the IMF. From a Neo-Gramscian view, the PNDC policy shift shows the coercive and consensual apparatuses of global hegemonic power and influence. It can be argued the PNDC initial counter-hegemonic policy was constrained by Ghana's dependency on external capital and raw material export and importation of finished goods. Ghana's embrace of the SAP reinforced its position as a peripheral state within the global system, where local elites acted as facilitators in realigning national policies to serve the interests of transnational capitalist organizations (Cox, 1987; Gills, 2000).

Moreover, the adoption of the IMF's ERP in 1983 illustrated both material pressure factors (capital exhaustion and famine) and ideological influence. As a consequence of the ERP, the PNDC's revolutionary ideals succumbed to a technocratic decision-making process arising from the neoliberal framework imposed by the global power bloc. This U-turn showed the nature of hegemony which is enforced through coercion and consent of elite groups (Cox, 1987; Gills, 2000; Hutchful, 2002). This cycle would remain in subsequent administrations before the discovery of oil and would further be entrenched during oil discovery in 2007 and production in 2010. In summary, the consolidation of a new power bloc around ERP and SAP set the stage for Ghana's political economy in the Fourth Republic which is discussed in the next section.

3.5. The Civilian Rawlings and John A. Kufuor's Eras: Ghana's Political Economy Before Oil, an Entrenched Neoliberal Hegemony

In trying to solve the economic problems the country was facing, Ghana pursued a strong ERP in the early 1980s followed by a SAP which imposed harsh economic conditions that were aimed at shrinking the boundaries of the state in favour of private sector participation (Tsikata,

2007). These measures were framed within a neoliberal economic agenda that came to be institutionalized in the ERP (ERP I, which commenced in April 1983) and the SAP (which started in 1986), both of which were prepared jointly with the IMF and the World Bank. While ERP I was more about macroeconomic stabilization (reducing fiscal deficits, currency devaluation), SAP deepened the liberalization agenda (trade deregulation, privatization of public enterprises, and subsidy withdrawal). This drastically reshaped Ghana's economic landscape by limiting or reducing the role of the state in favour of the private sector (Cox, 1987; Gills, 2000; Hutchful, 2002). Interestingly, it was around this period that Flt J. J. Rawlings established GNPC as one expert pointed out:

“It was out of this nationalistic ideal that led him to create, as far back as 1983, the GNPC, the NOC. And to equip the NOC with financial resources, logistics, we even acquired some drill ships and others to begin on our own to look for oil in our own territorial waters. Again, we even went to the extent of acquiring a block in Angola” (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).⁹

This corroborates what Hickey et al. (2020: 1254) mentioned that the GNPC in the 1980s and 1990 “was able to develop a high degree of technical competence in its early phase”. To corroborate this, another expert further mentioned that the GNPC was designed with a strong sense of a resource nationalist agenda and a strong conception of linkages (Key Informant Interview November 14, 2022).¹⁰

GNPC intensified its search for oil in Ghana when in 1980 there was a disruption in the importation of crude oil from Nigeria, which made the PNDC government to prioritise the exploration of oil in Ghana (Tsikata, 2022). The objective of the GNPC which has a strong sense of resource nationalism is clearly stated in Section 2 (2) of the PNDC Law 64, as follows:

- a. promote the exploration and orderly and planned development of the petroleum resources of Ghana.

⁹ Interview #17

¹⁰ Interview #15

- b. ensure that Ghana obtains the greatest possible benefits from the development of its petroleum resources.
- c. obtain the effective transfer to Ghana of appropriate technology relating to petroleum operations.
- d. ensure the training of citizens of Ghana and the development of national capabilities in all aspects of petroleum operations; and
- e. ensure that petroleum operations are conducted in such manner as to prevent adverse effects on the environment, resources and people of Ghana (Tsikata, 2022: 45).

The establishment of the GNPC and its ambitions represented another bold step toward resource control and resource nationalism. However, this initiative unfolded within a broader neoliberal framework that emphasized market-driven reforms and foreign direct investment. As some experts interviewed indicated, tensions emerged between the aspirations of resource nationalism and the structural constraints of neoliberalism a predicament that has continued to shape the oil and gas sector since then. The Rawlings administration's return to the IMF and World Bank at that time shifted the power bloc of Ghana back to capitalism and free market economy representing a departure from the administration's initial nationalist aspirations that arose from the shifting class dynamics and other changes in the political economy of the time. Rollback of SOEs and public sector employment diminished the power of the labour movement and working-class organisation. The liberal order led to the emergence of a new elite group which secured political positions and foreign capital along with procurement contracts. Civil society lacked sufficient strength during this time which resulted in diminished power to oppose the elite class agreement supporting neoliberal principles (Boafo-Arthur, 1999; Hutchful, 1985; Hutchful and Staff, 2002; Tsikata, 2007).

Ghana's government returned to civilian rule in January 1993 when President Rawlings was democratically elected, and he won a second term in 1996. Excessive government spending before the year 2000 general elections significantly stressed the fiscal position which led to macroeconomic uncertainty characterised by a cycle of hyperinflation and currency decline (Boafo-Arthur, 1999; Hutchful, 1985; Hutchful and Staff, 2002; Tsikata, 2007). By the end of year 2000, Ghana's currency had lost half of its value in relation to the US dollar and the country's

hard-earned reserves had practically been depleted with the nation unable to even cover a month's worth of imports. This led to a build-up in external payments arrears. Mr. J. A. Kufuor, the opposition leader and flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), was elected as the nation's new president in the 2000 elections and immediately he assumed office, his government's focus was to make the macro economy stable (Bawumia and Halland, 2017). This was because the macroeconomic situation of the previous administration was not in good shape.

The NPP administration led by Kufuor operated within a framework of market liberal principles and relied heavily on international financial backing. From 2001 to 2008 Kufuor's administration deepened Ghana's integration into the global neoliberal framework. It has been argued that the Kufuor's government goal was to improve the macroeconomic situation, and he did this by seeking assistance from the BWIs (Bawumia and Halland, 2017). The country was able to obtain some debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative between 2004 and 2006. This was based on an agreement that required Ghana to implement many series of macroeconomic and structural reforms such as public sector reforms, fiscal discipline and poverty reduction strategies (Afoom, 2011; Development Bank, 2009; Osei and Quartey, 2001).

The HIPC choice was not without economic and political implications. The government considered this a pragmatic approach to economic recovery; however, seeking support from the IFIs came with strict conditionalities that drew mixed reactions from Ghanaians. While some viewed it as a viable path towards macroeconomic stability, others regarded it as a surrender of Ghana's economic sovereignty. Nonetheless, the Kufuor government framed this initiative as a needed approach to economic stability and development (Aryeetey and Kanbur, 2017). This further underscore the tension between pursuing short-term economic stability and addressing the deeper structural economic dependencies reinforced by the power bloc within the global capitalist

hegemonic order. HIPC consolidated Ghana's structural dependence on external finance and policy conditionalities. Symbolically, HIPC marked a shift in the power bloc towards an assemblage that was even more tightly aligned with the interests of international capital and donor agencies.

Between 2000 and 2008, the country's main fiscal policy was to create room for more borrowing and to manage debt sustainably. The period saw a huge dent in the country's external debt resulting mainly from HIPC relief of \$6.1 billion to \$3.59 billion by 2007 and this was seen as a step in the right direction regarding the management of the country's economy. The debt relief programme was celebrated by the government because it gave them the much-needed fiscal space to re-channel the country's resources towards poverty reduction, economic reform, social infrastructure and health benefits such as the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The NHIS was seen as a pro poor health financing policy that gives access to poor people who could not have access to proper healthcare services. By the end of December 2006, out of an entire population of 21 million people 38% had registered for the scheme and 21% of the population had been issued a card to effectively provide them with health insurance at public health facilities that accepted the NHIS (Agyepong and Adjei, 2007). Although debt relief provided the government with much-needed fiscal space for poverty reduction, the politics surrounding HIPC and the burden of its conditionalities were widely criticized as detrimental to Ghanaians.

The Ghanaian government after discovering oil in commercial quantities started to change its policy from sustainable debt management to one of expanded spending (Alagidede, 2011). Ackah et al. (2020) note that oil, which was discovered in commercial quantities in 2007, marked an important watershed moment in Ghana's political economy. But the institutional and ideological superstructure into which oil was embedded had long been shaped by two decades of

liberalisation. The political elite alongside technocrats and private sector stakeholders began to reorient their expectations regarding oil revenue before Ghana started its first oil production. By 2008, Ghana government had entered the European debt market to borrow \$750 million at a coupon rate of 8.5% for a decade (Ackah et al., 2020: 4). As a result of the policy change the budget overrun which was generally low between 4.1% and 2.7% from 2001 to 2005 had swelled again to 11.5% of GDP in 2008 marginally contracting to 9.5% in 2009 (Ackah et al., 2020: 4).

This period highlights Ghana's increasing reliance on external market capital and global IFIs integrating Ghana more into the global capitalist hegemony with oil and gas serving as a new source of material base for further dependencies. It was being led by an elite coalition that was increasingly oriented around financial markets, foreign capital, and donor agencies at the expense of structural transformation of the domestic economy. It is important to note that the oil era did not happen in isolation, nor was it divorced from historical processes. The discovery of oil in commercial quantities was the culmination of historical processes that gradually reconstituted Ghana's state, class structure, and institutional arrangements in accordance with the global capitalist system (Ayelazuno, 2014a, 2016; Ayelazuno and Ayanoore, 2022). Regrettably, Nkrumah's vision of the state as an engine of industrialisation was replaced by a regulatory and facilitative state model. Ghanaian political parties across their political spectrum including Rawlings' National Democratic Congress (NDC) and Kufuor's NPP adopted neoliberalism as the foundational economic policy (Ayelazuno, 2014a, 2016). Civil society and labour organisations were marginal in terms of their role in macroeconomic policymaking, although a class of media and think tank intellectuals played growing roles in shaping public discourse on oil governance (Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh, 2012).

In essence, the era represented the formation of a new power bloc driven by a coalition of transnational capital together with donor institutions and local business elites supported by technocrats. Its coherence as a bloc was maintained not just by coercive means, but by the ideological diffusion of a neoliberal development paradigm. The oil discovery promised a new material base for development in Ghana but risked exacerbating the very dependencies and contradictions that had shaped Ghana's political economy for decades. I discuss all these into detail in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.6. Conclusion: Hegemony, Counter-Hegemony and Developmental Trajectories

Ghana's developmental journey as discussed in this chapter shows the enduring dependencies of colonial hegemony and the subsequent neoliberal global hegemonic economic world order. The chapter has revealed a captivating narrative of the intersection between structural dependencies established during colonialism, nationalist and resource nationalist policies, and the entrenchment of global capitalist hegemony. I have shown how the structures of neo-colonialism and neoliberalism have not only maintained influence over Ghana's economic policy but its developmental trajectories. This institutional dependency (i.e. power bloc) continued well into the post-colonial period, as a neo-colonial setup, which restricted Ghana's ability to attain economic sovereignty and control of its resources. I also examined the class composition across the various regimes and demonstrated how their power blocs were contested, ultimately leading to reintegration into the capitalist system through both the coercion and consent of the political elite.

Furthermore, counter-hegemonic efforts by subsequent Ghanaian governments to resist these structural dependences through resource nationalism highlight both the potential and limitations of counter-hegemonic interventions in a structurally constrained and controlled neoliberal global hegemony. For example, I discussed Nkrumah's state-led industrialisation

agenda, which represented a grand strategy to challenge the global hegemonic bloc and assert Ghana's sovereignty over its resources. However, his hopes were derailed by internal politics, external forces, colonial legacies of dependency amongst others. Similarly, subsequent heads of state, including Acheampong and Rawlings, sought to implement resource nationalist policies but faced similar outcomes. Their efforts were undermined by external pressures from IFIs, pervasive internal corruption, and structural reforms that failed to address the underlying dependencies of which compromised their counter-hegemonic aspiration.

The entrenchment of neoliberal hegemony through the SAP in the 1980s reached an apogee, reshaping Ghana's political economy and restricting the possibilities of resource nationalism unless the structural basis of Ghana's economy was addressed. By the time Ghana found oil in 2007, it was already caught up in a global neoliberal hegemonic world order that placed market-based reforms, foreign direct investment and export growth above local industrialisation and resource sovereignty. It was this neoliberal model, imposed by IFIs, that created structural limits on prior resource nationalist projects, placing Ghana even further within the capitalist system of the world. This resource nationalism crisis in Ghana speaks to the structural and ideological challenges that resource-rich developing countries encounter in claiming sovereignty over their natural resources.

In sum, over six decades, Ghana's developmental path revealed an on-going struggle between global capitalist pressure and resource nationalist desires. The country's economy was forged from this tension. This chapter also highlights the need to understand underlying historical tensions in depth, as a foundation for the theorization of Ghana's resource governance in the oil and gas space that I now pursue.

Chapter 4. National Policy Response and Hegemony: The Aspiration of Resource Nationalism and Counter-Hegemonic Struggles

4.1. Introduction

After oil and gas resources were discovered in commercial quantities in Ghana in 2007, the major concern of the entire citizenry, the government and all stakeholders was that Ghana avoids the resource curse that has plagued other nations with natural resources like oil, gold, diamonds etc. Even though a lot of Ghanaians were optimistic about the discovery of the oil and gas reserves, some also had reservations about the country's readiness for such an endeavour (Andrews, 2013; Ovadia et al., 2020). Their main concerns stem from how the mining sector has been managed over the years even though it is one of the most developed extractive sectors of the economy with gold mining not contributing enough as it should to the economy in terms of public revenue, employment, skills development and localised economic growth (Bloch and Owusu, 2012).

Regrettably, revenues from the mining sector have not led to significant developmental outcomes and many argue that Ghana's income from gold "does not count" (Gyampo, 2014: 26) despite mining gold for centuries its contribution to Ghana's broader economic development is marginal. A recent report shows that, as of September 2022, Ghana was the leading gold producer in Africa and the sixth worldwide with production in 2021 being 117.6 tons, making up 90% of West Africa's annual mineral export (Goosen, 2022). The mismatch between mineral wealth and tangible developmental outcome has led scholars to describe mining in Ghana as one with: revenue leakage, enclave dynamics which limits localised spillover, and limited value retention (Bloch and Owusu, 2012).

Beyond the domestic concerns outlined above, Ghana's integration into the global oil economy introduced new structural constraints shaped by the hegemonic influence of IOCs, TNCs, MNCs, and global IFIs, thereby adding another layer of complexity. Many feared that the Ghanaian government often characterized as weak in comparison to powerful oil conglomerates and their external backers, including foreign states and influential international institutions would struggle to assert sovereignty over the country's oil and gas sector (Ayelazuno, 2014a, 2016). Because these oil giants have power and influence on their side, stakeholders particularly CSOs, traditional authorities and political parties (especially the NDC which was in opposition) feared that Ghana's independence as a state and its ability to wield much influence over its interests in the oil markets would be eroded (Ayelazuno, 2014a).

Structurally, Ghana's petroleum governance operates as a node in the transnational fossil-capital accumulation system which includes oil corporations and nation-states that support neoliberal dominance as explained by Hanieh (2022) and Carroll (2019, 2021). This formation functions as an essential part of a larger and constantly changing power bloc that integrates new production actors into capital networks and legitimates extraction activities via transparency and sustainability narratives. This perspective reveals Ghana's policy reforms as part of the world energy capitalism system instead of merely domestic institutional adjustments.

Ghana's late entry into the oil and gas sector provides a unique opportunity to examine how a relatively stable and resource-endowed African democracy positions itself within the global political economy of oil. It aimed to learn from and find alternatives to the outcomes in "established" petrol-states such as Nigeria or Angola, where extractive governance has often been shaped by clientelism, corruption, and conflict (Obi, 2014). More importantly Ghana's emergence coincides with a global context marked by increasing demands for transparency, accountability,

and the pursuit of long-term sustainable development goals in resource governance. Hence, what is at stake is not simply the material wealth of the resource but the structural asymmetries of this moment of intersection between domestic developmental needs and the interest of global hegemonic bloc of IOCs, financial and donor institutions, multinationals and other big corporations, who are not neutral actors but instead ideologically, institutionally and economically shape the “policy space” of resource-rich countries (Abrahamsen, 2000). In the Ghanaian case, despite the widespread (formal, rhetorical) commitments of IOCs, IFIs and donor agencies to transparency, accountability and CSR. Some critics fear that oil and gas exploitation will further solidify Ghana’s dependency, reduce local control and further re-orientate the priorities of the state to better serve global capital. It has been argued that these multinationals could stall Ghana’s development agenda through lobbying and influencing agents in government (Ayelazuno, 2011). Ghana’s oil sector is thus a key site for contestation and for understanding the dynamics of resource nationalism as a counter-hegemonic project in a deeply unequal international system, rather than as conduit for passive revolution.

Accordingly, this chapter examines Ghana’s oil and gas policies as an effort to assert resource sovereignty and foster developmentalism in the context of resource nationalism. The chapter explores the undercurrents of hegemony and counter-hegemony that continues to shape resource governance in Ghana. By resource nationalism I point to these three features; (i) the maximization of public revenue; (ii) the assertion of strategic state control (ability to set a political or strategic direction to the development of the sector); and (iii) the enhancement of developmental spillovers from extractive activity (Haslam and Heidrich, 2016: 1). From this framework, I argue that Ghana’s national policy response reflects a deliberate yet constrained effort of attaining resource nationalism. I point out to the numerous interest groups, social forces and power

dynamics that played one role or the other in the foundational phase of the oil and gas sector. I also highlight constraints which arose from the interaction of civil societies' counter-hegemonic initiatives, politics and political elites' complicity within the global capitalist system and the structural dependencies entrenched by Ghana's position in the global economic order since the colonial era.

This chapter is important because it gives us the context and the preliminary actions and desires that the government and people of Ghana pursued at early strategies of the oil and gas discovery. The chapter is structured as follows: following the introduction, the first section examines the history of Ghana's oil exploration. This is followed by a discussion of historical structures and the role of intellectuals during the preliminary stages of oil search and discovery. The subsequent section analyses national policy frameworks and their alignment with global hegemonic standards, as well as the complicity of the political elite. I then turn to the role of civil society, exploring whether it functioned as a site of counter-hegemony or co-optation. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key arguments.

4.2. The History of Oil Search and Discourses: National Interest, Political Capture and Local Interest

4.2.1 Introduction: Framing Ghana's Oil Discovery and Forces at Play

As a developing country, revenue maximisation was one motivation for Ghana's search of oil. This was one of the internal motivating factors which pushed the state to persist in its oil search for decades. Oil exploration efforts in Ghana dates to the nineteenth century but since the 1960s successive governments have made frantic efforts to find oil in commercial quantities (Gyampo, 2011). Manu (2011) has catalogued all of Ghana's history in the oil and gas sector into four categories; first, onshore exploration between 1896 and 1969, second, offshore exploration

between 1970 and 1984, the third stage is from 1985 to 2000. It is characterised by the formation of GNPC between 1985 and 1987 by the PNDC government. The fourth category is from 2000 onwards.

This sub-section reviews the major phases and key actors involved in Ghana's oil search and how the discourses of national interest and resource nationalism were engaged at different junctures, in light of institutional deficits, elite-led governance architecture, and competing claims between the centre and the peripheries, especially by traditional authorities from the Western Region. The three forces that have come to define the early formative years of oil governance in Ghana are: (1) the instrumentalization of nationalist aspirations by state elites as a means of justifying policy expediency; (2) political capture of the oil policy space, particularly through the centralisation of authority at the presidency and loss of institutional memory across governments; and (3) popular and regional demands for local participation and equitable distribution of resource benefits. This can be understood as the interplay between historical structure and local agency. These social forces form the constitutive premise of the power bloc that shapes Ghana's resource sector politics. This ultimately tempers with the promise of resource nationalism when mediated by elite contestation, partisan competition, and foreign investor imperatives.

4.2.2. The Urgency of Oil and Resource Nationalist Rhetorics

In a rush to gain revenues from oil some laws were passed to ensure Ghana could begin accessing the oil money. It was all done under the notion of urgency. Interestingly, one expert who participated in the preliminary oil and gas conference lamented that:

You would not believe that in 2010 when we were about pouring our first oil, we did not have one law passed to govern the oil sector. Even though urgency had been pointed out at the Oil for Development Conference,

because government changed hands and because of mistrust of the government, by the new government... (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).¹¹

Though there were other laws which served as a guide such as the PNDC law 84. The point is that the earlier laws had some limitations which should have been addressed before going ahead with oil production under notion of “urgency” , especially for a country which was seeking to learn from the mistakes of the mining sector, particularly the mining of minerals such as gold and other precious minerals. The rush was also political, not just technical. The elite wanted to gain political credit and take symbolic control of the discovery since the oil was discovered a year before the general election in 2008.

Beyond the rhetoric of urgency, the political elite strategically framed the oil discovery as a matter of national interest. This framing, together with the initial actions undertaken, fostered a strong national conviction that the oil discovery would transform Ghana’s economy and enhance the lives of its citizens. According to interviewees who participated in the conference many of whom served as advocates, consultants, policy drafters, advisors, and critics of proposed governance approaches Ghana’s early engagement with oil governance was largely motivated by the desire to advance the national interest by leveraging newly discovered resources for economic transformation and improved livelihoods .¹² This was at the core of all the major deliberations at the early stage of oil discovery.

President Kufuor and his administration framed the oil discovery as a “divine blessing,” emphasizing that for the country to derive meaningful benefits, it would need to be managed with prudence and transparency. President Kufuor noted that “oil is money, and we need money to build

¹¹ Interview #17

¹² Interview #17, #13, #12, #21, #23, #37, #42, #43, #44, #52, #53, #54, #55

the schools, hospitals and roads.” This statement was resource nationalistic rhetorically and it places emphasis on the fact that if oil resources are managed well there will be no cause to complain rather oil would be used for social development. Many shared a similar sentiment; for example, the information minister at that time Mr. Kwamena Bartels emphasized how important it was to prudently manage oil resources by stating that the government was well aware of how mismanagement of oil wealth has ruined certain countries and that the government was putting together a team to go and learn from these countries so that “we don't fall into the same pit” (McCaskie, 2008: 324). Indeed, resource nationalist sentiments were rife at the preliminary days of the oil find. This corroborates Pryke's (2017) notion that national interest could be an influencing factor of resource nationalism and vice versa though other factors may contribute to this as well. In the spirit of national interest, the government organised a forum in 2008 in collaboration with other stakeholders to learn from decades of experience from nations like Norway and Britain that have been able to manage their resources well and used the wealth to make their economies better. At the heart of the discussions at the forum was how to use the money to build excellent institutions to avoid the resource curse (Debrah and Graham, 2015).

One expert who participated in the two-day conference described the early excitement as reflecting a strong sense of resource nationalism, as follows:

I must say that the increased interest in this preparatory meeting was largely related to what you would describe as resource nationalism because we had all felt that strongly that we've missed an opportunity with gold. And that oil represented our last opportunity to leverage our natural resources for our national development. So, the excitement was huge. And people will admit there was a famous statement made by former President Kufuor at the time that we were doing pretty well even before oil discovery and with oil as a shot of the arm we're going to fly. So, the expectation was really great. And the people in the Western region in particular were also excited, overly excited. To some extent, they felt that the oil was their God-given right (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).¹³

Nonetheless, the nationalist euphoria also complicated some of the period's contradictions. The government exercised control over oil development, yet policy decisions were eventually

¹³ Interview #17

predominantly influenced by foreign investment requirements and donor conditions alongside international market forces. The nationalist discourse was thus more legitimizing than transformational of Ghana's political economy.

This duality shows the inconsistency of Ghana's early oil politics. Presented as a sovereign project for national transformation, the oil discovery also deepened an entrenched power bloc of elite coalitions (political technocrats, transnational investors, IFIs) that upheld a neoliberal canon. The state was on one hand a nationalist actor and on the other hand a manager of global investor confidence. Consequently, the resource-nationalist narrative of the first years was emotionally resonant but institutionally thin and confined by the external dependencies and elite logics that have structured Ghana's development trajectory for a long time. This dynamic is illustrative of what would be described in a Neo-Gramscian framework as a passive revolution, i.e. nationalist promises getting articulated into, instead of against, the established structures of global capitalism. I demonstrate this further in subsequent sections.

4.2.3. Elite Capture and Loss of Institutional Memory

Ghana's oil discovery was marred by politicisation from the two major political parties in the country NDC and NPP. The governance processes were defined by partisan political contests and elite decision-making centralization leading to institutional discontinuity over different governments. The most vivid illustration of this was how the oil policy process became overtly politicised with both parties making claims that their administrations were responsible for setting up the basic policies before the oil was discovered in 2007. However, it is an undisputed fact that the PNDC laid the groundwork with a few laws for exploration to begin, and it was through the efforts of both sides that oil was discovered (with NPP leadership) in 2007. And it was during Prof. Mills' (NDC) administration that Ghana officially began producing oil in December 2010 (Graham

et al., 2016). The politics that took place during the early days of the oil discovery has also been described as the political capture of the process and loss of institutional memory and, in this regard, a member of the committee at the conference in his assessment of what had occurred observed:

I would also want to flag ...what I call the political capture of the processes. So, you had a situation where immediately after the oil discovery.... the president actually set up a desk at the presidency to lead on these processes (Key Informant Interview November 21, 2022).¹⁴

This meant that technocrats at the Ministry of Energy who were supposed to update the newly appointed ministers, and political heads did not have strong institutional memory to update them. This and the fact that oil and gas was a new endeavour caused a huge delay in the development of the governance framework when NPP lost the 2008 elections and handed over power to NDC in 2009. Theoretically, this represents a typical Neo-Gramscian contradiction: while the state purports to act in the national interest, the extent of its autonomy is limited serving as a site of elite contestation and struggles for partisan interest. Instead of functioning as an organic institution capable of aggregating popular demands the Ghanaian state was being used as a conduit for ruling coalitions to deliver partisan gains and obtain legitimacy from their party supporters (Gramsci, 1971).

4.2.4 Localised Demands: Chiefs and the Politics of Inclusion

The elite-driven narrative of Ghana's oil activities was accompanied by various grassroots voices and interests which emerged from social forces operating at the subnational level. The most prominent of these voices were those of the traditional authorities in the Western Region, where the physical deposits of the oil and the bulk of the activities of the industry were to be concentrated. The demands by the chiefs of the Western Region, as representatives of communities that had historically endured the externalities of the extractive sector, illustrate the contested character of

¹⁴ Interview #16

resource nationalism and the struggles over Ghana's petroleum windfall. The push by Western Region chiefs to have their region explicitly carved out as a beneficiary in Ghana's oil governance framework was both a territorial claim and a move for local legitimacy by non-elite social forces in a context of national economic prioritisation and elite policy capture. One key informant called this the "demand for local interest" (Key Informant Interview, December 12, 2022).¹⁵

Additionally, the chiefs argued that their region had long suffered from underdevelopment, and therefore, with the discovery of oil in their area, they deserved a direct stake in the revenues to support the region's development. They came together to write a petition to Ghana's parliament demanding 10% of the oil revenue for local development (Key Informant Interview, December 12, 2022).¹⁶ This demand can be seen as a manifestation of localised resource nationalism that articulates ownership not in the abstract national sense, but rather in the very real sense of the people who physically live on top of oil reserves. These demands by the chiefs were not an isolated or apolitical occurrence. Rather, their action mirrored a broader resurgence of regional consciousness and agency of traditional authorities within Ghana's political governance system. Research by Dotsey et al.(2024) and Akpalu (2025) suggest that traditional leaders in Ghana maintain strong influence in rural settings while bridging relationships between local populations and government officials. In this particular context, their mobilisation around the issue of oil revenues had both articulated a claim for inclusion in a given order and effort to redefine development claims within the confines of a political-economic order that was already hegemonic. Their agency, in other words, had to be understood as a negotiated claiming of voice rather than a break with the existing order of rule.

¹⁵ Interview #23

¹⁶ Interview #23

Furthermore, the intervention of the chiefs can be seen as an effort to broaden the power bloc to include non-elite and subnational actors. The call for inclusion in oil policy making functioned as both a critique of the elite technocracy within the initial framework and a counter-hegemonic move to adjust the distributional approach to the oil wealth. Although their demands were both valid and reasonable their real influence on policy formation and results remained very limited. The response of the state was more discursive than material: the ruling government (NPP) promised to introduce the “Accelerated Oil Capacity Development Programme” to develop local interest and skills in the oil and gas sector (Graham et al., 2016). Indeed, this was local forces in action seeking the interest of their region and by extension their local community. I delve into this in the chapter 6.

In sum, the mobilisation of chiefs in the Western Region illustrates how resource nationalism in Ghana is fragmented and uneven. It shows that the nationalist project of claiming ownership over the oil resources was not a uniform or unchallenged one but rather contested and negotiated across different levels of the political system. While the central government and its technocratic allies used the language of national interest to justify their policy choices, local actors in the resource region used the language of territorial justice and historical neglect to challenge their exclusion and demand a larger share of the oil benefits. These counter-claims received only partial accommodation because structural dynamics such as elite capture and centralized neoliberal policymaking limited their impact.

The early stage of the discovery of oil was met with a mixed bag of resource nationalism aspirations, political capture, and local demands on the sector. The nationalist discourse deployed by political elites masked centralised control over decision-making in the presidency by bypassing other institutions such as the Ministry of Energy. The consequence of this was a loss of institutional

memory, compounded by a weakening of technocratic governance over oil. On the other hand, there were localised demands by traditional authorities in the Western Region who sought a share of oil revenues for what can be read as a form of resource nationalism rooted in regional equity. These were only partially and symbolically addressed, speaking to the broader marginalisation of local demands in the policymaking process.

These internal dynamics were set against the structural constraints of Ghana's insertion in the global neoliberal order which, through decades of donor dependency, IMF conditionalities and the need to attract foreign investment, gave speed to oil commercialisation. Therefore, what became apparent is the formation of a new power bloc of political elites, technocrats, international capital, and state institutions, legitimised through nationalist discourse but underpinned by an imperative of investor-friendly reforms and an effective neutralisation of counter-hegemonic forces. Far from shattering the existing order, oil was subsumed into the existing logics of elite capture and structural dependence. Indeed, evidently, Ghana's resource nationalism reflects a deliberate attempt to assert sovereignty, yet its potential is limited by political elite complicity, external pressures and structural dependencies of the global capitalist hegemony. The next section examines the role of historical structures and the contributions of intellectuals in shaping the development of Ghana's oil sector.

4.3. Historical Structures and Intellectuals in Shaping the Oil Governance

4.3.1. Material Base: Oil Discovery and Dependencies

The NPP-led administration assuming office in 2001 under President Kufuor initiated several reforms which moved away from the NDC's statist approach to a more neoliberal mode in the extractive sector including the emerging oil sector to attract investors (Philips et al. 2016). This reform sought to increase the role of private sector in the extractive sector by reducing state control

and aligning the sector with global capitalist structures. Hence the discovery of oil and gas in Ghana was marked by entry of various MNCs and global institutions, which would ultimately shape the governance structures and the policy framework of the formative years. The emergence of oil represented both a new source of revenue and a continuation of existing economic dependency patterns. The oil discovery marked a transformation of the productive base which reconstituted the reconfiguration of class, institutional alignment and ideational structures of Ghana's political economy.

The preliminary developments in the sector were driven by Ghana's scarcity of capital and resources, which necessitated reliance on external actors. As one Member of Parliament explained: "We had to call on these global companies to support us. Yes, we had found oil, but we had limited capital, limited material resources, and limited human resource capacity to advance in the sector. We needed the oil money for development." (Key Informant Interview, April 10, 2023).¹⁷ This external dependency (i.e., structural dependency) and Ghana's capacity limitations were significant factors that shaped both the regulatory and developmental frameworks, as well as the ideological and institutional superstructures of oil and gas sector governance.

The oil discovery opened significant avenues for development but also exposed Ghana's vulnerabilities in the oil and gas sector, particularly its limited domestic financial capacity and technical expertise. As expressed by the member of parliament, Ghana's request for external support stemmed out from a necessity to help Ghana establish and monetise its newly found oil wealth. These international actors did not only bring money to invest in Ghana but their ideological biases and policy interest. One scholar aptly described the influx of these companies and

¹⁷ Interview #46

institutions as “global assemblages” which is the “interactions between and among Ghanaian state institutions and local politics, external global political economy and transnational companies and technologies” (Siakwah, 2017: 122). Within this assemblage, oil emerged as the new material base upon which the transnational power bloc anchored its hegemony comprising IOCs, IFIs, and domestic elites closely tied to donor networks and foreign capital.

The evolution of Ghana’s oil governance structure can be traced back to the material preconditions that existed before and during the initial stages of oil exploration and production. Ghana’s historical dependency on foreign capital that was foundational to the power bloc which dates back to the colonial extraction of cocoa and gold, continued in the early 2000s as a legacy of limited domestic capital and technological capacities. By the time of oil discovery in 2007, Ghana lacked the material conditions, including infrastructure, offshore drilling experience, and financial resources, to commercialize the oil find on its own. The dependency on foreign investment and technology was thus structurally reproduced. This created a material constraint which necessitated the involvement of IOCs, with Kosmos Energy and Tullow Oil being the most prominent partners at the time, later joined by ENI and others. These IOCs not only provided the necessary technical expertise and capital but also imported their policy preferences, such as production sharing agreements, fiscal stabilization clauses, and international arbitration, which were subsequently institutionalized into Ghana’s petroleum governance architecture (Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh, 2012; Ayelazuno and Graham, 2022).

This externally shaped governance structure was further complicated through donor-backed reforms supported by IFIs such as the World Bank and the IMF, as well as technical assistance from NORAD and the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI). These reform agendas promoted a host of best practice frameworks that included fiscal transparency, competitive

bidding, and revenue smoothing mechanisms, which were modelled after global governance blueprints such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) (Graham et al. 2019; Manteaw and Graham 2022). In practice, these frameworks limited the policy space for the state and promoted market-based rules of governance.

This demonstrates how material interests in this case, represented by a flow of foreign capital and technology, can impact the ideational and institutional superstructure, in the Ghanaian case, constraining policy autonomy. As pointed out by Cox (1981), the material conditions of (re)production like the entry of capital and technology provided by these external actors and global intuitions influenced the superstructure of ideas, norm, and institutions. In the Ghanaian oil and gas sector, the material base of foreign dependency on technology and capital gave birth to institutions, laws, and norms that reflected and upheld the development ideology underpinning neoliberalism, thus structuring the boundaries of possibility for a nationalist oil regime. The subordination of external actors in both investment and policy design in Ghana demonstrates how the country's oil governance structure was a historically conditioned to response to material dependencies embedded in a broader global capitalist order.

4.3.2. Role of Ideological Agents in Shaping Oil and Gas Governance

It is noteworthy to also discuss the critical role of other ideological agents in the policymaking and institutional processes. This included several influential ideational agents of capitalism ranging from donors, oil companies, and civil society organizations. These agents can be regarded as the ideational transmission belts of hegemony, because they transmit and entrench specific norms, institutions, and policy discourse in society, but not necessarily with the direct coercive power of the state. On the contrary, hegemony operates by way of the organisation of consent around shared ideational frames which naturalise the logic of the market as common sense

(Gramsci, 1971). In this respect, donors and corporate actors are akin to what Gramsci would have described as an extension of the “integral state”: the fusion of political and civil society through which dominant ideas and institutions are legitimised.

Some of these organisations such as the GIZ, UNDP, DFID, and the BWIs, and particularly the World Bank, were part of the planning and meetings at the early strategies of the oil discovery (Andrews and Siakwah, 2021). Although they do not have direct coercive power in the policy process, their support/interventions were ideologically anchored on a neoliberal institutional order. For example, in 2014, the World Bank contributed \$57.80 million to “help improve public management and regulatory capacity and enhance sector transparency” additionally to support indigenous skill development (World Bank, 2014). These supports are typically framed in “good governance” yet in the process, the policy conditions of most development aid promoted fiscal rules, competitive bidding, and private sector participation as the guiding principles for natural resource management (Abrahamsen, 2000). This is an example of passive revolution - a set of reforms that are advanced as progressive and developmental, but which are integral to the neoliberal restructuring of the state. These reforms not only stabilise the power of the elites and investor confidence, but they also channel demands for change into technocratic and managerial responses.

These institutions played a role as ideological agents presenting themselves as neutral apolitical experts whose main goal was to help Ghana make full use of its oil resources for development. Although they were all instrumental in the foundation of the oil and gas sector, one expert who was part of the preliminary meetings and discussion mentioned in retrospect that “they were all part of the neoliberal package which influenced several policies in the oil and gas sector”

(Key Informant Interview March 10, 2023).¹⁸ In his view, these global entities pursued their own interests, even though they presented them as being aligned with the interests of Ghanaians. He acknowledged that, in the early stages, it was difficult to discern their latent (hidden) interests, as their manifest interests appeared to focus on supporting the development of the emerging oil and gas sector. He further explained that these external factors listed above pushed for ideologies which aligned with those of the global capitalist bloc such as minimal state interventions and embedding market liberalisation in the governance framework of the oil sector (Key Informant Interview March 10, 2023).¹⁹

Furthermore, another expert mentioned that these policy experts through several financial support of their IFIs introduced policies which prioritise corporate efficiencies, profitability, and foreign direct investment at the expense of equity and local development (Key Informant Interview November 20, 2022).²⁰ This led to some tensions and ideological differences within the international community. For example, Norway pressed for a longer-term savings fund that focused on intergenerational equity (i.e., Norwegian model Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF), whereas the IMF pushed for a shorter-term spending focus and fiscal stabilization for macroeconomic reasons (i.e., the IMF raised concerns about Ghana's fiscal deficit and high inflation leading to their recommendation of a heritage fund and infrastructural investment). In the end, Ghana's PRMA became a kind of negotiated consensus between the two sides, with a stabilization fund as well as a future heritage fund for the long-term (Moss and Young, 2009). This reflects a certain degree of ideological heterogeneity even within the hegemonic bloc, as some global actors may have different priorities or strategies but within the same basic logic of capitalist

¹⁸ Interview #13

¹⁹ Interview #13

²⁰ Interview #12

expansion. These contradictions, thus, validate Gramsci's (1971) idea that hegemony is not a permanent state: on the contrary, it is constantly renegotiated through dialogue between forces in power.

The World Bank, DFID, NORAD together provided financial support for the oil and gas sector lobbying for competitive bidding for the oil bloc and transparency and accountability for oil and gas revenue (Key Informant Interview March 10, 2023).²¹ Another example is the PRMA, which was formulated under the strong influence of IFIs advocating fiscal transparency in line with global extractive sector standards, such as those promoted by the EITI (Gary, 2009; Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh, 2012).

Additionally, some IOCs were instrumental in lobbying for licensing reforms in the oil sector. A key informant mentioned that IOCs preferred direct negotiation compared with competitive bidding because it gave them access to the state officials limiting the public scrutiny (Key Informant Interview November 23, 2023).²² This demonstrates that these actors were ultimately pursuing their own interests. As Cox (1981) observed, the formation and functioning of states are shaped by multiple social forces and factors, which may not necessarily operate in the interest or welfare of the state.²³ Ghana serves as a demonstration of the creation of a transnational bloc which merges these forces to implement global accumulation strategies through national policy frameworks, illustrating how the integral state functions as an intermediary between international capital and internal political power. Although, CSOs and other transitional actors including the Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas (CSPOG) were instrumental in advocating

²¹ Interview #13

²² Interview #58

²³ I followed up with some of the IOCs on my interview list to hear their view on this, but all effort were unsuccessful. Two of the IOCs I contacted mentioned all their information are on their website and that they could not give me any information beyond their websites.

transparency, accentuality and governance reforms in the oil and gas sector (Debrah and Graham, 2015; Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh, 2012). Many of these actors were aligned with transnational advocacy groups such as Oxfam America and Publish What You Pay (PWYP), which sponsored their activities and operated within the broader neoliberal global hegemonic structures.

While transnational collaborations provide essential technical and financial support to local CSOs which amplifies their advocacy voice and influence, they also paradoxically integrate these civil society actors into more covert governance structures aligned with Western donor priorities and global transparency standards. To be sure, their interactions with donors should not simply be discarded as purely neoliberal co-optation; rather, they can more precisely be understood as a battleground for contestation and strategic engagement. PWYP, for instance, staunchly advocated for competitive bidding for oil block allocation in the name of equity and transparency. However, as confirmed by informants, this approach is also complicit in a donor-driven model of good governance that emphasizes technocratic and short-term solutions without fundamentally addressing structural change (Key Informant Interview, November 16, 2022).²⁴ This view was confirmed by all the Key Informants Interview from CSOs in the oil and gas sector. Indeed, this illustrates how global governance norms were projected onto Ghana in ways that shaped and influenced domestic oil and gas policies. In this regard, even as CSOs and their transnational allies countered opacity and elite capture, their advocacy was also shaped by the same ideational and material dependencies that structured the broader resource governance. This highlights the importance of interrogating the positionality of civil society in Ghana's oil sector, not necessarily as a counter-hegemonic force in itself but rather as a site of hybridity between advocacy, dependency, and institutional limitation. As both agents of change and conduits for hegemonic

²⁴ Interview #2

norms to facilitate policy and practice, these actors can be viewed as simultaneously enabling and constraining the democratization and diversification of the resource governance framework.

In conclusion, it is worth reiterating that even as international donors and corporations played a big role in the ideological construction of Ghana's oil and gas governance from above, the domestic media, civil society, and experts operated within a much weaker social space and were largely confined to policy advocacy within the existing hegemonic limits. The outcome was a form of institutional façade democracy, characterized by reforms and nominal participation in policymaking and oversight processes, yet ultimately subordinated to the material interests and ideational power of transnational corporations and the broader project of neoliberal capitalism. This was an example of what Gramsci described as the more consensual aspects of hegemony in modern capitalism the ability to make the subaltern consent to their own domination through mass acceptance of ideology, values, and institutions that reflect the worldview and interests of dominant social groups (Gramsci, 1971). In this regard Ghana's oil and gas governance exemplifies how integral state fuses coercion and consent by embedding global neoliberal logic within domestic policy structures while portraying the image of sovereignty and participatory governance. Next, I discuss national policy framework and elite complicity.

4.4. The National Policy Framework and Political Elite Complicity: Aligning Sovereignty Amidst Global Pressures

4.4.1. Background and Discourses on National Policy Framework

An important discussion during the oil discovery centred on the establishment of the right legal and institutional frameworks and the revision of old laws or policies to ensure that Ghana benefited from the sector. Although the rhetoric emphasized national ownership, transparency, and accountability, the policy environment was instead marked by contestation among competing

power blocs balancing nationalist aspirations, elite agendas, and global governance pressures. Ghana's efforts to establish a robust oil governance framework revealed the influence of multiple forces including local elites, global capital, historical patterns of state formation, and national aspirations for oil-driven development. In other words, these interactions were not a neutral policy process; they were a hegemonic project in formation, an attempt to weld elite consent to a neoliberal model of resource governance while defusing radical or redistributive alternatives.

Moreover, the discussion about Ghana's oil resources reflects a technocratic perspective similar to historical development models which regard natural resources as a base for industrial advancement. While Nkrumah's ISI approach employed state power to build productive independence through industrialization, Ghana's oil policy combines industrial planning with principles of market-based economics. This hybrid approach can be described as a fundamental feature of the integral state which is a fusion of state authority with civil society and political elite participations backed by global capitalist interest which is presented as a nationalist discourse. The question persists whether those in power can reestablish sovereignty over resource value chains to channel excess profits toward diversification through neoliberal systems instead of statist approaches.

It is worth noting that Ghana did not have a national oil policy where all policies related to the oil and gas sectors are found. However, there are several other policies and laws that were put in place which capture various aspects of the oil and gas sector. The government had already invested in the legal, institutional, and regulatory framework that would allow for oil exploration and production. The country's policy framework was an incremental construction, adapting to the oil sector's development through a combination of laws, some formulated before first oil and others after, in a patched rather than planned manner. These include PNDC Laws 64, 84, and 88

during the 1980s (Ghebremusse, 2014); Energy Commission Act (Act 541, 1997), National Petroleum Authority Act (Act 691, 2005), Petroleum Commission Act (Act 821, 2010), among others (Chambers and Partners, 2023). As one key informant and member of parliament succinctly put it, “in our anticipation of a prospective oil find, parliament over the years passed all these laws, indeed we were hopeful of finding oil” (Key Informant Interview, May 8, 2023).²⁵

This laying of laws both prior to and after the first discovery indicated not only a certain degree of institutional weakness in Ghana but also a space of elite contestation. At the time of the first oil discovery in 2007, the most comprehensive policy document, the National Energy Policy (2010), had not been published. This was another clear indication of elites’ reactionary approach instead of cautiously going through the process of oil governance policy formulation. While this policy contained laudable policy goals such as transparency, environmental sustainability, and responsible use of oil revenues for social and economic development, the policy was premised on foreign investor promotion as well. This included a commitment to regularize the regulatory environment, remove restrictions that impede liberal trade and investment regimes, and even the regular review of the Model Petroleum Agreement to sustain investor interest (Ministry of Energy, 2010a: 16).

This shows how Ghana’s elite constructed legitimacy within the hegemonic order by presenting developmental goals through neoliberal terminologies of “good governance” and “transparency”. It also betrays the underlying uncertainty that characterized policymaking at the time as well as the limits of state sovereignty. The deepening of pre-existing integration into global markets was an important driver of the oil regime. While political elites and policymakers’ public

²⁵ Interview #47

discourse and politics leaned heavily on resource nationalism (with the reference to Article 21 in the 1992 constitution that states that all minerals are the inalienable property of the people of Ghana), the implementation of the overall policy borrowed heavily from global norms, particularly those of the BWIs and transparency advocacy organizations such as the EITI. The PRMA, a key legislation in the sector, embodied both nationalist and neoliberal elements. It established institutions and regulations to limit elite capture of oil rents (as elaborated on in subsequent sections). It was also infused with macroeconomic stabilization rules that have long been the priority of the IMF and its structural adjustment conditionalities (Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh, 2012; Ghebremusse, 2014).

The elite framing of the policy process also undercut wider participation and ensured domestic contestation of elite control over oil resources. An important factor in this regard was the centralisation of decision-making authority on oil to the presidency rather than the Ministry of Energy, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The absence of a single comprehensive policy document (in the form of a National Oil Policy) on oil, and elite control of the decision-making over resources, coupled with the lack of strong technical expertise within the ministries also impaired coherent long-term thinking and planning. As such, these gaps left room for foreign and domestic actors to explore. These institutional and ideological contradictions indicated highlight the messy nature of post-oil discovery oil governance. Far from being a technical or legal instrument, the legal and institutional framework that came to shape oil in Ghana was a process in and of itself and a site of negotiation of power and agency among elite actors, transnational capital, and regulatory institutions.

It is in this sense that we can say that Ghana's oil governance framework was not the result of a nationalist vision but rather the outcome of a contested and negotiated set of institutions,

practices, and regulatory measures. It was not necessarily part of a grand neoliberal project but rather reflected a set of elite calculations about how to balance popular demands for control over the resource with domestic and external forces, including the need to integrate into international economic system. Ghana's post-oil discovery governance emerged from elite consent to neoliberal norms and practices, constituting part of a broader hegemonic project in which adherence to such rules and acceptance of the accompanying social relations secured continued access to capital and international legitimacy. In essence, this was the consolidation of a new power bloc: one that fuses political authority, technocratic rationality, and transnational finance under the guise of developmental nationalism. Yet resource nationalism advocated by both political elites and policy circles was used as a symbol to manage public expectations, and attempts at dissent, while pushing through an agenda that was often more reactive to external constraints than proactive or forward-looking. The next section is an analysis of some of the most relevant laws which were subjected to the contractions of the Ghanaian integral state which emanated from the oil and gas sector.

4.4.2. Overview of the Legal, institutional and fiscal framework²⁶

4.4.2.1. Petroleum Exploration and Production law (PNDC Law 84)

4.4.2.1.1. Importance, Timing and Scope

PNDC Law 84 was first passed in 1984 under the Rawlings PNDC regime. It was among the very first governance laws providing a legal architecture for the oil and gas industry, regulating everything from exploration and exploitation, to ownership, safety, and decommissioning. PNDC Law 84 was, in this regard, one of the most sophisticated petroleum laws in the early years of Ghana's extractive sector governance. Enacted several decades before Ghana's eventual

²⁶ In essence, all the legal institutional frameworks in Ghana's oil and gas sector, at least on paper, have a strong feature of resource nationalism which corroborates the three core features outlined by Haslam and Heidrich (2016: 225) namely (i) Maximization of public revenue, (ii) Assertion of strategic control over the sector and (iii) Enhance Developmental spillovers from extractive projects.

commercial oil find in 2007, this law structured the form of early petroleum agreements and foreign investment in Ghana's oil and gas industry. By balancing nationalist impulses with a desire for integration into the global oil economy, PNDC Law 84 served to both protect the public interest and signal openness to external capital (Ainuson, 2015).

PNDC Law 84 gave the GNPC a near-exclusive mandate to explore for and produce oil, while also creating space for private and foreign oil companies to access petroleum resources through contractual agreements with the state. Subcontractors were also recognised by the law and were able to access upstream oil and gas space through the umbrella of the main agreement holder, without any direct government relationship (Ainuson, 2015). This structure was a testament to the GNPC and the PNDC government's understanding of their technical and capital limitations as well as their desire to accommodate private and foreign companies from the very beginning of the oil and gas industry.

This law covered almost all aspects of the petroleum value chain and is the basis on which negotiations for petroleum agreements are made. The law specifies that no person or entity can conduct exploration and exploitation activities in the country without an agreement with the government of Ghana, with GNPC as the only exception to this rule. A "person" under the Petroleum Law is the same as a contractor or sub-contractor which is defined under the law as any person, firm, body corporate or other entity that has entered into a petroleum agreement with the government of Ghana. Under the law, any subcontractor that enters into a contract with the main agreement holder is not obliged to enter into an agreement with the government of Ghana, but they are enjoined with the main agreement holder who has an agreement with the government of Ghana (Ainuson, 2015).

The passage of PNDC Law 84 can be understood, through a historical materialist lens, as a manifestation of the dialectical relationship between the post-colonial state's developmentalist aspirations and the structural economic dependencies produced by the colonial relationship. The PNDC's legal architecture during its brief rule belied a statist, nationalist vision. Its concessions to international capital, however, presaged the trajectory of the 1990s and 2000s, and suggested how dependent Ghana was on global oil capital. Indeed, PNDC Law 84 legalised and entrenched an early stage of a state capital alliance a "power bloc" that wedded domestic political power to international oil capital. The law was the outcome of the Rawlings regime's effort to build hegemony using legal means that married nationalist discourse with pragmatic accommodation to international capital, and it thus embodied an early stage of passive revolution: reform from above that forestalled more fundamental transformation and co-opted potential opposition.

4.4.2.1.2. Process of Construction

PNDC Law 84 was not the product of any grand consultative process with civil society, academia, or local communities with an interest in the governance of Ghana's upstream sector. Instead, it was an executive and cabinet-led affair, consistent with the executive power concentration of the PNDC's military rule. The law was the product of an elite, top-down, technocratic approach to the passage of legislation and had minimal participation from the citizenry. Due to the failure to find oil within decades of the law's passage, PNDC Law 84 went largely untested until the commercial discovery of oil in 2007. When oil was finally discovered, the state's need to immediately start production meant that the law was never fully reformed or updated considering developments in global good governance for the industry. As a result, several of the law's articles had not been reviewed for several decades and were not in alignment with the global trend towards transparency, environmental protection, and competitive bidding.

A key informant who participated in the Oil and Gas Development Conference of 2010 described to that “ PNDC Law 84 was not fit for purpose,” (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).²⁷ The informant, described the states’ experience of dealing with oil companies like Kosmos Energy and ExxonMobil, and the regulatory and governance lacunae they encountered, specifically the lack of legal provisions for penalties if a third party used confidential and proprietary data without permission. At the time, the informant explained that “sharing of data was happening left, right and centre; there was no sanction for sharing of data. If you were drilling and you see the data and you use it to move your company forward, there was no penalty” (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).²⁸ Therefore, the technocratic and elitist form of law-making and the lack of popular participation expose the coercive consensual duality of the integral state: the exercise of authority by decree and its legitimisation through the efficient and developmental promise. In this way PNDC Law 84 showed how hegemony is not only consolidated through violence but also through institutions that naturalise elite domination and depoliticise resistance.

4.4.2.1.3. Resulting Legal Content and Impact

The PNDC Law 84 remained the primary legal framework for Ghana’s upstream petroleum sector until the passing of the E&P Act in 2016. It served as the basis for the GNPC to act as the commercial arm of the state and provided the legal basis for the state to partner with MNCs in the oil and gas industry. The law did not, however, offer much clarity on data disclosure requirements, environmental fines, or the licensing process and procedures, among other things, leaving the state at the mercy of the oil companies. The most impactful legal tenets of PNDC Law 84 were that no

²⁷ Interview #17

²⁸ Interview #17

petroleum activity could take place without a contract or agreement with the state (other than by the GNPC itself) and that the government recognised both “contractors” and “subcontractors” as types of legal entity in the oil and gas sector. At the same time, the government was never able to fully test the weaknesses of the old law before finally replacing it in 2016.

In one of the more cynical critiques of the state’s sequence of petroleum governance laws, one key informant mentioned that “the PRMA should have been passed after the E&P Act and not the other way around” (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).²⁹ The order in which petroleum governance and revenue management laws were passed, by pushing for the passage of the PRMA over the rigorous review of Law 84 for upstream production of petroleum, did not make sense to most experts interviewed but some of the gaps would only be filled out later in the E&P Act passed in 2016. This order of legalization was consistent with the neoliberal logic of governance that the IFIs were advocating: build fiscal and investor confidence first, and industrial policy second. This further entrenched the hegemony of transnational capital in Ghana's legal architecture and legitimized the state's role as a facilitator of rather than challenger to global hegemony.

4.4.2.1.4. Critical Assessment

PNDC Law 84 can be criticised as a display of contradiction of nationalists/populist rhetorics and exacerbating structural dependency. The law was, on the one hand, able to formally and explicitly entrench state sovereignty over natural resources. On the other hand, the very same legal architecture and legal content accorded a great deal of discretionary and interpretive space for elites. As a tool for integrating Ghana into the global oil economy, it privileged international

²⁹ Interview #17

capital and its interests, over development especially when Ghana found oil in 2007. This situation reflects the integral state's contradictory balance of coercion and consent: asserting sovereignty symbolically while embedding dependence materially

The lack of an emphasis on competitive bidding rather than direct negotiation with oil companies granted great deal of discretionary powers to the executive branch of the state and left the process open to political manipulation and opacity (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).³⁰ The establishment of an office at the presidency for oil related matters without going through the Ministry of Energy in Ghana created a gap for adequate institutional checks and balances. As Cox (1981) would have it, these legal and institutional arrangements reflected an underlying balance of power. In this case, PNDC Law 84 institutionalised a power bloc composed of political elites, technocrats and foreign investors, which was defined by the common sense and logic of resource extraction for the purposes of state revenue. Furthermore, PNDC law 84 can be seen as an example of passive revolution within Ghana's extractive sector through elite-driven reforms that aimed at modernisation and legitimisation of their power without altering the economy's subservience to international capital.

The failure of the state to pass a new law to replace PNDC Law 84 even after oil was discovered, and the subsequent delay of a replacement act until 2016, speaks to the allure of the race for oil wealth. That the government prioritised the passage of laws concerning the management of oil revenues (such as the early passage of the PRMA) before it had legal clarity on the production of oil, speaks to a significant contradiction in the state's legal apparatus, and the power asymmetry between the state and IOCs.

³⁰ Interview #17

In conclusion, while PNDC Law 84 was a forward-looking framework for its time, the lack of transparency and checks in its provisions, the outdated legal content and its lack of alignment with global good practices and norms in the extractive sector, as well as its facilitation of elite and corporate capture of oil, point to its role as a double-edged sword. It asserted state sovereignty in theory but eroded it in practice. While its replacement in 2016 was much needed and long overdue, the basic architecture of the upstream sector and the first legal architecture of the state in the oil industry had by then already been defined by the imperatives of global capital. It was such limitation that allowed Kosmos to escape major legal penalties after the oil spillage in 2009. The committee established to investigate the spillage found that Komos was negligent and at fault, yet Komos refused to pay the fine of GH¢40 million (¢400 billion - old Ghana cedis) arguing it was illegal (Key Informant Interview, May 8, 2023).³¹

4.4.2.2. Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act, 2016 (Act 919) and Petroleum (Exploration and Production – Health Safety Environment) Regulations 2017 (LI 2258)

4.4.2.2.1. *Importance, Timing and Scope*

The Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act, 2016 (Act 919) marked a great moment in Ghana's petroleum legislation, replacing the PNDC Law 84. The urgency of the reform was driven by the recognition that the old legal framework was ill-suited for the complexities and commercial realities of twenty-first-century oil production (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).³² By the time of its enactment, Ghana had been producing oil for close to six years, governed by a regulatory framework widely considered legally flimsy and prone to capture by MNCs.

³¹ Interview #47

³² Interview #17

The main aim of the E&P law is to make sure that oil resources are exploited in a sustainable, secure and efficient manner and for the state to gain maximum benefits from petroleum extraction. Conditions and requirements needed to issue licences for activities in the upstream petroleum sector are also spelt out in the law as well as the powers of the energy minister and all state agencies that operate within the sector (Chambers and Partners, 2023).

The 2016 Act, therefore, set out to consolidate the state's regulatory hold over upstream petroleum activities and institute a more transparent, accountable, and environmentally sustainable regime. The Act's companion legislation, Legislative Instrument (L.I) 2258 in 2017, zeroed in on the environmental, health, and safety dimensions of petroleum operations. Together, the legislative package sought to modernise Ghana's legal architecture, not only to lure in investment but also to reassure both local and international observers that Ghana could effectively and responsibly govern its oil wealth (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).³³ However, the timing of the legislation almost six years after first oil suggests important political and ideological undercurrents. The delay in reforming the legislative architecture was a product of the structural incoherence that is induced in a late developing state that finds itself suddenly rich in oil. The law took several years because the new legal framework for oil had to be built up over time, and because successive governments prioritised immediate revenue generation over the long-term integrity of oil governance. This time-lag problem is indicative of the contradictions of an integral state pulled between the need to reassert its resource sovereignty and the need to accommodate the structural constraints of the global capitalist system.

³³ Interview #17

4.4.2.2.2. Process of Construction

The process that resulted into the passage of Act 919 was one of intense negotiation between the state, IFIs, donor agencies, and corporate interests (Key Informant Interview April 10, 2023).³⁴ Consultations with civil society and the oil-producing communities did take place, but they were largely consultative rather than collaborative, with the ultimate decisions reflecting an elite consensus and external policy prescriptions (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).³⁵ The legislative process was heavily influenced by Ghana's need to align with international transparency norms like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), as well as by technical assistance from institutions such as the World Bank and NORAD (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).³⁶ According to Andrews and Siakwah (2021), these institutions were key ideological agencies in Ghana's petroleum policy trajectory through their funding, policy advice, and advocacy for market liberalisation. The influence of these external agencies and ideas is clear in the Act's emphasis on competitive bidding, enhanced ministerial powers, and detailed environmental compliance requirements.

While the state retained official control and ownership over oil resources, the broad regulatory thrust was one of investor accommodation to make sure that Ghana's legal regime is one that provides "investor confidence" (Abrahamsen, 2000; Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023³⁷). This is the same language found in the MOE's 2010 Policy Document on Ghana's Petroleum Industry (Ministry of Energy, 2010a). This language belies a deep accommodation of

³⁴ Interview #46

³⁵ Interview #17

³⁶ Interview #17

³⁷ Interview #17

international standards, embedded in the domestic policy process to court capital rather than prioritise distributive justice or developmental transformation.

4.4.2.2.3. Resulting Legal Content and Impact

Act 919 brought about a more structured licensing regime and formalised the use of competitive bidding processes for awarding petroleum contract over discretionary contract. The powers of the Minister of Energy, the PC, and other agencies were more clearly spelt out to limit the scope for executive discretion and arbitrariness (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).³⁸ The Act also beefed up data confidentiality provisions and addressed fiscal terms, local content, and dispute resolution, among others. LI 2258 provided for mandatory health, safety, and environment (HSE) standards to be observed in the conduct of petroleum operations. The HSE management plan was to be endorsed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (Ainuson, 2015). The EPA was also given authority to verify Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports prepared by companies and permit their operations subject to compliance with laws and conditions to be specified in a time-bound manner. The Act also provided for public participation through EPA-led public hearings in oil-affected communities. This process, at least in theory, was an avenue for local communities to be part of the regulatory processes that impact their lives and livelihoods (Key Informant Interview, May 8, 2023).³⁹

The formalisation of public participation in LI 2258 was a marked improvement on its predecessor. It is a legal recognition of the public's rights with respect to the operations of the oil and gas industry in the country. However, in practice, the public's actual role and influence in

³⁸ Interview #17

³⁹ Interview #47

these processes remain limited by the poor enforcement and sanctioning powers of the EPA, as well as the performative nature of these public hearings (Ainuson, 2015).

4.4.2.2.4. Critical Assessment

The passage of Act 919 and LI 2258 can be viewed, as a testament to the consolidation of a power bloc favourable to global neoliberal governance. Superficially, the legislation represented a move to increase Ghanaian sovereignty, transparency, and accountability over oil resources. However, closer scrutiny reveals the continued accommodation of global investors' interests and a deepening of the country's integration into the global capitalist system.

The focus on protecting investors, ensuring competitive licensing, and technocratic state oversight, all while giving in to specific demands and concessions from oil corporations (sectoral fiscal incentives, environmental waivers, priority visas) speaks to the stabilisation of a power bloc whose membership cut across international donors, IFIs, local technocrats, and political elites. This stabilisation of a common hegemony was achieved, as is the case with any hegemony, both through coercive institutions (extractive regulatory laws and fiscal incentives) and consensual ideologies of "good governance", efficiency, and transparency values (Abrahamsen, 2000). All these have global acceptance but are less critical or more radical or redistributive in nature.

While the public was included in this governance process, at least in principle, through environmental hearings, actual decision-making power was not devolved. The deep structures the limited technical capacity, fiscal dependency on foreign loans, and the broader ideological accommodation with neoliberalism continued to structure the oil governance logic of the state, continuing to constrain its transformative potential and subordinating its national priorities to global capital accumulation. In other words, Act 919 and LI 2258, while marking legal and

institutional progress and maturity, also reproduce existing power imbalances. Their technocratic sophistication hides deeper political-economic constraints that militate against true sovereignty. In essence, Act 919 presents not a rupture but a re-articulation of hegemony working through the Ghanaian integral state. On paper it modernised Ghana's oil sector, while in practice it's a reproduction of material and ideological relations that sustains dependency. The law must thus be read not simply as a governance tool but as a product of historically constituted class forces, ideological struggles, and the shifting configurations of global hegemony.

4.4.2.3. Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (PRMA) (Act 815)

4.4.2.3.1. Importance, Timing and Scope

The PRMA enacted in 2011 was significant since it was the first detailed law to regulate the receipt, allocation, investment and use of oil revenues. Passing this law under the notion of urgency reflected a confluence of pressures, the interest of political elites of revenue maximization, the global policy climate advocating for transparency and fiscal disciplines and Ghanaian civil society strict monitoring of the new sector (Debrah and Graham, 2015; Panford, 2017). Situated within the broader framework of the state's resource nationalist agenda, the PRMA represented an early and high-profile attempt to not replicate the sectoral governance challenges of mining, which was characterised by the absence of a dedicated fiscal management law (Key Informant Interview, April 5, 2023).⁴⁰

One key informant described the Act as an instrument for strategic control over oil rents channelling them for national development; in his words, "the spirit of the law was for Ghana to make use of oil rent for development" (Key Informant Interview April 10, 2023).⁴¹ This aligns

⁴⁰ Interview #42

⁴¹ Interview #46

with the AMV's principle of resource-based development through value addition and the creation of linkages (AMV, 2009: 13). It also meets one of the core tenets of resource nationalism "revenue maximization" as pointed out by Haslam and Heidrich (2016). Indeed, the oil discovery pushed both state and other stakeholders to draft this law which has been said to be one of the most comprehensive oil revenue management acts in Africa having prominent international best practices and meeting international standards at least on paper (Panford, 2017). Nonetheless, a critical review of the practice of the law reveals several flaws and limitations making the attainment of the spirit of the law nearly impossible.

4.4.2.3.2. Process of Construction

The construction process of the PRMA was characterised by a relatively broad and inclusive set of consultative processes, including inputs from parliamentarians, civil society groups, technocrats, and other stakeholders. CSOs like the Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas (CSPOG) played an instrumental role in this process, pushing for fiscal transparency and savings (Key Informant Interview, July 31, 2023).⁴² These CSOs conducted nationwide consultative processes on the proposed law, which eventually informed its construction, as in the case of the Stabilisation and Heritage Funds provisions (Key Informant Interview, July 31, 2023).⁴³ However, the process and end-result also reflect the imprints of global governance norms espoused by IFIs and bilateral donors (Abrahamsen 2000). The influence of institutions like the World Bank, which

⁴² Interview #18

⁴³ Interview #18

has been involved in offering technical advice to the Ministry of Finance on fiscal policy in Ghana, was evident (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).⁴⁴

Consequently, while the PRMA has domestic origins, it was also shaped by the interventions of transnational actors whose role speaks to Ghana's integration in the global neoliberal order. This hybridity between domestic consultation and external policy disciplining highlights the practice of the integral state: a situation whereby civil and political society are integrated through expert knowledge, donor support and legal design to structure consent for a fiscally conservative rent management regime. In this regard, the PRMA is a product of both domestic statecraft and site of negotiations between resource sovereignty aspirations and global hegemonic imperatives.

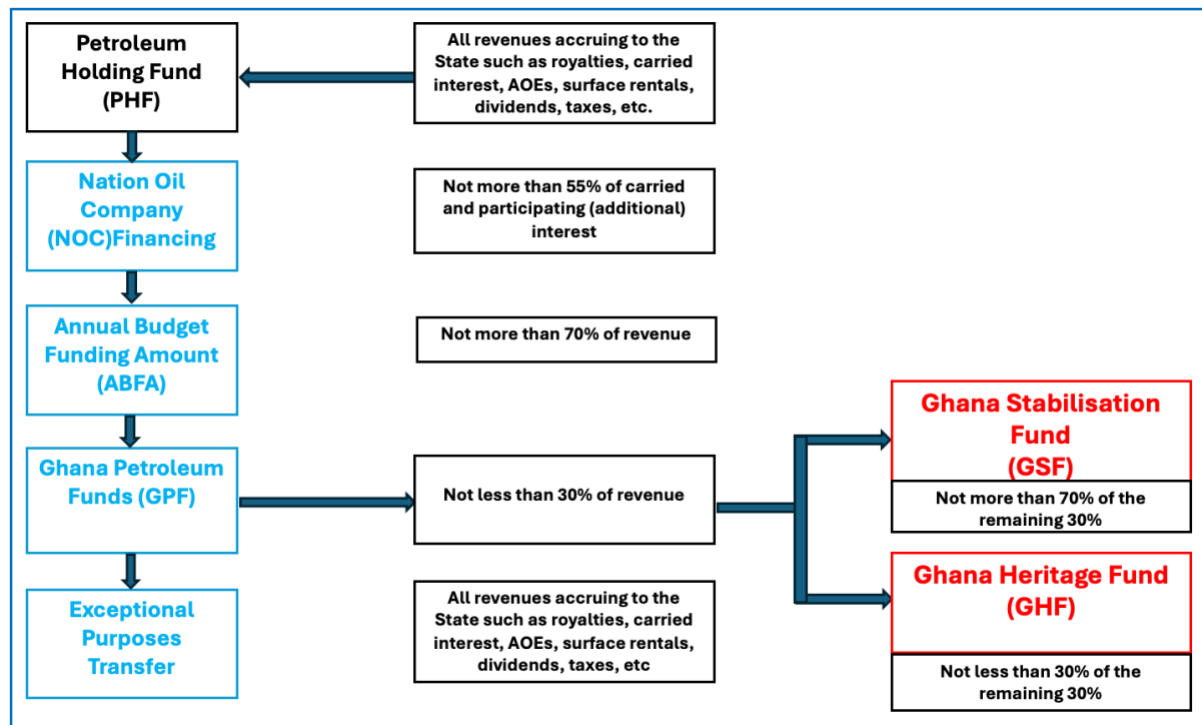
4.4.2.3.3. Resulting Legal Content and Impact

The PRMA has the goal of revenue maximisation and strategic control of Ghana's oil revenue. It governs how revenues from the extraction and sale of the country's oil reserves are utilised and managed. It clearly dictates how the incomes due to the country should be received and distributed. The petroleum holding fund is the first account into which all oil and gas receipts flow into before they are distributed to all other channels including the stabilisation fund and the heritage fund (Chambers and Partners, 2023). Some important aspects of the PRMA 815 include a transparent process for the transfer of funds from oil and gas receipts between the Bank of Ghana and government. A clear provision in the PRMA is the compulsory annual transfer of 30% of all sums of oil revenues into the sovereign wealth fund and stabilisation fund. The finance ministry is

⁴⁴ Interview #17

also compelled by the PRMA law to publish a report on all petroleum revenues received by the government and the expenditures made quarterly. Multiple audits are conducted on all accounts that receive funds from oil and gas revenues and there is also Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) that acts as an independent watchdog not affiliated to the government and tasked with keeping a close eye on what government does with funds received from oil revenues and how it is complying with laws that govern oil and gas resources (Debrah and Graham, 2015).

Figure 1 Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (PRMA) Revenue Allocations



Source: author's creation with data from (PIAC, 2023b).

The PRMA has two kinds of spending with the first spending being that of the GNPC with spending by the central government being the second. Government spending normally has to do with the funding amount from the annual budget. How much money GNPC can spend from oil revenues depends on its equity financing required to produce oil blocks plus a part not going

beyond 55% of net carried and participating interest. The law maintains that an upper ceiling of 70% of all annual oil and gas receipts minus equity financing cost of GNPC (referred to as benchmark values as shown in figure 1) shall be transferred to the budget that is the Annual Budget Funding Amount (ABFA). The law then directs that the remaining 30% of the oil and gas revenues be distributed into the Heritage Fund and Stabilisation Fund (see figure 1). The evidence corroborates the claim that resource nationalism emphasizes enhancing developmental spillovers (Haslam and Heidrich, 2016: 1).

The Heritage Fund and Stabilisation Fund provisions of the law apply only during periods of oil production. Once oil revenues are depleted, however, the law stipulates that the ABFA should be equivalent to the real returns generated from the assets of these two funds. The stabilisation fund serves as a cushion for the budget if price volatility in the markets cause revenue shortfalls. The Heritage Fund is regarded as an endowment that can only be accessed once the nation's oil and gas resources are exhausted, serving as a mechanism to ensure intergenerational equity (Ackah, 2016; Kankam and Ackah, 2014). One respondent from the field mentioned that the introduction of the Heritage Fund had a resource nationalist agenda seeking to save for future generations (Key Informant Interview, January 5, 2023).⁴⁵ Another respondent mentioned that:

The Heritage Fund and Stabilisation Fund were all based on community and national engagement which were spearheaded by civil society groups across the 10 regions of Ghana at the time of oil discovery...CSOs pushed hard for a Sovereign Wealth Funds (Key Informant Interview, July 31, 2023).⁴⁶

In essence, the legal architecture of the PRMA, then, points to the twinned logic of resource nationalism as domestic sovereignty assertion and neoliberal conformity to global norms of

⁴⁵ Interview #72

⁴⁶ Interview #18

transparency and fiscal prudence. However, this dualism has sometimes generated tensions and inconsistencies in the practical implementation of the Act.

4.4.2.3.4. Critical Assessment

Analytically, the PRMA can be seen as an example of how legal and institutional forms can reflect the ideological terrain of a power bloc attempting to mediate between local aspirations and the transnational interest. While the PRMA represents a domestically constituted attempt at control over the extractive rent, the process and content of the PRMA is also intertwined with global norms of transparency, macroeconomic savings, and stabilisation logic that point to the hegemonic and consensual dimensions of neoliberal governance.

On the one hand, the PRMA could be seen as a realisation of a nationalist vision for using oil rents for national development, infrastructure, and social welfare, as is evidenced by increased education expenditure from ABFA (GBN, 2025). The savings aspect of the law also fulfils longer-term social objectives around intergenerational justice and economic resilience. Civil society actors have been keen to point out these achievements as a victory of popular accountability mechanisms hard-won after the post-2007 oil-on-shore mobilisations and advocacies (Key Informant Interview, July 27, 2023).⁴⁷

On the other hand, the PRMA's very framing, as a technocratic instrument of macroeconomic management and control, also places it firmly in the ideological universe of the IFIs. While this has the advantage of predictability, transparency, and efficiency (thus pleasing external investors), it also places strict limits on the degree to which the Ghanaian state can exercise its fiscal sovereignty, particularly in a crisis. For example, during the recent COVID-19

⁴⁷ Interview #52

pandemic, public outrage greeted proposals to access the Heritage Fund for additional budgetary allocations (Key Informant Interview, July 27, 2023).⁴⁸

In addition, despite the law's provision for citizen oversight by PIAC, this body's actual enforcement powers are weak, making accountability highly dependent on political will. The prioritisation of formal and technocratic mechanisms of transparency and efficiency at the expense of deeper issues of redistributive justice have led some commentators to argue that the PRMA, for all its sophistication, has not significantly challenged the structural inequality of Ghanaian society or the enclave nature of its oil economy.

In conclusion the PRMA can be viewed as the outcome of Ghana's attempt to institutionalise a form of resource nationalism that fits within the parameters of the global capitalist order. It neither upsets the existing global order nor provides insulation for Ghana against external pressures. Instead, it is a product of the strategic accommodation of the Ghanaian state and its dominant classes to the governance needs of domestic developmentalism, within a governance framework strongly marked by the influence of international norms, an elite consensus on key issues, and popular advocacy. As such, the PRMA reveals the compromises and contradictions of a semi-peripheral, aid-dependent state trying to manage and govern oil wealth. In other words, the PRMA embodies a re-articulated hegemony: this revenue regime achieves legitimacy by promoting transparency and savings but keeps control over fiscal strategies directed toward transnational capital interests.

⁴⁸ Interview #52

4.4.2.4. Ghana NOC Act 1983 (PNDC Law 64)

4.4.2.4.1. Importance, Timing and Scope

GNPC was established by the PNDC law 64 in 1983 before Ghana found significant oil in 2007⁴⁹, it was set up to manage the state's hydrocarbon resources which includes finding, exploiting and producing. Furthermore, by law GNPC is allowed to encourage the exploitation of Ghana's hydrocarbon resources by other firms and GNPC is responsible for managing the government's share of petroleum resources exploited by others. By the PNDC law 64, GNPC was not only a commercial entity but also played a regulatory role. This would later change when in 2010 a new law was passed to create the PC that would separate regulatory duties from commercial ones. The deliberations that came up during the earlier days of the discovery was to separate the role of GNPC as both a regulator and participator in the oil and gas sector.

The choice to vest the GNPC with both commercial and regulatory powers was clearly intended to advance statist and resource nationalist ideas and goals, aligning with the state-centred vision of post-colonial development prevalent in Ghana at the time. This approach under the Rawlings regime in 1983 envisioned the state at the helm of industrializing the country and managing its natural resources for national development, as opposed to a more liberal view of the state as a facilitator. This was like Nkrumah's' ISI mode in the post independent era. PNDC Law 64 also had the express purpose of allowing the GNPC to actively participate and encourage private investment in upstream petroleum operations, in partnership with IOCs (Ainuson, 2015). This clearly hybrid mandate as a quasi-regulator and potential market participant from its inception was

⁴⁹ The establishment of GNPC demonstrates that Ghana had resource nationalists features even before substantial oil discovery in 2007, as indicated in the features of resource nationalism - “ (iii) assertion of strategic control over the sector” (Haslam and Heidrich, 2016: 225). It is through the NOC that one can assert strategic control in the sector.

critical to understanding the role of GNPC in shaping the state's upstream oil governance in its early years.

4.4.2.4.2. Process of Construction

GNPC's legal framework was part of the larger politico-economic milieu of the PNDC in the early 1980s. The PNDC, a military junta led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, took control in a period of economic crisis and was ideologically nationalist, seeking to reassert state authority over key sectors like mining and energy (Hutchful, 1985, 1987, 2007). The formation of GNPC, an SOE to manage petroleum resources, was reflective of these broader aspirations and the context in which the PNDC was operating a country with a failing economy but significant state autonomy being constrained by IFIs.

The creation of GNPC in the 1980s before oil discovery, shows an early point to the foresight of the Rawlings regime and the importance of petroleum resources and the need to establish a strong institutional presence in the sector. However, GNPC was established through a top-down decision, with no evidence of consultation or stakeholder involvement reflecting the broader pattern of legal decision-making during the PNDC era. At its inception, GNPC combined both commercial functions and industry regulation (Banful, 2010). This failure to ensure institutional separation as well as stakeholder inclusion was to come back to haunt the country years later, especially after the commercial discovery of oil (Banful, 2010). The fact that GNPC's mandate combines commercial and regulatory functions in one legal architecture is not unique to Ghana. However, in the subsequent era of competitive multiparty politics and greater global accountability for the state's oil governance decisions, the concentration of powers at GNPC would become a key challenge for Ghana, especially as the industry entered the production phase.

4.4.2.4.3. Resulting Legal Content and Impact

PNDC Law 64 created the GNPC as the Ghanaian state's petroleum exploration and production arm. The law granted the Corporation the authority to: conduct petroleum operations, either individually or in partnership with others; hold and manage the interests of the Republic of Ghana in petroleum agreements; and perform other functions related to the regulation of the petroleum sector (GNPC, 2019). These powers and roles essentially made the GNPC a commercial competitor as well as the regulator of the industry as indicated earlier. This hybrid role for the GNPC was called into question once oil was discovered.

This critique was heightened by specific regulatory failures in the initial years of production. In some instances, GNPC was unable to sanction oil firms found in breach of their obligations to the state. For example, GNPC could not sanction Kosmos Energy, which in 2010 was found to have breached provisions on data confidentiality and an environmental accident. There was a change in GNPC's role, shifting its focus to exploration and production, while the Petroleum Commission Act (Act 821) established the PC as the new regulator of the sector. This legal development reflected the increasing power of global governance norms to shape Ghana's oil policy (Ainuson, 2015).

4.4.2.4.4. Critical Assessment

A critical assessment of the GNPC's legal and institutional development would be to first look at the changing nature of Ghana's power bloc during the formative years of its oil governance. At the time of GNPC's creation, there was a state-centric power bloc that believed in the ability of the state to industrialize the country and that saw the aggressive management of its extractive resources as critical to state-led development (Key Informant Interview, July 27, 2023).⁵⁰ This

⁵⁰ Interview #52

form of a power bloc, built around statism and a sense of resource nationalism in a rentier state, was the basis for GNPC's original mandate. However, as Ghana integrated into the global capitalist order, especially after the PNDC's turn to neoliberal economic policies in the 1980s and 1990s, this power bloc underwent a passive transformation that saw it increasingly accommodating the transnational capitalist class and donor community.

The splitting of GNPC's regulatory and commercial roles in 2011 can be seen as part of this larger reconfiguration of the country's institutional architecture to fit transnational governance and class interests. While the reform was much needed to avoid regulatory capture and conflict of interest, it also marked a retreat from Ghana's earlier resource nationalist and statist oil and gas governance. Moreover, the global normative pressure for the discourse of "good governance" (Abrahamsen, 2000) and regulatory independence from private interests, often applied by actors like the World Bank and IMF, is clearly seen in this example of GNPC. However, the long delay in revising GNPC's original legal mandate also reveals the weakness of institutional responsiveness in the face of structural transformation. The fact that the PRMA was passed even before GNPC's legal mandate was revisited (and even before the 2016 E&P Act) points to the fragmented and rather reactive nature of oil sector governance in Ghana (Panford, 2017).

As one of the interviewees explained, the seemingly haphazard and out-of-sequence nature of some reforms may have had to do with the pressure to get laws in place that would allow the country to both secure and allocate oil revenues quickly (Key Informant Interview November 20, 2022).⁵¹

⁵¹ Interview #12

In conclusion, although GNPC remains a symbol of Ghanaian resource nationalism, its actual operational role is shaped by both its historical legacy as well as the present global order. The Corporation has a vital commercial role to play to ensure the state is a competitive partner in negotiating oil contracts and production-sharing agreements with IOCs. However, it is also structurally limited by the very architecture of the international system, as well as globalized corporate lobbying and donor influence in shaping that architecture. This tension is at the heart of the GNPC and by extension, Ghana's oil governance.

4.4.3. Policies/Laws Alignment with Neo-Liberal Global Standard and Entrenchment of Capitalist Hegemony

4.4.3.1. Pro-Capitalist Contracts, and the Erosion of Resource Sovereignty

The preliminary years of oil governance revealed a shocking contradiction between resource nationalism rhetorics and practise. Despite successive government pledge to use oil revenue for national development the institutionalisation of contractual arrangements, licensing processes, and investment incentives in the post-oil discovery period was characterised by a striking alignment with neoliberal policy norms and a general predisposition favouring IOCs. As pointed out earlier on the influx of several policy influencers, ideological agents, including economists and legal advisors played an instrumental role in the formation of the laws and policies which favoured capitalist oil contracts and the dominance of IOCs. This, in turn, militated against Ghana's ability to exert material control over its oil resources. In the early years of oil discovery in Ghana, there was a growing tendency by the ruling class to dilute its control over the petroleum sector in favour of foreign capital.

After oil discovery in 2007 the Kufuor administration's goal was to attract more investors into Ghana's oil and gas sector which attracted IOCs to the detriment of its own NOC the GNPC. This shift significantly disadvantaged the NOC limiting its ability to serve as a vehicle for resource

nationalism in Ghana. One of the actions taken by the Kufuor administration was to downsize GNPC from 600 staff to 80 staff liquidating all other “non-core” activities. The marine assets were disposed of to curtail monthly cost; all these were done to curtail corporate debt owed by GNPC (Kufuor, 2022). The measures adopted weakened GNPC’s capacity to act as an effective strategic commercial entity and by extension reduced its ability to form an independent material base from which to advance state control of hydrocarbons. These liberalisation actions made both the upstream and downstream operations of the oil and gas sector very attractive to international firms which further enhanced the capitalist structures of oil contracts. Since oil was discovered in 2007, the state has signed over a dozen agreements with different IOCs (Resource Contracts, 2019).

Additionally, before the acceptance of competitive bidding most of these contracts were directly negotiated with the ruling elites which ensured that IOCs gained significant control. For example, between 2010 and 2014 oil blocks were awarded through direct negotiations; a process which allows IOCs to gain much control in Ghana’s oil and gas sector with limited public scrutiny (Stephens, 2023). This process was not transparent allowing the ruling elite to exert discretionary powers in contract allocation especially during an election year. As one key informant mentioned: “there was a lot of pressure on the NPP administration to get money for the 2008 elections therefore some of these political elites collaborated with IOCs to fast track laws for the oil and gas sector” (Key Informant Interview, November 20, 2022).⁵² This corroborates the views of Panford (2017) that despite the passage of several laws to regulate the oil and gas sector, most oil contracts with IOCs were set up to disproportionately benefit MNCs and IOCs.

Furthermore, under the guise of urgency, contracts were given to IOCs under unfavourable terms in which Ghana’s sovereign’s interests were compromised. For instance, the royalty rate for

⁵² Interview #12

the Jubilee oil field (Ghana's first major oil discovery) was pegged at a low rate of 5% for crude oil and 3% for gas under the Model Petroleum Agreement (MPA) negotiated and developed under the Kufuor administration. This rate was well below the rate enshrined in the PNDCL 84 (12.5%) and other international benchmarks, with some countries raking up to 35% royalties (Key Informant Interview, November 21, 2022).⁵³ While these deals were justified on the basis of the need to attract foreign investment, they served to diminish Ghana's ability to accrue long-term fiscal revenues and exert some measure of bargaining power. This alignment of Ghana's oil and gas laws and policy framework with neoliberal economic principles reflects the broader influences of hegemonic transnational actors such as the World Bank and IMF-backed economic reforms and foreign advisory services.

Hybrid contract structure where GNPC entered joint ventures with IOCs, governed by production sharing agreements (PSA) further complicated the issue. The contract allowed the state to retain ownership of oil reserves, but it gave corporations control over the production and sale of oil. In practice, the GNPC's weakened state and the IOCs' superior legal insight meant that contracts were skewed in the oil companies' favour. The complexity of the agreements, and the asymmetric legal and technical capacity between the parties, meant that the state had little recourse to ensure enforcement or pursue claims for breaches of contract terms. These structural limitations were not only obvious in the contracts but were also part of a broader governance culture where oversight institutions were neither independent nor sufficiently capacitated.

Similarly, political favouritism and elite collusion played a role in allocating oil contracts. For instance, on April 30th, 2004, the NPP under President Kufuor granted E.O. Group, a diasporan Ghanaian owned company, a 3.5% share in the Jubilee field due to his connection with

⁵³ Interview #16

the company. When NDC came to power in 2008 it negotiated the contract accusing the former president Kufuor of fronting for E.O. Group (Andrews and Siakwah, 2021; Mohan et al., 2018). Although empirical evidence of direct corruption remains limited, the public perception of elite collusion in oil contacts was widespread, particularly within oil producing communities during the fieldwork.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, research has shown that IOCs' lobbying of parliament and other policymakers did influence the outcome of several laws governing the oil and gas sector (Andrews and Siakwah, 2021; Mohan et al., 2018). In this respect, the IOCs' preference for direct negotiations instead of competitive bidding gave the corporations better access to decision-makers and reduced transparency and public scrutiny of contracts (Phillips et al., 2016).

All of this reflects the extent to which Ghana's oil governance has been aligned with the interests of global capital. The overall policy framework in the sector was influenced by support from international donors and consultants and was shaped by a set of neoliberal assumptions such as fiscal discipline, investor security, deregulation, and the state's limited role. It should be noted that these structural constraints were not an accident of history but were in large part the outcome of strategic policy choices by political and economic elites in Ghana. The neoliberal turn in oil governance, in particular, was not inevitable but reflected a political project. This political project was promoted by a power bloc of actors such as local and international, state and non-state that controlled the commanding heights of the oil economy. This power bloc secured its dominance not only through coercion but also through consensus. Oil was framed by state elites, IFIs, transnational corporations, and local technocrats as an economic "blessing" or "gift" that had to be safeguarded through responsible management that, in turn, necessitated private capital and technical expertise (Key Informant Interview, November 21, 2022).⁵⁵

⁵⁴ FGD.

⁵⁵ Interview #16

In this way, elite actors and IOCs cultivated a shared consensus on what was considered natural and legitimate. As a result, the discursive consensus about the need to use the oil sector to drive economic growth excluded more critical or redistributive approaches. This ideological consensus was not only projected upwards to IOCs but was also reconfigured to the population at large through repeated invocations of technocratic management of oil as opposed to democratic control. The evidence on Ghana's oil licensing and contract design in the post-oil discovery period thus shows how a declared political commitment to resource nationalism could be hollowed out by a host of elite policy choices, foreign pressures, and institutional fragmentation. While in principle, national control of oil remained the established policy, in practical terms, the foundations from which the Ghanaian state could assert its sovereignty over oil were eroded. In the end, the sector's governance model was not transformational but privileged the interests of transnational capital.

4.4.3.2. Tax Exceptions and Contractual Advantages for IOCs

Ghana's oil fiscal regime after discovery has not only been marked by considerable impulsiveness, but also by a built-in imbalance of state–capital interests that systematically privileges IOCs. As demonstrated in the case of the Jubilee field, while policy rhetoric emphasized resource sovereignty, the actual architecture and content of Ghana's petroleum agreements (PAs) revealed systematic incentives favouring IOCs. Such agreements, as the country's primary governance tool, are rife with reduced royalties, tax exemptions, and inequitable ownership and control. The following analysis delves into the specific details and broader political economy rationale of such PAs (Ayelazuno, 2014a, 2016; Ayelazuno and Graham, 2022).

One of the most glaring disparities in Ghana's oil contracts is the variable and, in some cases, low royalty rate. While the model Ghanaian petroleum agreement stipulates a standard

royalty of 12.5%, negotiated rates can differ significantly block by block (primarily with water depth) and field by field (PWC, 2017). For example, in Jubilee the rate was successfully negotiated down to 5% for crude oil and 3% for gas rates that were well below international standards where royalty rates can reach 30–35% (Ghebremusse, 2014: 21, 40–44; Kankam and Ackah, 2014: 402). The case of Jubilee is representative of the significant concessions granted in the name of attracting investment for deep offshore exploration, which resulted in royalty waivers and curtailed the government's overall take of oil rents.

The system of carried interest (in which the state government initially owns a stake in oil blocks without incurring any cost to development) has also varied. Though Ghana's formal carried interest is 10%, the Jubilee agreement effective interest was 3.75% (Ghebremusse, 2014: 21, 40–44; Kankam and Ackah, 2014: 402). GNPC's shareholding across the 18 identified oil blocks in Ghana further illustrates this imbalance, with ownership for the state ranging from 38% to as low as 8.8% while IOCs in many blocks possessed 80–90% . (Acheampong et al., 2022; Ghebremusse, 2014; Resource Contracts, 2019). The lack of a unified royalty or equity structure thus not only erodes the principle of strategic control central to resource sovereignty but also creates a fragmented and discretionary fiscal system over-reliant on elite negotiations in non-transparent ways.

Moreover, the various tax exemptions granted to IOCs and their associates further reduced the revenue-generating potential. The records show that the IOCs negotiated their PAs or contracts in a way that reduces their taxes on imports and exports as well as those of their foreign workers if that item is related to their work in the oil and gas sector. Value added tax (VAT) in Ghana is 17.5% but under most PAs IOC contractors and all their affiliates are subject to zero VAT and mechanisms have been put in place by the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) for the IOCs to use

to guide such situations (PWC, 2015; PWC-Africa, 2017). PAs usually state that expatriates whose work in Ghana is only for a short period are exempted from paying taxes (this varies for every PA) but other than that all expatriates who work for the IOCs are taxed if they work in Ghana. Expatriates are generally taxed at a flat fixed rate of 20%. People who reside in Ghana for more than 183 days (both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian) are taxed on a graduated scale from 0%-25%. It is known that in kind benefits like accommodation and vehicles with a driver are all factored into the taxes. Also, IOCs do not let their foreign employees contribute to the pension schemes of the state and this is also included in the PAs (PWC-Africa, 2017; Resource Contracts, 2019).

Furthermore, the agreements guaranteed unrestricted capital repatriations to IOCs, in which they can repatriate capital to their home country and or to any other country of their choice without limitations. An example is the contractual agreement between GNPC and AMNI International of 2014, Article 13 clause 1 states “that contractors shall ...be entitled to receive, remit, keep and utilise freely abroad all the foreign currency obtained from the sales of the Petroleum ... or from the transfers, as well as its own capital receipt from the loans...” (GNPC and AMNI, Resource Contracts, 2019: 45). These clauses, repeated across PAs, codify Ghana’s capital account openness and limit state control over capital flows. To make knowledge of such agreements public or not is currently at the full discretion of the government with no laws in the country currently compelling it to do so. Even though information about such agreements can be found on the respective online portals of MOE and GNPC’s they are scant and incomplete (P-Track, 2014). Speaking at the Africa Open Gate Conference in July 2017, the deputy Energy Minister of Ghana at that time, Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam disclosed that the government would make available to the general public all registers that contain PAs, licences, permits and authorisations (Pitnam, 2017). Even though

this has been done some of the information provided online is still incomplete. Table 2 is a summary of taxation from some of the PAs.

Table 2 A Summary of Taxation of Some Petroleum Agreements from Ghana's Oil Fields

Contractor -Year	Field of operations	Summary of Taxation
GNPC, CAMAC Energy Ghana Ltd and Base Energy Ghana Ltd –(2014)	Expanded Shallow Water Tano Block	• 12.5% Royalty to the State • 35% CIT • No import and export taxes for foreign employees (PA, pages 49-51)
GNPC (EXPLORCO) and Springfield E&P-(2015)	(West Cape Three Points (WCTP)- block 2	• 12.5% (New Discovery) • 10% for the existing discovery of GDP at Royalty • 35% CIT
GNPC and AMNI International Petroleum Development Company Ltd-(2014)	Central Tano Block, Offshore	• 12.5% Royalty to the State • 35% CIT • No importation and exportation taxes for foreign employees (PA, pages 42-44)
GNPC, Britannia-U Ghana limited, Hills Oil Marketing Company Ltd- (2014)	Southwest Saltpond Block	• 10% Royalty to the State • 35% CIT • No import and export taxes for foreign employees (PA, pages 46-48)
GNPC, Heritage Exploration and Production Ghana Ltd, Blue Star Exploration Ghana Ltd- (2014)	Offshore South-West Tano Block	• 12.5% Royalty to the State • 35% CIT • No import and export taxes for foreign employees (PA, pages 52-54)
GNPC, COLA Natural Resources and MEDEA Development Ltd- (2013)	East Cape Three Points	• 10% Royalty to the State • 35% CIT • No import and export taxes for foreign employees (PA, pages 41 and 42)
GNPC, A-Z Petroleum Products Ghana Ltd, ECO Atlantic Oil and Gas Ghana Ltd, Petrogulf Ltd- (2014)	Deepwater Cape Three Point West Offshore Block	• 12.5% Royalty to the State • 35% CIT • No import and export taxes for foreign employees (PA, pages 40-42)

Source: Author's creation with data from Resource Contracts (2019).

Furthermore, a careful analysis of the total share of ownership in all the 18 agreements showed that the state percentage of ownership is as high as 38% and as low as 8.8%. Compared with the IOCs share it is certainly not proportional and a clear disadvantage for state, with some owning 85%, 75%, etc., as shown in table 3. This skewed distribution ultimately undermines resource nationalism and consolidates a power bloc in favour of transnational capital as noted by scholars such as Cox (1983) and Mitchell (2011).

Table 3 Summary of Ghana's 18 Petroleum Agreements

Agreement/Block	Percentage of Share Holding	Finalised Date
1. West Cape Three Points (WCTP)	Tullow (Operator) 25.66%, Kosmos 30.02%, Anadarko 30.02%, GNPC 12.50%, Petro SA 1.80%.	22-Jul-04
2. Deepwater Tano (DWT)	Tullow (Operator) 35.48%, Anadarko 24.0%, Kosmos Energy 24%, GNPC 14.0%, Petro SA Ghana 2.52%.	10-Mar-06
3. Deepwater TanoCape Three Points (DTCTP)	Aker Energy Ghana Limited (Operator) 40%, Lukoil Overseas Ghana Limited 38%, FT Exploration and Production Limited 2%, GNPC 10%; GNPC Exploration and Production Company Limited (GNPC Explorco) 10%.	19-Jul-06
4. Offshore Cape Three Points (OCTP)	ENI Ghana Exploration & Production Limited 44.44%, Vitol Upstream Ghana Limited 35.56%, GNPC 20%.	05-May-08
5. East Cape Three Points	Medea Development Limited (Operator) 36%, Cola Natural Resources Limited 54%, GNPC 10%.	04-Dec-13
6. Central Tano	Amni International Petroleum Development Company Limited (Operator) 90%, GNPC 10%	21-Mar-14
7. South Deepwater Tano	AGM Petroleum Ghana Limited, GNPC, Explorco	24-Jan-14
8. Shallow Water Cape Three Points	Sahara Energy Fields Ghana Limited (Operator) 85%, Sapholda E and P Limited 5%, GNPC 10%.	18-Jul-14
9. Southwest Saltpond	BRITANIA-U Ghana (Operator) 76%, Hills Oil Marketing Company 4%, GNPC 20%	17-Jul-14
10. Offshore SouthWest Tano	GNPC (Operator) 12%, Heritage Exploration and Production Ghana Limited 39.60%, Blue Star Exploration Ghana Limited 39.60%, GNPC Explorco 8.8%	18-Jul-14
11. Offshore Cape Three Points South	UB Resources Limited 70.47% (Operator), Houston Drilling Management Ghana Limited 12.18% Royalgate Ghana 4.35%, GNPC 13%	18-Jul-14
12. East Keta Block	GNPC (Operator) 11%, Heritage Exploration and Production Company Limited 38.7%, Blue Star Exploration Ghana Limited 38.7%, GNPC Exploration and Production Company Limited (GNPC Explorco) 11.6%.	18-Jul-14
13. Expanded Shallow Water Tano	Base Energy Limited 67.5%, GNPC Explorco 22.5%, GNPC 10%	23-Jan-15
14. Deepwater Cape Three Points West Offshore	Eco Atlantic Oil and Gas (Operator) 50.42%, A-Z Petroleum Products Ghana Limited 27.88%, Petrogulf Limited 4.35%, GNPC Exploration and Production Ghana Limited (GNPC Explorco) 4.35%, GNPC 13%	22-Mar-15
15. Onshore/Offshore Keta Delta Block	Swiss African Oil Company (Operator) 83%, Pet Volta Investments Ltd 5%, GNPC 12%	11-Mar-16
16. Cape Three Points Block 4	ENI Ghana Exploration and Production Limited (Operator) 42.47%, Vitol Upstream Tano Limited 33.98%, Woodfields Upstream Limited 9.56%, GNPC 10%, Explorco 4%	14-Apr-16
17. West Cape Three Points Block 2	Springfield E & P Limited (New Discoveries 84%; Existing Discoveries 82%, GNPC (New Discoveries 11%, Existing Discoveries 8%), GNPC Explorco (New Discoveries 5%; Existing Discoveries 10%).	26-Jul-16
18. Deepwater Cape Three Points	ExxonMobil Exploration and Production Ghana (Deepwater) Limited (Operator) 80%, GOIL Offshore Ghana Limited 5%, GNPC 15%	18-Jan-18

Source: Acheampong et al. (2022: 19–20).

Additionally, even though it is clear in the law (PRMA 815) that all contracts must go through a competitive bidding process some contracts were given out without due process. This goes to demonstrate that there are cases when the government itself failed to adhere to what the law requires. An instance is when Ghana's government signed a PA with Exxon Mobil without going through the competitive bidding process. In the PA for Deep Water Cape Three Points (DWCTP) field which was between 2000m and 4000m in depth, ExxonMobil as the lead operator had 80% interest while the Ghanaian state represented by GNPC would have 15% (Reuters, 2018).

This case is one example of how discretionary elite decisions can flout formal policy standards and fail to comply with the PRMA.

In sum, the cross-contractual inconsistency and overall fiscal leniency towards IOCs is a function of a more structural weakness of the Ghanaian state to bargain with transnational oil capital. Taken together, the evidence of Ghana's petroleum agreements thus shows how there has been a disjuncture between the rhetorical intention and material realisation of resource nationalism. The fragmented legal architecture, laid-back enforcement of competitive bidding, and recurrent tax exemptions all point to a pattern of elite-led oil governance which often privileges foreign capital over public transparency and accountability. Addressing this disjuncture requires not only legal reform, but also a transformation of the underlying power dynamics that embed Ghana within the global political economy of oil.

4.4.3.3. IOC's Revenue Dominance and Entrenchment of Capitalist Hegemony

Despite the discovery of oil in 2007 and the commencement of oil production in 2010, the distribution of oil revenues remains heavily skewed towards IOCs. From 2011 to 2023, as shown in table 4 and figure 2, Ghana only received US\$9.8Billion (22%) of oil revenues whilst IOCs in total obtained US\$35.3Billion (78%) of the total revenue. In comparative terms, the 22% take of Ghana's oil revenue is relatively below global average for oil producing countries which typically is between 65% and 85% in well negotiated fiscal regimes. For instance, government takes in Norway and Angola stand at 78% and 70% respectively. It is important to note that Ghana's 22% represents its share of gross petroleum revenues over the period 2011–2023, whereas the government take figures cited for countries such as Norway and Angola are typically calculated on net income after cost recovery and tax adjustments. While the fiscal bases are therefore not strictly identical, the comparison nonetheless illustrates the relatively limited share of total

petroleum value captured by the Ghanaian state within its current contractual framework. Regrettably, Ghana's current fiscal regime based on outdated tax laws has been criticized for preventing the state from capturing adequate windfall profits, making the sector attractive to investors but less beneficial to the nation (Ashikwei et al., 2023). Thus, Ghana's fiscal regime shows a weaker bargaining position shaped by elite compromises, thirst for investment and historical dependencies on external capital which ultimately enables IOCs to capture most of the oil wealth limiting state led developmental aspirations. This revenue disparity is an exposure of the structural weaknesses of Ghana's oil governance's framework which is deeply embedded in the global capitalist hegemony. One oil and gas expert from civil society noted:

Ghana could have been much patient rather than rushing to sign 18 (see table 2) oil contracts with IOCs. These contracts prioritised foreign capital accumulation over national development, which is the hallmark of the neoliberal extractive model as seen in other developing countries. (Key Informant Interview, November 14, 2022).⁵⁶

Additionally, the persistence of direct negotiations despite the 2016 E&P Act which was to ensure competitive bidding, further demonstrates how political and economic elites remain embedded within the global oil capital networks, like the afore mentioned example of Ghana's 2018 contract with ExxonMobil (Reuters, 2018). The structuring of Ghana's oil contracts displays how hegemonic transnational forces such as IOCs, external advisors and IFIs influence on Ghana's fiscal regimes supports liberal investments framework and production sharing agreements which limit state control as demonstrated in the earlier sections of this chapter.

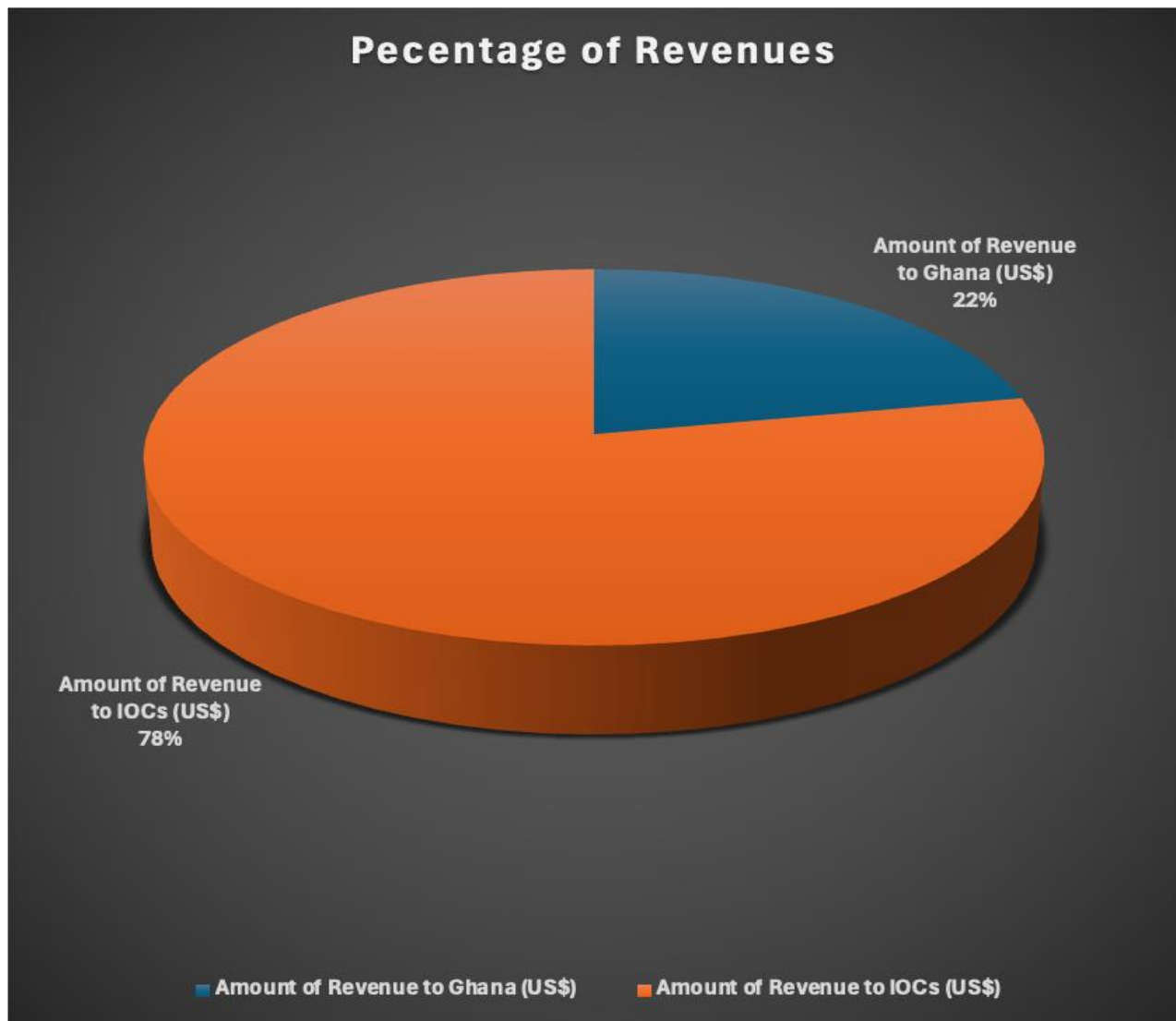
⁵⁶ Interview #15

Table 4 Summary of Oil Production and Revenues Accrued from Ghana's Oil Sector from 2011 to 2023.

Year	Revenue to Ghana (US\$)	Revenue to IOCs (US\$)	Grand Total (US\$)
2011	\$ 444,124,724	\$ 2,319,494,442	\$ 2,763,619,166
2012	\$ 541,623,740	\$ 2,346,070,746	\$ 2,887,694,486
2013	\$ 846,767,185	\$ 3,586,568,862	\$ 4,433,336,047
2014	\$ 978,017,693	\$ 3,769,641,010	\$ 4,747,658,703
2015	\$ 396,172,910	\$ 2,193,192,515	\$ 2,589,365,425
2016	\$ 247,175,395	\$ 1,118,434,522	\$ 1,365,609,917
2017	\$ 555,330,000	\$ 2,246,663,031	\$ 2,801,993,031
2018	\$ 977,120,000	\$ 3,557,807,244	\$ 4,534,927,244
2019	\$ 937,582,204	\$ 2,319,000,000	\$ 3,256,582,204
2020	\$ 666,400,000	\$ 2,346,000,000	\$ 3,012,400,000
2021	\$ 783,330,000	\$ 3,586,000,000	\$ 4,369,330,000
2022	\$ 1,428,760,000	\$ 3,769,600,000	\$ 5,198,360,000
2023	\$ 1,062,320,000	\$ 2,193,192,500	\$ 3,255,512,500
Total	\$ 9,864,723,851 (22%)	\$ 35,351,664,872 (78%)	\$ 45,216,388,723 (100%)

Source: Authors computation with data from (Acheampong et al., 2022; Ouroilmoney.org, 2023; PIAC, 2023a).

Figure 2 Percentage of oil revenues accrued from Ghana's fields oil from 2011 to 2023



Source: Author's computation with data from Acheampong et al., (2022); Oouroilmoney.org, (2023); and PIAC, 2023a).⁵⁷

In essence, Ghana's cumulative 22% state and 78% IOC oil revenue split from 2011-2023 (Table 4, figure 2) is not just a reflection of fiscal imbalance but the undercurrent political economy

⁵⁷ These are all the author's computation based on the data sources mentioned. From 2021 it was difficult accessing the specific amount for the IOCs since all the sources were not up to date therefore, I used a projected number based on their averaged production. The fact that the website especially the www.oouroilmoney.org is missing data from 2021 is troubling making the tracking of these numbers nearly impossible.

of oil contracts and investment incentives that produced these figures. The agreed split was determined by PSAs and hybrid contractual frameworks (carried interest, cost recovery) that were skewed in IOCs' favour, especially within Jubilee and TEN fields (Ghebremusse, 2014). While Ghana's state take is not uncommon for a new oil producer facing high exploration risks, it falls short of global best practices where developing countries capture 40–60% of total oil wealth (Ashikwei et al., 2023; Daniel et al., 2010). The annual variations resulted from shifts in global oil prices along with production output and contract details such as royalty rates between 3% and 12.5% and tax concessions provided to IOCs (PWC, 2017). Ghana's extractive sovereignty will continue to face structural constraints unless there are renegotiations or more stringent regulations put in place.

4.4.3.4. Transparency and Revenue Governance

The enactment of Ghana's PRMA (815) was widely celebrated as a hall mark for transparency and accountability in the governance of natural resources. This legal framework has these three features: regular publication of oil revenues and allocations to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning; an independent auditing and oversight committee through the PIAC; and mandatory savings mechanism through the stabilisation funds and heritage funds. These reforms were largely driven by pressure from CSOs and their desire to prevent the oil curse at the early stages of Ghana's oil discovery (Debrah and Graham, 2015; Panford 2017).

However, a critical reflection on the PRMA reveals that, the role of PIAC (established by clause 53 and 55), has been largely symbolic within Ghana's oil governance framework. Although the law appears progressive, its implementation has been fraught with inconsistencies, institutional challenges, political interference etc., as discussed by Graham et al. (2019). These tensions between the form and the function of PIAC displays a broader contradiction in Ghana's oil and gas

sector's governance where an institution such as PIAC exists to ensure transparency and accountability but its impact remains minimal due to structural and political constraints. It is important to note that, under the PRMA, the composition of PIAC is made up predominantly of representatives from CSOs. Notable members include representatives from Trades Union Congress, National House of Chiefs, Association of Queen Mothers, Association of Ghana Industries and Chamber of Commerce, Ghana Journalists Association, Ghana Bar Association (GBA), Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, the CCG, the Federation of Muslim Council and Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences (Debrah and Graham, 2015; Panford, 2017).

For the purposes of analysis, PIAC's composition must be seen not only as an exercise in institutional inclusion/exclusion, but as the result of the "compromise" of social forces in the power bloc that supports the oil governance arrangement. The list of these actors is long and ideologically and institutionally diverse. In Gramscian terms, however, it is also important to note that not all of these bodies enjoy an equally central position in Ghana's political economy.

To begin with, it can be argued that several of the above-mentioned bodies could be easily identified as part of the "integrated civil society" which is part of the integral state, - in Gramscian terms, that is, bodies that support the creation of consent, rather than those that challenge the existent hegemony. As such, TUC, the representative of organized labour, could function (on PIAC) as a platform that represents the interests of counter-hegemonic social forces seeking a larger share of the resource wealth to be redistributed. However, as has been argued by Adomako-Kwakye (2024) the long history of TUC's institutional integration into the Ghanaian state dilutes its aptitude to contest state power.

In a similar manner, the National House of Chiefs and Queen Mothers' Association can be seen as symbolic of traditional representation and authority. As Abrefa Busia and Adjei (2022) argue, inclusion of traditional authorities in Ghana's contemporary governance system serves as a form of legitimation of the process of governance in general. The inclusion of traditional authorities in Ghana's oil governance can thus be seen as largely symbolic, aimed at ensuring legitimacy and gaining acceptance of governance decisions among local populations. Nonetheless, the very fact of their inclusion does not necessarily point to a radically inclusive nature of the governance assemblage.

Furthermore, GHEITI and the Institute of Chartered Accountants represent professional and technical expertise that is ideologically closer to neoliberal assumptions about the necessity of good governance and the technocratic norms of transparency and fiscal responsibility (Abrahamsen, 2000). As a result, they function as important enablers of the Ghanaian petro-state's image as a compliant of transparency and accountability instead of challenging the fundamental inequalities. In other words, these bodies have specific capacities (technical expertise) that are important for ensuring the overall legitimacy of the oil governance process. Nonetheless, they lack any transformative ability. CCG and the Federation of Muslim Councils, for their part, have significant moral authority, but they do not exercise a direct influence on the economic governance of the country. Nor do they have any real power to affect class-based struggles over the use of oil resources.

What all the above-listed bodies have in common, however, is their belonging to a "centre ground" of Ghana's national-popular that the state can accommodate to maintain its own legitimacy and international reputation as an investment destination. In that sense, PIAC is another example of the state incorporating select bodies as part of a broader passive revolution, that is,

granting social forces access to the oil governance structure while neutralizing the potentially more radical demands by using the symbolic capital of different bodies. In that sense, the PIAC itself can be seen as a limited space of resistance, not powerful in changing the overall terms of the oil accumulation regime and its distributional consequences. The power bloc, in this instance, is underpinned by a relatively stable alliance of pro-capitalist state elites, IOCs, and IFIs, with the various bodies of civil society having only a legitimating role.

Although the PRMA established PIAC and other transparency mechanisms, these provisions largely remain on paper, as their actual implementation has been inconsistent with the transparency requirements set out in the law. Ghana is ranked relatively moderate in implementing the EITI standards and compliances (EITI, 2024); however, challenges such as delays in reporting, opaque contract negotiations and perception of corruption in the oil and gas sector persist. Additionally, there is the lack of the enforcement and implementation of PIAC's recommendations as one senior official from PIAC noted:

Despite PIAC's mandate, our proposal and recommendations are largely ignored by the government. Most of our reports since 2011 have in them recommendations and instances of revenue misallocations, yet very little reform has taken place, it's almost like we are just reporting without any actions being taken (Key Informant Interview, January 5, 2023).⁵⁸

These selective adherences to EITI transparency standards reflect a broader tendency to use transparency mechanisms as symbolic tools for attracting investors within a neoliberal capitalist framework, rather than as transformative instruments of accountability in the extractive sector. Additionally, one of the critical concerns in Ghana's oil and gas governance was the limitations of PIAC, the very institutions established to ensure transparency and accountability. PIACs work began after it was commissioned in September 2011 and even though the road was tough during its early days the committee made some headway in its oversight activities. For instance, the

⁵⁸ Interview #72

committee was inaugurated on September 15th, 2011, and became operational the following month. Its first annual report for 2011 was published in 2012 and since then over ten reports have been published in addition to the first one. It has also held a series of public forums in various regions across the country and inspected many other ABFA projects (PIAC, 2019).

Nonetheless, some of the early limitations of PIAC, as discussed by Graham et al. (2019), included but were not limited to the following: lack of basic infrastructure; ambiguities in certain provisions of the PRMA (Act 815); the government's failure to act on PIAC's recommendations; and the absence of a L.I. to operationalise the PRMA and facilitate its interpretation. These and others contributed to PIAC's inability to perform admirably in promoting the use of petroleum revenues for sustainable development in rural areas and poverty alleviation initiatives. Not having a physical office between 2011 and 2016 was a major legal drawback for PIAC in its quest to effectively monitor activities in the oil and gas sector (GhanaWeb, 2016b; PIAC, 2016). Before they could carry out their constitutionally given mandate PIAC had to deal with their own inadequacies. The law that established PIAC also vetoed a ministerial discretion to approve and disburse PIAC budget, and this stood in the way of PIAC becoming truly independent in its early stages. PRMA 815(15) specified that the committee members be given an allowance that's determined by the finance minister with parliamentary approval. The law did not also specify which parliamentary committee was to take charge and act on PIAC's reports. Even though Section 56(d) of the PRMA (Act 815) requires PIAC to submit its reports to Parliament, the law does not specify how these reports should be communicated between PIAC members and their constituents.

Regrettably, parliament passed the PRMA 815 into law without a L.I to interpret and operationalise it and this allowed the government to act in ways that contradicted the law. The failure to pass a LI to enact the PRMA highlights a structural weakness within the oil governance

regime in Ghana. While the PRMA was generally acknowledged as a positive step towards transparency, the absence of the LI suggests that the pressure to appear credible to external audiences (IMF, World Bank, extractive sector investors, etc.) was greater than the capacity to put credible enforcement mechanisms in place. As some experts argue, this “gap” in the legislation was a product of political expedience and elite agreement to appear to be doing something while in fact doing very little in terms of effective implementation (Key Informant Interview November 20, 2022).⁵⁹ In this sense, the PRMA’s passage by Parliament can be understood as a “ritualized gesture” to demonstrate Ghana’s commitment to transparency and ensuring investor confidence than as a carefully constructed and designed governance architecture. Such a choice largely reflects what some authors describe as a “passive revolution” (Gramsci, 1971; Cox, 1981), where reforms appear transformative but are, in reality, shaped by and constrained within the existing hegemonic order. Furthermore, there were numerous instances that PIAC had to draw the government’s attention to breaches in the law for the government to address them (GhanaWeb, 2016b; PIAC, 2017c, 2019). With the absence of the LI government ignored most of the concerns raised by PIAC and it was virtually powerless in taking legal action against the government.

Another fact is that the absence of the LI handicapped PIAC in monitoring institutional compliance. An example is PIACs inability to request for government records or documents on certain matters like what powers a commission of enquiry is granted under the law. PIACs powers are limited in compelling officers who manage the petroleum funds to give testimonies under oath; they cannot ask questions from officials of government institutions and compel them to answer if they do not wish to. The committee cannot formally request any state law or justice enforcement agency to investigate or make enquiries into suspected breaches in the law concerning the use of

⁵⁹ Interview #12

petroleum funds. The absence of the L.I. has rendered PIAC largely incapable of holding those who mismanage the country's oil revenues accountable, as it can only raise the alarm but lacks the mandate to take independent action (Graham et al., 2019).

In conclusion, this situation further highlights the largely symbolic role of institutions such as PIAC, which, despite satisfying neoliberal checklists of democratic credentials and investor-friendly incentives, have had little transformative impact. While Ghana's approach to oil transparency through PIAC and the PRMA appears laudable on paper, its practical effectiveness has been undermined by legal, executive, and structural constraints. Rather than serving as transformative instruments of governance, these transparency institutions have in many ways functioned as neoliberal legitimacy tools that enabled the government to meet international and donor expectations without making a significant dent on elite cohesion and impunity or ensuring any real oversight of the industry.

4.4.3.5. Political Elites, Neo-Patrimonialism and Oil Governance: Hegemony and Complicity

The political elites since the discovery of oil have been at the centre of navigating competing interests between local demands and international demands. While the oil and gas sector offered Ghana an opportunity to assert greater control, the political elite have often engaged in neo-patrimonial practices that undermine resource nationalism and instead reinforce global capitalist hegemony. The contradictions in Ghana's oil and gas sector where the rhetoric of resource nationalism coexists with the dominance of IOCs stem from the political elite's dual allegiance and complicity, as they seek to balance the demands of domestic legitimacy with the need to maintain ties to global capitalist hegemony. Central to this is elite capture, whereby political leaders manipulate the governance of the oil sector for their political interest instead of

national interest. Elite capture is manifested in the patronage politics especially in the case of the GNPC.

First, GNPC on paper has strong elements of resource nationalism. In fact, the main reasons for GNPC's establishment include but not limited to the following:

- a. To promote the exploration and the orderly and planned development of the petroleum resources of Ghana
- b. To ensure that Ghana obtains the greatest possible benefits from the development of its petroleum resources.
- c. To obtain the effective transfer to Ghana of appropriate technology relating to petroleum operations.
- d. To ensure the training of citizens of Ghana and the development of national capabilities in all aspects of petroleum operation.
- e. To ensure that petroleum operations are conducted in such a manner as to prevent adverse effects on the environment, resources and people of Ghana (GNPC, 2019).

GNPC also has a vision to be one of the leading global oil and gas companies whose operations deeply impact the lives of Ghanaians in a positive way (GNPC, 2019). With a staff strength of about 300, GNPC employs mostly Ghanaians, and the board is made up of seven people who are appointed by the government. The board members exercise oversight over the company in terms of policy direction. Although the formal mandate of GNPC is consonant with the fundamental aims of resource nationalism which is extracting the maximum benefit for the state from petroleum resources; managing petroleum resources prudently to deliver the expected social and economic dividends; extracting, mastering, and managing petroleum-related technologies for the development of the country; developing and training Ghanaians; and safeguarding the environment (GNPC, 2019). GNPC itself has often been an instrument of elite patronage, for example, appointments to the board and management of GNPC are often overtly partisan. Freddie Blay, the then national chairman of the ruling NPP, was appointed by the Akufo-Addo administration as the board chair of GNPC from 2016 to 2022, amid controversy that he was using that position to undermine the CEO in intra-organizational power struggles (GhanaWeb, 2019a). Such issues were also present in earlier periods of political transition for example, the trial and eventual clearing of

Tsatsu Tsikata, the former CEO of GNPC, by the NPP administration was not a legal process but rather a settling of scores by a rival regime (Skaten, 2018). The issue of patronage was confirmed by one respondent, who explained that individuals closest to the highest authority in the country often secure appointments at GNPC (Key Informant Interview November 20, 2022).⁶⁰

These cases are consistent with Ghana's broader patterns of neo-patrimonial behaviour: legal and regulatory reforms and formal institutional arrangements often subverted by informal networks of elite power. The NPP and NDC governments have both used GNPC and, to a lesser extent, the PC as patronage instruments to co-opt and reward loyalists and other members of their regime coalitions. Structural instability in GNPC changing key staff after every regime change, a lack of continuity in leadership and personnel, and competition between GNPC, the Ministry of Energy, and the PC for resources and political favour has also impeded the ability of GNPC to be a truly sovereign national oil company. The NPP removed nine of GNPC's top ten officials when it came to power in 2000 and they were reappointed when the NDC returned to power in 2009. These practices have deleterious effects on institutional capacity for long-term planning and development, policy coherence and institutional memory, and technocratic professionalism (Phillips et al., 2016).

Oil policy and institutional choices made by Ghanaian elites reflect the dynamics of a competitive clientelist political settlement. Elites have co-opted segments of society and used oil-related policies to create coalitions and rewards for political support and loyalty, often at the expense of transparency, accountability, and the national interest. As Ayanoore (2017) and Mohan et al., (2018) have observed, elite bargains and coalition-building drive state action in the oil sector.

⁶⁰ Interview #12

Oil contracts and participation opportunities have often been doled out in response to clientelist demands, with political connectedness trumping technical merit or national priorities.

Although Ghana's elites have reformed the institutional framework to try to create at least the appearance of separation of the commercial and regulatory functions of GNPC, as with the creation of the PC in 2010, the long-established GNPC continues to have regulatory power. This is because of the embedded technical expertise of GNPC staff and the organisational and historical legacy of dominance that GNPC has had in the sector. Asante et al., (2021) explain that while legal reforms have changed the regulatory-commercial entanglement, these changes have not been complete or profound, and elite bargaining has mediated their adoption and implementation. The political salience of oil rents became apparent during the 2012 election campaign, with both NPP and NDC openly campaigning on how they planned to use oil revenues to advance their political aims, suggesting the return of the resource curse risk in Ghana, a competitive democratic regime (Nyuykonge and Letsoalo, 2013).

The outcome of elite bargaining and political settlements has undermined Ghana's developmental potential in the oil sector. When institutions are weakened, policy becomes incoherent and short-term, and national sovereignty over resource wealth is reduced. In other words, Ghanaian political elites are complicit with the terms of global capitalist integration of its oil sector and, at the same time, mediate it to serve their particularistic interests. This is not just a case of state weakness but also of hegemony, elite consent and complicity with the asymmetrical integration of Ghana into global capitalist structures. Political elites, as agents of the state, have not been transformative but facilitative of global capital's interests in Ghana's oil sector by reproducing their own power through neo-patrimonial practices.

4.5. Civil Society Engagement: Counter-Hegemony or Co-optation?

Oil discovery in 2007 brought together several CSOs who later formed the civil society platform on oil and gas (CSPOG). The CSPOG served as an avenue for advocating for transparency, accountability, and equitable management of oil resources. CSPOG served as an organised local social force attempting to resist the historical patterns of elite capture and the dominance of corporation in the oil sector. Their goal was to ensure Ghana did not experience the oil curse that some countries experienced. As a result, they were heavily involved in the deliberations during the early stage of the oil discovery. Indeed, it has been argued that oil brought CSOs in Ghana together to form a social force to keep the government on its toes in the oil and gas sector (Debrah and Graham, 2015). In table 5, I point to several engagements of the CSOs in Ghana's oil and gas sector from the day oil and gas was discovered. In theory, CSPOG played a counter-hegemonic role by pushing for stronger legal, institutional and fiscal mechanism to regulate the oil and gas sector, foster transparency and ensure maximum benefit. While traditional intellectuals such as political elites, IFIs, TNCs, and IOCs were involved in the planning and meetings during the early stages of oil discovery, CSPOG and other CSOs served as organic intellectuals, contesting some of the views of the traditional intellectuals in shaping the legal and institutional framework of the oil sector.

Table 5 A Summary of a Decade of CSOs Activities in the Oil and Gas Sector

Year	Activities
2007	Discovery of oil in commercial quantities at offshore West Cape Three Points
2008	Civil society consultative meeting with CSOs in Mankessim Central Region. First of its kind Ghana Oil for Development Conference organised by the government and development partners
2009	- Ghana's Big Test-Oil's Challenge to Democratic Development was a report published by Oxfam America and the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) in January. - In March 120 individuals and 60 CSOs' launched CSPOG. It included Gender and Faith based groups, organised labour groups, Community Based groups and Media representatives. - Their main aim was for civil society groups to actively engage the government in meeting the demands of being accountable to the citizenry on the oil and gas resources of the nation. - They monitored oil production, how the government spent oil revenues and environmental impacts on the citizenry. They also helped to put in place the legal and institutional structures that made sure the government adhered the best practices in oil governance. - GHEITI's National steering committee started meeting with Energy Ministry officials in 2010 to have discussions on extending the initiative to oil and gas which was completed in August.
2010	- June 2010 CSPOG issues communique to the government after amalgamating the views and positions of the citizenry after a summit organised by the WB and Oxfam America. - Important reports are published by CSPOG and other CSOs that thrusts the debate on good governance in Ghana's petroleum sector into the spotlight.
2011	- In measuring how the government of Ghana is managing upcoming hurdles in the oil and gas sector and its relations with development partners like the IMF, WB, Industry and civil society groups, CSPOG in collaboration with Oxfam America published a Readiness Report Card in April (Van Alstine, 2014). - With the passage of the PRMA in 2011, CSPOG lobbied for the PIAC to be included so that the general public will also have a role to play in monitoring and compliance in oil resources (Debrah and Graham, 2015). - Another win for the CSOs was the establishment of the PC at the new independent regulator. The law that established the PC took the powers of the regulator from GNPC and gave it to the PC making GNPC a commercial entity. The PC became the new regulator and issuer of licences and awarder of contracts (Van Alstine, 2014). - CSOs lobby for transparency and competitive bidding in awarding of contracts under the exploration and production bill. - The Petroleum Transparency and Accountability (P-TRAC) Index was introduced by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) in 2011 at a project to monitor progress in governance in the petroleum space in Ghana. Based on four parts of the oil and gas value chain, the index checked on Revenue Transparency, Expenditure Transparency, Contract Transparency and the Petroleum Funds management (P-Track, 2014). - After the PC was established, the Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP) and other CSOs helped the commission develop most of its regulations for the sector.
2012	- In a press briefing organised by the IEA in July on "making Ghana's oil and gas resource count" with the aim of creating awareness about how the oil and gas sector is evolving. At a member of the wider Civil Society, the Media also played an important role in relaying information of the oil and gas sector to the general public. In order to allow for broader participation of the ordinary citizen in Ghana's oil and gas sector CSOs took the initiative to engage government in consultative meetings and press briefings and also brought in Public Interest Groups, Academia and relevant individuals and institutions to adopt strategies and take steps to make Ghana's oil and gas a beneficial resource for all. - CSPOG and other CSOs called on the government to provide a timeline for setting up a national long term development plan in managing our oil revenues and the share the plan with the wider citizenry and all relevant stakeholders and fast track the passage of the Petroleum Exploration and Production law and the Local Content and Local Participation Law. They also asked the government to suspend the issuance of licences to new companies (both local and international) that were entering the oil and gas sector till their demands had been met.
2013	Capacity building workshops on petroleum revenue governance for institutions in government and significant stakeholders in the oil and gas space organised by the IEA and other CSOs.

2014	After the mysterious death of 20 whales off the Ghanaian coast, the Ministry of Environment, Science and Innovation tasked the Environmental Protection Agency to set up a committee to investigate it. The committee was made up of officers from Ghana Maritime Authority, Fisheries Commission, CSOs, Maritime Research Institutions and the EPA itself. The committee was led by Professor Ofori-Danson from the (FoN, 2014) University of Ghana, the leading expert on marine mammals in Ghana (FoN, 2014). The CSOs from the Western Region that were part of the committee included Friends of the Nation (FON) and Western Region Development Network of NGOs (WARENGO). They had their first meeting on 12th February 2014.
2015	- With the aim of increasing transparency and accountability, Friends of the Nation launched the social accountability project in Shama in the Western Region on June 2, 2015. The project had the support of the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and the French Embassy (FoN, 2015). - The first of its kind Africa Oil Governance and Accountability Summit was held at the Labadi beach hotel in Accra. It was organised by the Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP) with sponsorship from Gas for Inclusive Growth (GOGIC). The ministry of petroleum gave the program its blessing and major stakeholders and CSOs gave it massive support by coming together between 23rd and 24th November to make the summit a success. The summit's main aim was the importance of ensuring proper and effective governance of all natural resources, especially oil and gas which was abundant on the African continent. Oxfam, IBIS and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) also provided support (ACEP, 2017a).
2016	ACEP and other CSOs made major contributions to the Exploration and Production Bill before it was passed into law. It was revealed that the competitive bidding process and publication of petroleum contracts parts of the law was initiated by ACEP with other CSOs also contributing important aspects of the law (ACEP, 2017a).
2017	- PIAC, GHEITI and other CSOs in the petroleum space engage government and the general public on publishing information about how oil revenues are received and disbursed (PIAC, 2019). - PIAC launched its annual report on Ghana's oil and gas sector.
2018	- ACEP holds oil and gas summit - Media continues oil and gas awards - PIAC launched its annual report on Ghana's oil and gas sector.
2019	- Red flags were raised about a contract between the government of Ghana and Aker energy by IMANI Africa, a policy think tank. IMANI cautioned that Ghana risked losing billions of dollars if the contract with Aker is not renegotiated at a matter of urgency. They also raised concerns of conflict of interest about one of the local partners of Aker energy, Fueltrade Ghana limited which was owned by the chief executive (CEO) of GNPC at the time Dr. K. K. Sarpong (GhanaWeb, 2019b). The allegations were refuted by Dr. Sarpong with the energy minister at the time Mr. J. P. Amewu also saying that "It is curious how IMANI concluded that Ghana risks losing \$30 billion if the government does not negotiate a new petroleum agreement with Aker Energy ... "There is no basis for a new petroleum agreement. This is because the work that was done by Aker Energy formed part of an appraisal programme based on the existing petroleum agreement," he said (Graphic online, 2019). - PAIC launched its annual report on Ghana's oil and gas sector.
2020	- Another ACEP oil and gas summit organised. - Oil and gas awards organised by the media. - CSPOG Launches campaign to fight corruption in the extractive sectors of Ghana. - PAIC launched its annual report on Ghana's oil and gas sector.
2021	- PIAC launched its annual report on Ghana's oil and gas sector. - Media continues oil and gas awards
2022	- In September ACEP-IMANI issued a statement to enquire about the Gas sales agreement between GNPC and Geneser Energy Ghana Limited (GEG)(ACEP, 2023a). - In November "Climate Finance Report" was Launched. - Alliance of CSOs Working on the Extractive Sectors, Anti-corruption and Good Governance issues a press statement on the state of affairs of the extractive which reviewed the state of affairs in the sector (ACEP, 2023b).
2023	- Press Statement by Alliance of CSOs Working on the Extractive Sectors on the recurring controversies surrounding the Aker Energy and AGM operations in Ghana (ACEP, 2023a) (ACEP, 2023c). - ACEP organised the "Future of Energy Conference 2023".
2024	In April ACEP organised the "National Methane Forum".

	• ACEP organised the “2024 Summer School on Governance of Extractive Industries in Anglophone Africa”. • ACEP organised the “Future of Energy Conference 2024”.
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Source: Author’s compilations

A review of CSO actions in Ghana's oil and gas sector shows significant operational diversity throughout the last ten years as shown in table 5. Organizations from civil society including coalitions CSPOG, ACEP, and IMANI actively worked to shape legal structures and influence public as well as elite discussions about oil revenue management. However, their overall long-term impact and structural power are limited by larger hegemonic forces and elite pushback.

The 2007-2012 period saw the most progress, as CSOs capitalized on the “founding moment” of oil discovery to institutionalize transparency mechanisms (e.g., the PRMA, the Petroleum Commission Act), demand competitive bidding and the creation of PIAC. This type of intervention, which might be described by Gramscian scholars as “counter-hegemonic practices,” involves attempting to influence the ideological and institutional superstructure in ways that align with the national interest and democratic accountability.

From 2013 onward CSOs maintained their efforts in publishing reports and organizing summits to highlight questionable business activities involving companies like Aker Energy and Geneser Energy. The progress of deeper reform efforts has faced obstacles from government countermeasures alongside limited legal power and only partial access to contractual information and selective responses from the elite. Hence, the restricted influence of civil society underscores its structural weakness when compared to the established power of state institutions and transnational corporations.

Overall, while Ghanaian civil society has made important normative and institutional contributions, it also must be seen in the context of a broader hegemonic framework that constrains its transformative capacity. This makes their gains more symbolic and episodic, rather than systemic.

4.5.1. CSOs' Contribution to Legal, Institutional and Policy Frameworks

Right from the early days of oil discovery CSOs attempted to act as a counter-hegemonic force, which is described by Debrah and Graham (2015) as the coming together of several CSOs to shape and influence key foundational policy decisions. In other words, at the early stage of the discovery CSOs formed a coalition to monitor the sector. Since then, CSOs have done a great job by contributing significantly to the legal, fiscal and regulatory structures that have directed policy formulation in the petroleum sector. In both upstream and downstream operations, they have contributed to laws and legislations such as the Petroleum Commission Act, 2011; Act 82, Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act, 2016, Act 919; PRMA, Act 815 as amended Act 893; Petroleum (Local Content and Local Participation) Regulation, 2013 LI 2204 and Petroleum (Exploration and Production)(Measurement) Regulation and Guidelines, 2016, LI 2246. All these legislative framework contributions were in part a response to the high demand for greater state control, revenue maximisation and the escape of the resource curse.

One of the major victories of CSOs was ensuring that the PRMA established a transparent framework for managing petroleum revenues, which had previously been opaque. The Act also provided mechanisms for proper accountability in the use of these revenues. Accordingly, the PRMA mandates the Minister of Finance to publish all revenues received from the sale of petroleum resources in at least two national dailies within thirty calendar days after the end of each quarter (Debrah and Graham, 2015). There are several clauses within the law that create transparency around the oil revenue. Some of these clauses include clause 8 which requires that the publication of oil revenues be done not only in newspapers but also be published online. Additionally, clause 16 requires that the minister harmonise petroleum revenues to expenditure and present the report to parliament quarterly as well as publish them for the nation to see. There

are several clauses in the law about transparency and accountability such as clauses 46 to 48 (PRMA, 2011).

Another achievement for CSOs was the advocacy for the creation of a CSO reserved seat in the governing body of the PC, which was included in Act 821. This provision established a formal link between government and civil society by mandating the inclusion of at least one representative from CSOs on the commission. This person is to represent the interest of other stakeholders other than the government on the board of the commission. Bishop Akologo from ISODEC Ghana was selected in 2013 to sit on the board of the governing council to represent the civil society groups (Key Informant interview, January 14, 2023).⁶¹ To corroborate this, Yaw (2013) suggests that for a nation to be able to use its oil resources to develop, transparency and accountability must be important in its dealings and civil society organisations made significant contributions to that effect. Again, for a nation to escape the resource curse its governing structures and institutions must be of the highest quality.

Another significant victory of CSOs was their relentless role in securing the inclusion of the PIAC in the PRMA. To increase accountability and transparency in the oil and gas space, CSPOG fast tracked the creation of legal structures such as PRMA 815 and others. The earlier stage of oil discovery saw CSPOG making demands on transparency, accountability, and participation of all in the governance of our natural resources. It was within that context that the idea of an additional public oversight body led by citizens in the form of the public interest and accountability committee was mooted and supported by CSOs (Key Informant Interview July 31, 2023).⁶² The PIAC is a good example of counter-hegemony because of the various contentions which occurred especially opposition from the political elite. The reason for CSOs resilience was

⁶¹ Interview # 17

⁶² Interview # 18

that CSOs were seeking to make their contribution into the legal framework to ensure transparency and accountability.⁶³

Despite the determination of CSOs, during the legislative process CSPOG encountered resistance from political elites in the ruling NPP government. Parliament opposed the inclusion of provisions on transparency, accountability, and participation, which constituted the section of the bill relating to PIAC. To counter this opposition, CSOs rallied support from select individual parliamentarians and devised a strategy to portray those who resisted their position as unpatriotic and acting against the interests of the people. The strategy then was that those parliamentarians who opposed the inclusion of PIAC would be exposed and would be punished at the polls. In the words of one expert from CSPOG:

The strategy was that when the speaker put the matter to a vote... they (parliamentarian who supported PIAC) would ensure that the yes vote goes up very strongly and then they would demand a headcount because it's not going to be in camera, we will be able to see those parliamentarians who are voting against the wishes of the citizens and those who are supporting the wishes of the citizens. And then at the polls (2008 elections), they will all be voted out. So that was a contentious area. And so, when the matter was put on discussion, somehow word went around. And so, members of parliament got to know that this was a strategy. And so, when the matter was put to vote, there was no objection at all. It was accepted. That's how PIAC came into being. Of course, they pushed for some amendment, because PIAC was going to go autonomous which they rejected (Key Informant Interview, January 14, 2023).⁶⁴

This strategy was a successful counter-hegemonic approach which helped the CSPOG to overcome the limitation of the government. As a sign of victory, the CSPOG made fifteen proposals to parliament for consideration regarding PRMA 815 before it became law with just one rejection. PIAC was created as a direct result of clauses 51 and 52 which were all proposed by CSPOG to monitor and evaluate compliance with the law and provide a stage for the public to express concerns and give their own assessment of how the oil revenues are being managed (Debrah and

⁶³ Interview #75

⁶⁴ Interview #17

Graham, 2015). The objectives of setting up the committee are stated in clause 4 of the PRMA 815 and they include:

- a. to monitor and evaluate compliance with this Act by the government and other relevant institutions in the discharge of their duties in relation to the use and management of petroleum revenues and resources as required by law.
- b. to provide a formal active voice in the use and management of petroleum revenues, by providing space and the platform for the public to debate whether spending prospects and management of revenues adhere to development priorities.
- c. to provide independent assessments on the use and management of petroleum revenues and resources to assist Parliament and the executive in the oversight of and performance of related functions; and to ensure that petroleum revenue is used for the benefit of current and future generations of citizens (PIAC, 2016).

4.5.2. Counter Hegemony and Contradiction of Transparency: Co-Optation or Accountability?

4.5.2.1. Civil Society and Its Impact on Transparency Laws and Institutions

The legal and institutional architecture of Ghana's post-oil discovery governance trajectory is significant in the context of the role CSOs have played in its emergence. The advocacy of CSOs in demanding transparency and accountability in petroleum revenue management has been shaped by their attempts which served as a counter hegemonic force, including the state elites and IOCs push for legal reform. For instance, CSOs were instrumental in influencing the government's decision to establish the PRMA in 2011 as well as the subsequent creation of PIAC to institutionalize the role of citizens in demanding accountability in the use of oil rents (Debrah and Graham, 2015; Panford, 2017). The establishment of PIAC was heavily inspired by transparency movements such as EITI. The goal was to create a legal and institutional infrastructure for civil society oversight (Debrah and Graham, 2015). As a result of the advocacy by CSOs for the establishment of PIAC, several of its members were drawn from civil society organizations. This represents a contested compromise as one key informant admitted (Key Informant Interview January 14, 2023).⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Interview #17

Despite several policy interventions by CSOs which created a legal framework for greater accountability, its implementations were diluted by politics and elite interests. For example, as pointed out earlier in this thesis, PIAC autonomous proposal was rejected by parliament and there was no L.I backing PIAC's proposal making it a toothless bulldog without any prosecutorial powers (Key Informant Interview, January 14, 2023).⁶⁶ Additionally parliament added some flexibility clauses in the PRMA which arguably diluted some aspects of implementation of the law. This was the introduction of the discretionary power of the minister of finance to select the four priority areas of expenditures from the ABFA and the absence of appropriate regulations to guide the minister (Anaman and Darko, 2022). Additionally, PIAC has faced several challenges, as previously discussed.

All of this raises critical questions: Has the push for transparency and the institutional structures established under the PRMA served as a counter-hegemonic response by CSOs to elite capture of the state? Or, alternatively, does transparency represent merely an act of co-optation, especially if civil society continues to demand deeper institutional accountability? Transparency has become a double-edged sword: on one hand, symbolically necessary for state and corporate legitimacy; on the other hand, a tool for fragmenting, co-opting, or even deradicalizing CSO demands.

4.5.2.2. Structural Loopholes in the PRMA

In addition, the structural design of the PRMA itself also has some significant limitations that have affected the broader framework of transparency. As it stands now, the PRMA requires publication of petroleum revenues, and the funds are divided into the ABFA, Stabilization Fund, and Heritage Fund. However, sections 21 (4) and 26 (4) of the PRMA give broad discretionary

⁶⁶ Interview #17

powers to the ministers of finance and energy, including the ability to determine the use of the ABFA. For instance, section 21 (4) allows the minister of finance to select which expenditure items count as priority spending for the ABFA without any rigorous procedural accountability or technical criteria (Anaman and Darko, 2022). This has given all governments the opportunity to “re-prioritize” the use of ABFA funds in ways that meet their political and economic objectives even though that use might not be what the law intended. For example, all governments have used the ABFA to finance government debt or fund recurrent expenditures like salary payments. The lack of any mechanism to enforce or challenge these discretionary powers has enabled government ministers to bypass the more stringent controls in the law.

A similar challenge is seen with the GSF, which was intended to provide a buffer in the event of negative price shocks. Ministers have unilaterally decided to place caps on the fund or even withdraw portions of it without much transparency or accountability. While civil society has sought to influence the selection of government representatives and push for more radical proposals such as social audits and public hearings, state actors have used legal loopholes or institutional inertia to delay implementation (Key Informant Interview, November 21, 2022).⁶⁷ What is apparent in these dynamics is that the law of transparency, accountability, and citizen participation is there, but its enforcement is weak and selective. When the state actors and political elites are threatened by demands for real structural change or sanctions against elite malfeasance, they are happy to retreat into legal grey areas, dilute commitments, or even rely on bureaucratic inaction.

Looking at these loopholes, it was not surprising that one expert in the oil and gas mentioned that “political elites from both NPP and NDC have frequently manipulated legal

⁶⁷ Interview #16

provisions to maintain discretionary control over the use of ABFA, oil contract and revenue allocation (Key Informant Interview, November 21, 2022)".⁶⁸ Therefore, while CSOs played a prominent role of counter-hegemony in drafting policies which have resource nationalism tendencies, the enforcement of these policies generally remains structurally constrained by hegemonic capitalist interest which defeats the actualisation of resource nationalism in the oil and gas sector. It is important to emphasise the point that despite the global reputation of Ghana's oil and gas sector being relatively transparent due to having fashioned global standard laws, a closer examination of issues reveals fundamental contradictions which further shows the selective transparency in oil and gas governance. Although CSOs played a counter-hegemonic role in securing certain clauses in the PRMA such as the mandatory publication of petroleum revenues and expenditures to ensure transparency their influence was still met with limitations.

4.5.2.3. Selective Transparency and Measurement Politics

Despite the rhetoric of global best practice and actual implementation of transparency measures such as mandatory contract publication and EITI compliance, Ghana's oil sector transparency has often functioned more as a symbolic commitment than a radical transformation of the *status quo*. For example, while some petroleum contracts have been published in full or in part on government portals and repositories, they are often incomplete or redacted. A promise by a deputy minister in 2017 to publish all contracts was not fully fulfilled (Pitnam, 2017). These practices of selective transparency, partial disclosure, and delay mean the public is unable to scrutinize contracts and revenue flows effectively.

Some evidence for this can be seen in the fact that a P-TRAC Index has been developed by the IEA to measure the level of transparency in Ghana's oil and gas sector. The index, based on

⁶⁸ Interview #16

specific criteria such as budget openness, online publication of contracts, political financing, and others, has been tracking progress and suggesting improvements since 2014 (P-Track, 2014). For example, the oil sector scorecard shows that in 2011, the overall score on good governance in the extractive sector was 59.7%, with strengths in transparency in contract publication (66.7%) and revenue disclosure (64.3%) (P-Track, 2014). This index has also been used by civil society, particularly groups such as the CSPOG, to launch “Readiness Report Cards” and rate the government’s progress and performance. For example, in 2011 it was used as a tool to assess the performance of government on matters that required attention.

The Report Card scored government’s performance on ten different metrics which included transparency, independent regulation of the sector, licensing and contracting, citizen participation/public oversight, budget openness/public financial management and social and environmental issues. The Report also shed light on the role of Parliament, Petroleum Companies, Donor Agencies and Civil Society Groups. The CSOs platform developed a scorecard to go with the report card which was used to rate government’s performance after one year of production. Despite the relatively high score of transparency, the governmental non-compliance with full contract disclosure was reported making it difficult for the public to access these PA (P-Track, 2014). There have also been several instances of selective reporting on oil revenue by government which makes tracking difficult (P-Track, 2014). Hence, this selective transparency functions as a hegemonic tool: while, on paper, it creates the appearance that Ghana has met good governance standards and global best practices, in practice political and corporate elites continue to dominate the sector.

4.5.2.4. CSO Engagement: Hegemony or Counter-Hegemony?

A critical contradiction in civil society's engagement in Ghana's oil sector is that, while it has been active and influential in many areas, as shown in Table 5, its successes have been counterbalanced by a trend of co-optation and dilution of their demands. Civil society has been at the forefront of demanding transparency, good governance, and accountability, but it is also true that some of these actors have been partly incorporated into the technocratic and legalistic governance system, where their capacity to make radical political demands has been limited.

On the one hand, CSOs in Ghana have, in many ways, functioned as important counter-hegemonic actors. This is especially true when they have brought to light evidence of opaque state and corporate practices, elite capture of oil contracts and revenues, or the marginalization of local communities. Groups like ACEP, IMANI, IEA, Friends of the Nation, and CSPOG have had significant influence in policy circles, helped pass legislation such as the PRMA and E&P Act, and been able to mobilize media and public pressure against illegalities and abuses. For instance, these groups have been very vocal and effective in raising alarms over opaque and suspicious contracts and payments that the government or IOCs have made.

On the other hand, there are also ways that these CSOs have been co-opted or co-opt themselves into the very system they are supposed to be holding accountable. For example, ACEP proposed a competitive bidding regime for the allocation of oil blocks to private firms, and the idea was written into the 2016 E&P Act (ACEP, 2017a). However, the state has since granted contracts without competition, including a US\$2 billion oil block concession to ExxonMobil in 2018 (Reuters, 2018). CSOs that rely heavily on foreign funding are also constrained by “donor capture” dynamics and an underlying consensus on transparency and market-friendly resource governance. It is less controversial or politically expedient to demand transparency and accountability which has become a “global public good” than to meaningfully represent the voices

of the marginalized, especially oil-producing communities. This has been a long-term tension, although it would be simplistic to suggest that these CSOs were ever fully independent of the neoliberal consensus or immune from capture.

4.5.2.5. CSOs and the State: A Need to Reframe Hegemony

Overall, the PRMA and the struggle for civil society participation and transparency provides several important insights into the contradictions of counter-hegemony and hegemony in Ghana. On the one hand, CSOs were successful in pressuring the state to institutionalize transparency mechanisms in the law and crystallize citizens' role in oversight through PIAC. However, the lack of an LI for PIAC, the discretionary powers of the ministers, and the shallow enforcement of CSO recommendations are all indicative of the limits of legalism as a strategy to restructure power relations.

The lesson here may be that counter-hegemonic reforms require not only new legal and institutional rules but also counter-hegemonic shifts in power dynamics. As long as the executive remains unconstrained and has the capacity to interpret or ignore the law as it sees fit, civil society victories may be precarious. Moreover, transparency is not a panacea for accountability: it must be underpinned by other pillars such as institutional capacity, political will, and popular mobilization that are willing and able to take on elite actors.

4.5.2.6. Transparency and Its Discontents

Ghana's post-oil discovery legal and institutional architecture is an example par excellence of the dialectic between hegemony and counter-hegemony. On the one hand, the PRMA has been one of the most ambitious and well-crafted laws, demonstrating how civil society advocacy and global best practices could come together to produce concrete outcomes. However, the political economy of elite capture, institutional fragmentation, and discretionary control that have

characterized the trajectory of oil governance have hollowed out many of the PRMA's more noble commitments. Transparency has thus become a double-edged sword: as long as the state and corporations try to publicly commit to it, they can largely ignore or dilute its more contentious demands, and accountability is effectively replaced with superficial gestures and selective compliance.

The challenge for CSOs, and indeed citizens in general, is to push for transparency beyond just a technical or managerial reform, but rather as a concrete practice of public control and popular ownership over resources. For transparency to be effective, it must be backed up by enforceable legal commitments, fiscal rules and oversight mechanisms that genuinely empower oversight institutions like PIAC, and a genuine political will to decentralize oil rents to the grassroots and make them accountable to popular forces. Otherwise, transparency is an empty concept, a legitimizing myth of neoliberal extractive capitalism. The challenge for students of Ghana's oil industry is to remain open to the possibility that Ghana might be both a success story and a contradiction of neoliberal hegemony at the same time.

4.6. Conclusion

The chapter reveals that Ghana's oil and gas governance is influenced by a complex and evolving interplay between competing interest, ideologies, and institutional arrangements. Rather than reflecting a straightforward case of resource sovereignty or foreign domination, Ghana's experience illustrates the dialectical struggles between competing power blocs inherent in the governance of extractive resources within the global capitalist system. Through its oil and gas policies and legal frameworks such as PRMA, Petroleum Commission Act, E&P Act Ghana demonstrated a purposeful but restricted effort to assert resource sovereignty while promoting economic inclusion and development. The government worked together with civil society and

other domestic actors to develop a governance framework which aimed to avoid the resource curse while increasing public revenue and strengthening state control.

A Neo-Gramscian analysis reveals that Ghana's resource governance system is shaped by a dialectical tension. On one side is the hegemonic bloc, led by IOCs and IFIs, together with segments of the domestic political elite. This power bloc is sustained not only through material control but also through ideological leadership, where neoliberal norms such as flexible fiscal regimes, investor confidence, and direct negotiations are promoted as "common sense." On the other side are counter-hegemonic actors, including civil society groups, technocratic institutions, local advocacy organizations, and segments of parliament (particularly the opposition), who fought to embed principles of transparency, accountability, and equity into Ghana's oil and gas legal framework. Their efforts contributed to the inclusion of PIAC and the incorporation of transparency clauses in the PRMA, the E&P Act, and related legislation. CSOs have demanded for transparency and accountability alongside public participation, but their impact remains limited. Their counter-hegemonic efforts remain constrained. Legal loopholes, executive discretion in oil revenue management with limited efforts to enforce accountability have weakened the institutional effectiveness of these reforms. The dilution of transparency provisions, the largely symbolic rather than transformative role of PIAC, and the state's continued control over resource allocation all demonstrate how counter-hegemonic demands can be absorbed, neutralized, or subverted within the dominant political and economic bloc. The effectiveness and resilience of the hegemonic bloc, which has consolidated itself through close transnational coordination and the domestic subordination of dissenting views, and the relative weakness of the counter-hegemonic bloc is clearly a reflection of the broader material and ideological balance of forces at both domestic and international levels.

Yet Ghana's experience also shows moments of subaltern resistance, of friction, of political contestation, of claims to autonomy by certain actors. CSOs and critical actors within Parliament and within technocratic institutions have had a genuine impact on the formative outcomes of legislation, and on the general awareness of oil governance issues in Ghana. Hence, the Ghanaian case is neither that of the success of resource nationalism, nor that of its failure, nor that of simple imperialism in control. It is that of contradictions, but also interdependent and dynamic outcomes of contestation between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic blocs within institutions, across institutions, and between institutions and civil society. In essence, it is not a binary story of success or failure but one of uneven development, institutional negotiations, and ideological contestation within the capitalist global order.

Taken together, the results also confirm the operation of Ghana's integral state, in which state agencies, CSOs and donors form part of an institutional configuration that generates consent and perpetuates dependence. The alliances built around oil governance, and the shared interests of local elites, technocrats and transnational capital that they reflect, represent a recomposed power bloc. Hegemony in this context, Ghana included, is achieved through participation and reform, not repression. Oil's structural power is key to this phenomenon: fiscal rules, transparency mechanisms and investor-friendly provisions discipline governments and constrain policy space. In this way, material and ideological constraints work together to reproduce hegemony.

This outcome should also be seen in historical terms. In many ways, Ghana's experience of oil governance is a continuation of its ISI past. The drive to build a modern industrial state lives on. But in this era of neoliberal governance, that drive is shaped by the constraints of the market. The seeming contradiction between sovereignty and subordination is thus resolved in an

institutional form that differs little from its predecessors (such as Nkrumah). In so doing, Ghana's case also has implications for understanding resource nationalism more generally. The ways in which hegemony is reproduced in Ghana's democracy is instructive for our understanding of resource nationalism in other contexts. It is not by repression that domination is maintained in a democratic petro-state, but rather through a host of reformist and participatory features that co-opt popular dissent and promote consensus.

Chapter 5. The Local Content Policy (LCP) in Ghana: Resource Nationalism or Neo-liberal Accommodation?

5.1. Introduction

Since Ghana discovered oil in commercial quantities in 2007, the state has been formulating strategies to see the country get full benefits from the resource while doing everything possible to escape the resource curse. To do this, one of the key policies it adopted was the LCP which was also made into a law. By local content in this dissertation, I refer to “the quantum or percentage of locally produced materials, personnel, financing, goods and services rendered in the petroleum industry value chain, and which can be measured in monetary terms” (Petroleum Commission, 2013: 49).

Ghana's LCP can be read as a millennial refashioning of the ISI impulse, the desire to translate resource extraction into home-grown industrial capacity. But unlike Nkrumah's statism, this reworking unfolds through private-sector partnerships and transnational alliances, pointing to a changed composition of the ruling bloc from nationalist-statist to neoliberal-technocratic. The core issue now revolves around control of localisation efforts and the distribution of its financial benefits.

LCP in Ghana is widely presented as a resource nationalism tool to advance state-led industrialisation and economic inclusion while increasing local involvement in the oil and gas sector (Ackah and Mohammed, 2020). Nonetheless, a Neo-Gramscian reflection on Ghana's LCP suggests that it represents a negotiated compromise within global capitalism rather than a genuine assertion of sovereign control over national resources (i.e. oil and gas). The policy simultaneously supports domestic empowerment claims while meeting IOCs needs and fitting into the post-neoliberal global economy which allows selective state interventions to preserve capitalist systems

without altering core power structures. In this chapter, I argue that Ghana's LCP, although it is framed as a tool of resource nationalism, it is only symbolic, because it is ultimately limited through international economic forces and controlled by both foreign corporations and local elites' complicity. To a large extent, Ghana's LCP reflects the concept of "passive revolution" according to Gramsci (Gramsci, 1971; Morton, 2007) and Cox (1987) because it permits minimal changes to address demands for economic sovereignty yet preserves the overarching strength of global capital. The LCP ultimately functions as a local expression of global capitalist integration (i.e. integral state) that promotes gradual participation of domestic stakeholders but keeps IOCs in charge of essential industry operations because it does not eliminate Ghana's dependence on global capitalist oil economic structures.

The chapter's argument reinforces the dissertation's broader claim that Ghana's resource nationalism is shaped by the contradictory pressures of an African democratic state seeking, at least on the surface, to balance the demands of global capitalist hegemony with local developmental aspirations. Ghana shows its dedication to national development and industrialisation as an African democratic state operating under the control of IOCs and their power bloc. This contradiction means Ghanaian elites face a political challenge because they must support local content programmes for political legitimacy yet remain structurally dependent on foreign capital, technology and market access which perpetuates Ghana's subordinated integration in the global economy.

Moreover, the ongoing global energy transition adds complexity to maintaining Ghana's LCP's viability over the long term because the shift of IOCs towards renewable energy and decarbonisation may render Ghana's oil led industrial strategies redundant in the long term. Although the energy transition has been presented as progressive shift, it remains controlled by

dominant powers who maintain their influence over global resource extraction (Fox, 2023; Pedregal and Luki, 2024; Pedregal and Lukić, 2024).

This chapter is structured as follows: after the introduction, the second section investigates the historical development of the LCP by examining its roots within both international and local context. It examines how the post-neoliberal economic order selectively allows state-led industrial policies yet maintains the supremacy of transnational capital and IOCs. The third section examines how the LCP evolved by analysing its design and objectives. The penultimate section examines the impact of the LCP in the oil and gas sector, highlighting how some of its apparent successes are largely superficial, with limited transformative effect. Situated within the Neo-Gramscian theory of hegemony, the analysis shows that the LCP functions as a localized form of global hegemonic adaptation which manages contradictions without altering the dominance of transnational capital, while at the same time reflecting the complex and contradictory nature of some limited gains. The concluding section places Ghana's LCP into its appropriate context by examining its role in the worldwide capitalist framework. It shows that the LCP operates within a framework of passive revolution that is pursuing limited reforms that project nationalist goals but ultimately preserving the structural dominance of transnational capital.

5.2. Genesis of Ghana's LCP: Origin in the Global Context

5.2.1. The Global Push for State-Led Industrialisation in Post-Neoliberal Era

A discussion on the development of Ghana's LCP must be understood within the wider post-neoliberal shift in global economic governance. After years of neoliberal policies prioritising deregulation and privatisation with limited government involvement a shift towards acknowledging limitations of purely market-based development occurred during the late 2000s. The IFIs, development partners, and multilateral organisations started to selectively support state-

driven industrial policies particularly in the Global South to address socioeconomic inequalities while sustaining the dominance of global capital (Fine and Saad-Filho, 2017; Stiglitz, 2019). This is often done through state partnership with IFIs with the motive of attracting FDI for the benefit of government, industry and communities (World Bank Group, 2013a, 2013b, 2015). For example, in 2013 the World Bank organised a conference in support of local content from September 30 to October 1 in Vienna, Austria which gathered policy makers, industrial associates, major IOCs and mining companies, suppliers' association, over 50 oil producing states and other stake holders (World Bank Group, 2013a).

This transition of IFIs supporting state led industrialisation such as LCP reflects Gramsci's (1971), Cox's (1987) and Gill's (2008) concept of “passive revolution” which represents reform implementation that strengthens existing power systems instead of dismantling them. It is within this framework that LCPs were established as an acceptable government intervention which encouraged local economic participation while protecting the business interests of TNCs and IOCs. LCPs give the impression of enhanced resource sovereignty, yet they stay fundamentally linked to global value systems and dependent on external capital and technological inputs (Chang, 2003)

Ghana's LCP emerged in a global trend significantly influenced by the World Bank alongside the IMF and bilateral development organisations. It has been argued that these institutions on the surface promote local content frameworks as a means of incorporating domestic economies into global production networks while preserving investor friendly environments favourable for the dominance of IFIs (Whitfield et al., 2015). For example, the World Bank has taken an active role in urging African nations to establish local content frameworks within their extractive sectors to demonstrate that these policies can boost economic benefits while still attracting foreign investment (World Bank Group, 2013b). Nonetheless, critics have argued that

these LCP frameworks have been designed to serve multinational firms first while neglecting domestic industry needs which results in only surface-level local involvement (Eikeland and Nilsen, 2016; Hansen et al., 2014).

Global economic and capitalist forces have shaped the LCPs adopted by resource-rich developing nations in similar ways. For instance, the Brazilian government initially established rigorous local content mandates for Petrobras' oil industry yet later relaxed these rules because international investors pushed for changes and criticized them for inefficient institutions (Baer, 2007; Musacchio and Lazzarini, 2014). The Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act of 2010 which sought to boost local involvement in Nigeria's oil sector struggled with foreign control and inadequate enforcement systems (Ovadia, 2016b). The cases demonstrate the role of LCPs as tools for neoliberal accommodation that balances resource nationalist aspirations with foreign investment needs. Therefore, this is the global background that sets the stage for the implementation of Ghana's LCP which I explained that on paper is framed as a strategy for local empowerment nonetheless its implementation has been shaped by external forces with the goal to maintain Ghana's integration in the current neoliberal hegemonic economic order rather than help the country to attain economic self-sufficiency. Yet, global capitalism is not the only limiting factor, some other factors are variations in state capacity and political will across national contexts. Evidence from LCP experiences in other countries like Brazil and Norway shows that successful LCPs can achieve far-reaching outcomes when combined with effective institutions, political will, and developmental state (DS) capacity (de Oliveira, 2015; Muhongo, 2021).

In this sense, the global system sets parameters for what is politically and economically possible, but it does not mechanically reproduce a single outcome. Instead, reinvigorating LCPs

in the current context would require not only resistance to external pressures and capture but also strategic alliance building domestically to push for accountability, enforcement, and local industrial development. Ghana's LCP experience calls for a more nuanced and dialectical analysis that avoids the traps of a binary approach.

5.2.2. Ghana's Local Context and Motivation for LCP

Ghana's LCP was shaped by a combination of historical lessons from mining, economic aspirations and political pressures. Experts who were interviewed mentioned these fundamental reasons as the driving force behind the LCP legislation in Ghana's oil and gas sector. The first was Ghana's historical experience and lessons from the mining sector, which had long been dominated by foreign interests. Expert interviews highlighted that Ghana's experience in the mining sector was far from positive. Respondents noted with regret that, despite being one of the world's leading gold producers, the country has largely failed to translate its mineral wealth into broad-based economic development, particularly for mining communities that continue to live in poverty. This perspective corroborates findings from earlier studies on mining and its impacts.⁶⁹ Regrettably, the mining sector's approach to local content was widely seen as ineffective, since it over-concentrated on fiscal policies such as obtaining revenue through taxes, and other means, at the expense of domestic development and human capital formations and development (Hilson and Hilson, 2017; Hilson and Okoh, 2013).⁷⁰ Additionally, although there was LCP embedded in the Mining Act of 2006 there was no legal instrument due to several factors such as the prioritisation of foreign investment over structural economic transformation, lack of political will and institutional weakness (Asumda et al., 2024). The absence of a L.I or regulation limited the impact of the LCP

⁶⁹ Interview #14 and #15

⁷⁰ Interview #15

in the mining sector. For example, one of the weaknesses of the mining LCP was the ambiguity in the policies on purchases of locally manufactured products. Hence, Ghanaians were importing from China, Vietnam, and other places and selling to the mines. As a result, local manufacturers were undercut and unable to compete with the cheaper prices of their competitors, leading to closures and stalling the growth in the local sector. This ultimately led to the collapse of the LCP in the mining sector and low production from companies that manufactured some of the chemicals and materials needed by the mining companies (Key Informant Interview, November 14, 2022).

The second factor that influenced the formation of Ghana's LCP in the oil and gas sector was the lessons drawn from other countries that had successfully implemented similar policies. Therefore, Ghana's entire LCP, the legislature and the architecture of the petroleum sector were centred on countries like Norway when it comes to oil, Trinidad and Tobago specifically gas. Because these countries implemented good and sustainable LCPs, Ghanaian stakeholders sought to model Ghana's LCP after these countries (Key Informant Interview December 15, 2022).⁷¹ These countries had a target contribution for their extractive sector beyond the taxes. They specifically included the development of human resources and capital and well-crafted linkages between the oil and gas sector and other sectors of their economy. Additionally, stakeholders in charge of the formation of the LCPs picked some lessons from Nigeria because the country implemented a strong and effective LCP since it had a dedicated oversight body (NOGICDMB), mandatory local content requirement, a strong legal and regulatory framework, promotion of indigenous participation and promotion of local supply chain.

The third factor was the political pressure of managing expectations and avoiding the resource curse. This is because, in 2007, Ghanaians had high expectations of the transformative

⁷¹ Interview #14

nature of the oil and gas sectors. Nonetheless, in 2010 when oil production commenced, one expert interviewed mentioned that stakeholders realised that some companies were importing some basic items such as personal protective equipment (PPE), catering and food supplies, uniforms and working gears from Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa, China and other places. Hence, to benefit from the sector, Ghana needed to empower local suppliers (Key Informant Interview December 15, 2022).⁷² Therefore, the expectation was to increase Ghanaian participation in the oil and gas sector, driven by concerns that citizens might otherwise fail to benefit. The focus was on developing local capacity, raising standards, and ultimately empowering Ghanaians already engaged in the sector.

Clearly, in the case of the LCP in the oil and gas sector, there is a stronger orientation towards resource nationalism, informed by lessons from the mining sector. The government sought to avoid repeating the shortcomings of the mining LCP by providing legal backing, establishing strict enforcement mechanisms, and setting specific local participation targets. The desire to use oil and gas for development led Ghanaian stakeholders to embark “on policy and legislative development from the moment oil and gas were discovered in 2007” (Ackah and Mohammed, 2020: 143). Corroborating the earlier views of all experts interviewed on the matter was the notion that the mining sector failed to deliver the benefit meant for Ghanaians (Akabzaa et al., 2007; Gyampo, 2011; Ayelazuno, 2014b). This pushed the state, in consultation with policy experts, civil society and several stakeholders, to marshal its resources to commence the process of legislation. One of the earliest actions was the release of two policy documents by the Ministry of Energy, both in February 2010. One of them which was titled “National Energy Policy” states the following under the local content section:

- Maximise the benefits of oil and gas wealth generation on a comprehensive local content platform by optimising the use of local expertise, goods and services, job creation for people, businesses and financing in all aspects of the oil and gas industry value chain, and retention of the benefit within Ghana.

⁷² Interview #14

- Develop local capacity in all aspects of the oil and gas value chain through education, skills and expertise development, transfer of technology and know-how.
- Achieve maximum practicable influence over development initiatives for local/domestic stakeholders.
- Maximise local content and local participation in all aspects of the oil and gas industry value chain within a decade.
- Increase the capacity and international competitiveness of domestic businesses and industrial sectors; and create supportive industries that will sustain economic development (Ministry of Energy, 2010a: 16–17).

The second policy document was “Local Content and Local Participation in Petroleum Activities-Policy Framework” which outlines the follow core objectives:

- Maximise the benefits of oil and gas wealth generation on a comprehensive local content platform by maximizing the use of local expertise, goods and services, job creation for people, businesses and financing in all aspects of the oil and gas industry value chain and retention of the benefit within Ghana.
- Develop local capability in all aspects of the oil and gas value chain through education, skills and expertise development, transfer of technology and know-how and an active research and development portfolio;
- Achieve a degree of influence or control over development initiatives for local/domestic stakeholders.
- Achieve at least 90 per cent local content and local participation in all aspects of oil and gas industry value chain within a decade.
- Increase capabilities and international competitiveness of domestic businesses and industrial sectors; and
- Create oil and gas and related supportive industries that will sustain economic development (Ministry of Energy, 2010b: 5).

A careful examination of these two policies reveals that the government of Ghana was committed to promoting local content in the oil and gas sector to enable the indigenes to take ownership of the sector because the policy mentioned that priority should be given to Ghanaians in the sector. These policies showed the government's commitment to building the capacity of local businesses to make them internationally competitive. Part of its ambition was to achieve 90% local content by 2023, a decade after the law was passed. This was a comparatively huge increase from the 10% in 2013. While on paper these LCPs were framed in the spirit of resource nationalism, aimed at ensuring Ghana's control and participation in the oil and gas sectors, there is a clear structural constraint from the post-colonial global economic structure entranced by neoliberalism. The need to attract foreign investment at the beginning of the oil discovery as alluded to by one key informant meant that the LCP has to be designed in a way that did not deter IOCs and other investors. Indeed this led to the compromise in the implementation of the policy which I point out

in the subsequent section of this chapter.⁷³ This is what makes it align with the framework of passive revolution, where reforms are introduced as transformative tools to address domestic concerns but remain embedded within the broader neoliberal order which ensures the continuous dominance of global capital (Cox, 1987; Gill, 2008).

5.3. The Evolution of the Petroleum (Local Content and Local Participation) Regulations, 2013 (LI 2204)

5.3.1. A Brief History of the Legislative Process

The history of LCP in Ghana started as far back as 1984 with the enactment of the PNDC Law 84 which is the Petroleum Exploration and Production Law at that time. Section 23 of the PNDC Law 84 makes provision for preference of Ghanaian goods and services (Ackah and Mohammed, 2020). Six years after oil production (2016), the government of Ghana decided to change Law 84, as discussed in Chapter 4, Law 84 has several limitations. Therefore, the law was replaced with the E&P Act 2016 (Act 919). The Act mentioned that Ghanaian citizens who qualify should be given the opportunity in the oil and gas sector. Specifically, section 61 clause (1) mentions that Ghanaian firms should be selected first in the supply chain of consumer goods and service equipment, machinery and many more.

In 2013, the Petroleum (Local Content and Local Participation) Regulations, (LI 2204) law was introduced to facilitate the growth of local knowledge and expertise in the upstream oil and gas sector. The main aim of this law was to increase the access and use of local materials and services in exploiting the nation's petroleum resources as much as possible. This law also aims to increase the skills and expertise of Ghanaians to make them more competitive in the upstream petroleum job market in Ghana. The law was amended to enable the PC to use its discretionary

⁷³ Interview #46

powers to direct non-Ghanaian and Ghanaian-owned businesses in the upstream sector to enter into partnerships and strategic alliances to supply goods and services instead of incorporating a joint venture. The amendment to the law also makes reservations about the supply of certain types of goods and services to Indigenous Ghanaian Companies (IGC) while raising the qualification of Ghanaian-owned companies from 51% to 100% ownership (Chambers and Partners, 2023). The law requires the transfer of technologies, skills, training, recruitment initiatives and programmes to Ghana's NOC, the GNPC or the PC. Some of the Jubilee partners and GNPC representatives who were interviewed during fieldwork confirmed that they were working in collaboration with the state to achieve this goal (Field Interviews 2022 and 2023).⁷⁴ The next section outlines some key features of the LI 2204.

5.3.2. Features of LI 2204 and the Limits of Resource Nationalism

Policies are useful; however, as some experts noted, without a L.I. they have limited impact, since they lack the force of legislative enforcement. This was the case in Ghana's mining sector, even though the Mining Act contained provisions on local content. Therefore, on November 20th, 2013, Ghana's LCP was enacted into Law as the "Petroleum (Local Content and Local Participation) Regulations, 2013 (LI 2204)."

The objectives of the LI 2204, as stated in its preface, are focused on domestic empowerment in terms of job creation, value addition, technology transfer and enabling Ghanaian ownership. More particularly, the law provides for mandatory joint venture between non-indigenous firms and Ghanaian entities with at least 10% equity (Regulation 4) and a 10% price preference for indigenous firms in procurement contracts (Regulation 12). Provisions on

⁷⁴ Interviews #2, #43, #44, #62, #63, #64, #65.

employment include the obligation to submit training and succession plans that must show how and when Ghanaian nationals will replace expatriates in all positions (starting with the junior and middle-level ones) (Regulations 17–19)(Petroleum Commission, 2013: 4).

These objectives were similar to those of the LCP to enhance local participation and again a strong sense towards resource nationalism because they prioritise domestic value addition, local capacity development, employment creations, technology transfer and national control over core aspects of Ghana’s oil and gas sector. The goal is to ensure that Ghanaian interest is paramount whilst limiting foreign control and dependence on foreign capital. The Law in Article 5 (1) established the Local Content Committee which was one of the features adopted from the Nigerian model (Key Informant Interview January 20, 2023).⁷⁵ The Committee is mandated to: oversee, coordinate, and manage the development of local content; undertake public education; conduct local content monitoring and audits; and perform any other functions assigned by the Commission in accordance with applicable laws, among others (Petroleum Commission, 2013: 6).

⁷⁵ Interview #15.

Table 6 Fundamental Local Content Provisions from the L.I 2204⁷⁶

L.I. 2204 provision	Description
Regulation 4(6)	A non-indigenous Ghanaian company providing goods or services must enter into a joint venture agreement with local companies which must have an equity participation of at least 10%.
Regulation 11	Preference to Ghanaian companies in the procurement of goods and services.
Regulation 12.	10% price advantage to be given to indigenous Ghanaian companies. Regulation 13 Single source justification subject to PC approval for the procurement of goods and services above \$100,000
Regulations 14	Submission of quarterly forecasts to the Petroleum Commission.
Regulations 15	Submission of specified documents to the Petroleum Commission at various stages of the bidding process.
Regulation 16	Review of selected contracts to ensure effective monitoring
Regulations 17 (1) b&c	Employment and training sub-plan to be submitted by companies to the Petroleum Commission that details out timeframe within which Ghanaians can be employed at each phase of the petroleum activity, and progress made for the accelerated training of Ghanaians
Regulation 18	Regulation 18 Companies to submit succession plan for any employment position that is occupied by a non-Ghanaian
Regulation 19	Only Ghanaians shall be employed in Junior and middle level positions.

Source:(ACEP, 2017b: 15)

Table 6 is an illustration of the fundamental local content provision from the L.I. 2204. These represent legislative presentation of resource nationalist objectives within the oil and gas law: requiring minimum levels of equity participation by indigenous companies (Reg. 4), priority in awarding contracts (Reg. 11–13), as well as reporting obligations to the Petroleum Commission

⁷⁶ In the drafting of L.I. 2204 the PC and the Ministry of Energy worked with policymakers and industry experts along with CSOs and private sector stakeholders through multiple consultation rounds during the development of L.I. 2204. It also involved technical experts from the Ministry of Energy and legal advisors along with members from Parliament's Energy and Mines Committee who worked together to create a framework that addressed both national development aims and IOCs requirements.

on employment, training, and workforce indigenization plans (Reg. 17–19). In aggregate, these constitute the engine room of Ghana’s legal architecture to deliver on capacity development, technology transfer and economic participation, that closely tracks the hallmarks of nationalist strategy and the imperative to avoid Ghana’s mining “failures”. All these provisions were put in place in the spirit of resource nationalism as one expert admitted “we fashioned these great laws and policies because we had the interest of the ordinary Ghanaian at hand...mining taught us a big lesson” (Expert Interview April 10, 2023).⁷⁷

That said, these policy outcomes too are not reducible to technocratic products but represent a social product of political contestation and negotiation by actors who “won” counter-hegemonic battles to embed elements of a developmentalist project in an opening and globalizing liberal oil regime. The law further introduced quarterly reporting (Regulation 14), contract transparency (Regulation 16) and compliance monitoring arrangements to be overseen by the Petroleum Commission. Article 5 of the LI 2204 provides for a Local Content Committee to be responsible for, inter alia, the development of targets, coordination of local content implementation and conduct of audits, etc., an institutional design inspired by the Nigerian local content law.

It is within this political-historical context where the force of law was employed to empower domestic industry that the features of L.I. 2204 must be understood. On the one hand, its detailed provisions represent, in legal-technical terms, an ambitious attempt to operationalise a broader vision. On the other hand, viewed through the political economy of local content, the binding nature of the law also reveals its limits. Its enactment was, at least in part, a response to civil society pressure and to state recognition that the mining LCP had been largely a public failure

⁷⁷ Interview #46

(Ackah-Baidoo, 2020; Hilson et al., 2014), thus representing an effort to institutionalise local empowerment.

At the same time, in a more active exercise of agency, the state remains quite constrained by the logic and structure of its hegemonic order. For instance, even while Regulation 4(6) calls for joint ventures with Ghanaians, many of the JVs that have been created to comply with this requirement have foreign firms retaining most of the real power within them, just on paper. The regulation also points to the limits of LI 2204 as the supposedly sovereign state will not always actually monitor employment quotas and training and succession plans, or even procurement (to the extent that some of it must go to domestic companies).

Put another way, the contradictions in LI 2204, just as much as in the broader policy/legal framework, are characteristic of how this law and these various legal features are very much part of a wider hegemonic order and power bloc, within which some aspects of resource nationalism could be allowed some expression, but within which the aspirations for such an empowerment paradigm could be captured and constrained by local elites and the structural power of transnational capital.

5.4. The Impact of Ghana's LCP in the Oil and Gas Sector: Successes or Neoliberal Façade?

Ghana's LCP has been promoted as a key strategy to boost local involvement and drive industrial growth while maintaining resource control in the oil and gas industry. While the policy has contributed to institutional development, investment growth, increased local participation, and some supply chain achievements, its overall effectiveness remains contested. From a Neo-Gramscian view LCP appears to function as a supposed counter-hegemonic instrument while remaining embedded within the boundaries of global capitalism. This subsection critically

examines how effectively the LCP achieved genuine economic transformation, while also recognising the complex and often contested terrain of policy making in the global capitalist context. Rather than viewing the LCP solely as a vehicle of genuine resource sovereignty or merely as a neoliberal façade that invokes resource sovereignty rhetorically, it is more accurately understood as a negotiated compromise, balancing pressures from transnational capital with domestic demands for accountability, participation, and developmental gains, what can be described as features of the integral state. The analysis explores the intermediate outcomes, structural constraints and limited or partial success of the LCP. It shows how the LCP simultaneously reflects efforts towards indigenous empowerment and capacity building while remaining entrenched in the broader transnational dominance and elite interests.

5.4.1. Institutional Development: Strengthening Governance or Symbolic Reforms?

One of the essential achievements that experts mentioned during my fieldwork was the establishment of institutional frameworks for LCP to guide the oil and gas sector. The PC was created with some financial support at early stages from several TNCs and IFIs, namely the World Bank, Norwegian government, the Department for International Development (DfID), amongst others (Boateng, 2022). The commission serves as the main regulatory authority with the mandate of enforcing local content regulations and systematically monitoring the operations of foreign companies operating in Ghana. According to an expert interview:

...institutions like the Petroleum Commission and processes for even measuring local content. We didn't have that. It doesn't even exist in the mining sector, which was there before the oil and gas sector. But at least they know when you come in, how they will measure when they take a material...they have a way of measuring, they do periodic monitoring to check how you are complying with the law. So, in terms of systems, institutions and processes, I think it has been good (Key Informant Interview, November 21, 2022).⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Interview #16

This corroborates the literature's assertion that strong institutions, when allowed to function without interference, are more likely to prevent the oil curse, whereas weak institutions tend to be further undermined by the discovery of oil (Iimi, 2007; Sarraf and Jiwanji, 2001).

Despite the establishment of the PC, it continues to face several challenges, some of which have been documented in earlier studies (Quartey and Abbey, 2018; Ablo, 2019; Boateng, 2022; Ablo and Otchere-Darko, 2022). To corroborate these challenges a top official interviewed from the PC listed the following challenges: first is political interference which occurs oftentimes when there is a change in government; second is inadequate enforcement of regulations as a result of external interference; and lastly limited institutional capacity and political will to challenge the structural dominance of TNCs, IFIs and IOCs due to their strong influence in the sector.⁷⁹ This is so because from the onset we saw the strong support from TNCs, IFIs etc., when the commission did not have funds at the early stages of its creation because several efforts to obtain funds from the parliament, budgetary allocation and later in 2014 through the PRMA were not successful (Boateng, 2022). More so, for two years of its establishment (i.e., from 2012 to 2014) the commission was operating from a rented apartment.

Ironically, it was not the Ghanaian state but the World Bank through the Ministry of Finance that provided a grant in 2014 to renovate the Commission's office (Boateng, 2022). While the grant facilitated the development of some physical infrastructure, it also highlights the subtle dynamics of dependency that shape institutional capacity in resource governance. This, in turn, raises questions about the autonomy of the Commission as a national regulator. The creation of the PC in Ghana was a significant step in institutionalizing oil governance, particularly in terms of

⁷⁹ Interview #57

regulatory separation from GNPC's commercial interests. However, this process should be seen in the context of a larger political economy, influenced by both domestic and transnational factors. While IFIs and MNCs did play a role in providing technical and financial assistance to the Commission, especially in its early stages, this can be seen as an attempt to institutionalize governance mechanisms that align with global norms of transparency and investor protection, rather than as a direct challenge to existing hierarchies of global capital (Boateng, 2022).

One must understand the outcomes of these interventions as complex hybrids instead of labelling them simply as symbolic or hegemonic. The PC made progress in licensing standardization and local content enforcement but encountered significant challenges with political interference and resource limitations. This suggests that the process of institutional development in Ghana has been more of a contested terrain where both elements of resource nationalism and external influence coexist. Indeed, as will be seen in subsequent sections, local actors have also used these institutional spaces to push for developmental goals, albeit partially and with the risk of elite capture.

5.4.2. Investment and local development: Meaningful Transformation or Peripheral Growth?

LCP has facilitated several investments in local business, infrastructure, and skill development especially in the Western Region with the support of MNCs. One expert mentioned that Ghana's LCP implementation has led to significant investments in infrastructure development, educational improvements, and workforce training mainly in the Western Region which hosts most of the country's oil activities.⁸⁰ The expansion of hospitality and commercial businesses represents one of the most noticeable results of the growing oil and gas operations in Takoradi. However, the

⁸⁰ Interview #16 Expert Interview November 21, 2022

political economy behind these investments shows a complex negotiation between local people, state institutions and global capital.

The construction of luxury hotels including Best Western Atlantic Hotel in 2012, and Palms of Eagle in 2014 and the opening of Takoradi Mall in 2018 demonstrate the economic growth resulting from local engagement in the oil and gas industry.⁸¹ Fuelled by the investment needs of oil companies and their workers, these investments have often come from Ghanaians seeking to establish and expand their businesses (Usman and Landry, 2021). However, the concentration of benefits within only Western Region also presents a spatial dimension of inequality and an increase in enclave development (Eduful and Hooper, 2015).

In terms of human capital, the LCP has reinforced education and skill-building programmes to boost local employee involvement in the petroleum sector. The University of Mines and Technology alongside the University of Energy and Natural Resources have developed specialised petroleum sector courses to provide students with applicable industry knowledge. The Institute of Oil and Gas Studies together with additional training centres contributed to knowledge transfer advancement. The GNPC strengthens its human capital development commitment by creating four professional institutes at various universities with each receiving \$250,000 annually to improve petroleum research and training. The initiatives correspond with local content regulations that focus on skills transfer while growing Ghanaian presence in multiple parts of the oil and gas industry. The policy demonstrates its influence on local investment and employment enhancement as well as capacity building despite the full long-term effects remaining uncertain. It also reflects

⁸¹ Ibid.

the interests of the elite in training locals to fit the operating models of the IOCs, rather than fostering broader capacity for a sovereign petroleum industry.

While many state-led infrastructural projects like the Atuabo Gas Plant (2011–2016) and the creation of the PC represented important material and symbolic victories, the financing and actual technical work on these projects were themselves often externally provided. As such, even the most successful interventions were to some extent anchored to global circuits of capital and knowledge (Ablo and Asamoah, 2018; Boateng, 2022). Furthermore, in 2019, there was an indigenous participation in the discovery of oil by Springfield Group a Ghanaian owned oil company which announced oil discovery of 1.5 Billion barrels and 0.7 trillion of cubic feet of gas in offshore in Ghana which led to more investment in the process of extraction (Reuters, 2019). Additionally, in June 2024 the government demonstrated its commitment to establishing a “Petroleum Hub” in Jomoro Municipal area in the Western Region by signing a \$12 billion agreement in partnership with local and international corporations such as TCP-UIC Consortium made up of Touchstone Capital Group Holdings Ltd, UIC Energy Ghana Ltd., China Wuhan Engineering Co Ltd and China Construction Third Engineering Bureau Co. Ltd. The estimated cost of the project was \$60 billion. According to the then Energy Minister, Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh, it was to comprise three refineries, five petrochemical plants, jetties, and port infrastructure (GhanaWeb, 2024a). Although these were recent investments and it remains too early to assess their full impact, the project was projected to generate 780,000 jobs in the Western Region.

In conclusion, while the LCP has facilitated localized increases in employment, skills, infrastructure, and some service delivery, these are the direct and indirect results of a negotiated space between the political elite and foreign investors and the pressure of donor institutions. The

development that has occurred has been neither the product of a fully sovereign national agenda nor the outcome of complete submission to externally driven forces. Rather, what is emerging is the outcome of a negotiated arrangement between contested interests. Hence, in the current period of what might be termed neoliberal resource nationalism, the state has carved out a limited space of resource sovereignty within the constraints of a global capitalist economy. How and if this can be used to reorient Ghana's petroleum industry towards a more transformative and just path is as much a question of political will as it is of policy.

5.4.3. Human Resources Development: Empowering Locals or Enforcing a Labour Hierarchy?

The PC is mandated to ensure that L.I. 2204 and LCPs are implemented successfully. L.I. 2204 mentions that before the attainment of 5 years of implementation, the local content implementation should achieve 30% Management staff, 20% Technical staff and 80% other staff (ACEP, 2017b: 18). Furthermore, the law mentions that 50% of goods and services should be locally sourced and about 50% to 60% of the workforce should be Ghanaians. After 2 years of implementation, it was reported in the 2016 State of the Nation address, that the number of people employed in the sector was 6,940, which was made up of 5,590 (81%) Ghanaians and 1,350 (19%) expatriates (Mahama, 2016). It mentioned in the report that the targets for Management staff and other staff were met with a huge gap in Technical Core Staff specifically in Engineering. However, the PC took steps to address this challenge by negotiating 20% of the engineering design for the TEN projects to be Ghanaians through a joint venture company between GNPC and Technip. Similarly, ENI's Gas Processing Plant was to be managed by Ghanaians. Additionally, Kosmos

Energy and Tullow Oil Managers were all Ghanaians. These were confirmed by the staff during field interviews; the information is also available on their respective websites.⁸²

The development of human resources in the oil and gas sector has been the goal of some of the educational institutions which adapted their academic programmes to meet industry requirements. The University of Mines and Technology (UMaT) offer specialised petroleum engineering programmes which prepare professionals for drilling technology application as well as reservoir management and geosciences. The University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) now features oil and gas governance and environmental sustainability modules as part of its energy-focused academic offerings alongside technical capacity building modules. All these institutions and others received some form of support from GNPC (GNPC, 2019). For instance, from 2018 to 2020, GNPC Foundation pledged a fund of US\$4 million for four years to establish professorial and research chairs at the four big universities in Ghana, including the University of Ghana, KNUST, UMaT and the University of Cape Coast, all of which are in related areas, such as petroleum engineering, geosciences, and all other related disciplines, to develop sustainable technical capacity in the country's energy sector (B&FT, 2020). GNPC has also awarded over 4,000 scholarships to undergraduate and postgraduate students across the country, including 700 scholarships to first-year students in a single cycle, to equip Ghanaians with skills in exploration, drilling, and project management, to meet human resource needs in the sector (UMaT, 2021).

In sum, there is evidence of some success in Ghana's quest in developing human resource. L.I. 2204 and other policies on local content have so far been able to meet local target for

⁸² Here are the official Ghana-focused websites for the mentioned companies: Eni Ghana: <https://www.eni.com/en-IT/actions/global-activities/ghana.html>; Kosmos Energy Ghana: <https://www.kosmosenergy.com/ghana> Tullow Oil Ghana: <https://www.tullowoil.com/our-operations/africa/ghana/tullowoil.com+1tullowoil.com+1>

management and general staff and increase Ghanaian participation in higher positions, such as nationals in Kosmos energy and Tullow Oil etc. The PC of Ghana has successfully negotiated a technical agreement with regard to Ghanaian engineers working on the TEN project and GNPC has made efforts in sponsoring tertiary institutions and offering scholarships (short term, in capacity building).

However, there is evidence that the oil and gas sector is still characterized by a shortage of people in core technical positions, particularly in engineering and there is still dominance of expatriates in the upstream sector in particular. In conclusion, the evidence from the analysis is mixed; it points to a hybrid structure combining both progressive and regressive forms of control within Ghana's oil and gas sector. For instance, while local participation in the sector has increased, particularly in non-core positions, it remains constrained by a global hierarchy of knowledge and technical expertise. As earlier research has shown, the reality is that higher-paying technical and executive roles are still dominated by foreign expertise, while many Ghanaian workers occupy lower-paid jobs (Obeng-Odoom, 2015a).

5.4.4. Supply Chain Development and Value Addition: Shifting Ownership or Preserving IOCs Control?

A good linkage in backward (upstream) and forward (downstream) in Ghana's oil and gas sector would bring many benefits. Ghana's LCP aimed to establish stronger forward and backward linkages in the oil and gas industry by requiring local firm integration into supply chains and pushing for domestic refining and petrochemical growth while ensuring technology transfer to Ghanaian businesses. Specifically, L.I. 2204 aimed to boost domestic value addition through local procurement requirements for goods and services and local equity shares in oil and gas contracts while establishing training initiatives for technical skill development in Ghana. The policy failed

to build forward and backward linkages due to poor enforcement of mandates combined with weak industrial capacity and the strong presence of IOCs in essential value chain segments.

The knowledge-intensive nature of backward linkages in Ghana's oil and gas sector has varied across different skill sets and capacities. While some low to mid-level service areas such as basic construction, security services, waste management, and catering have seen increasing participation from Ghanaian firms, high-value technical services like well drilling, seismic exploration, front-end engineering, and fabrication of complex oil infrastructure remain largely dominated by foreign contractors and IOCs since the sector is capital intensive (Ablo and Otchere-Darko, 2022). The accessibility divides stem from capital intensity, technological sophistication, and industry experience. Ghanaian businesses have found relatively easier entry into sectors that require lower startup costs and less technical expertise (e.g., fabrication of simple steel structures or civil works for oil sites) (Ablo, 2015; Ovadia, 2016a; Ackah and Mohammed, 2020). However, participation in high-tech segments such as deepwater drilling, seismic data analysis, and reservoir modelling is constrained by limited local expertise, lack of financial capacity, and weak technology transfer mechanisms (ACEP, 2017b). Without targeted investment in training, research collaborations, and capital support for Ghanaian firms, the gap between accessible and inaccessible backward linkages in the sector will persist, reinforcing Ghana's structural dependence on foreign expertise.

The majority of Ghanaian SMEs operating within the oil and gas sector focus their business operations on low-value service areas including catering and janitorial services along with hospitality, security and transport logistics (Ablo, 2015; Ovadia, 2016a; Ackah and Mohammed, 2020). Ghanaian companies remain excluded from the main value chain because these service-based business activities fail to generate significant economic returns or sustainable industrial

development. Research findings show that from 2010 to 2016 Ghanaian SMEs received only a minor portion of the total oil industry spending through contracts in these service areas. Ghanaian companies received 28% of the contracts worth approximately \$1.76 billion but foreign firms won 72% of contracts amounting to around \$4.54 billion (ACEP, 2017b). The figures illustrate how local businesses experience limited involvement in high-value sectors such as engineering and well-drilling services because foreign companies dominate these areas due to technological and financial barriers (Ablo and Otchere-Darko, 2022).

The number of employment opportunities on oil rigs continues to be limited. Initial oil production forecasts predicted extensive job creation for Ghanaians in upstream operations yet PC statistics from 2016 indicated that only 19% of technical industry positions were occupied by Ghanaians (ACEP, 2017b). One local drilling company owner mentioned that “we do not have the funds to compete with other foreign companies and the economic situation makes it hard for us to get a loan to support our business” (Field Interview, September 4, 2023).⁸³ Most local hires occupied non-technical low-wage positions which sustained a labour hierarchy that kept Ghanaians at the margins of essential extractive work while expatriates filled high-level technical roles (Obeng-Odoom, 2015a). The structural disparities in oil and gas employment and supply chains will continue without specific policies to develop local technical skills and integrate Ghanaian companies into lucrative industry segments. The current approach maintains Ghana's dependency on its resources without driving genuine economic reform. Essentially Ghana's structural dependency on foreign capital underscores the limits of LCP as a tool for economic transformation and development in Ghana.

⁸³ Interview #70

Nonetheless, as part of the PC's effort to ensure the smooth supply of goods and services in the oil and gas sector promoting local content the following goods and services were reserved for Ghanaians and Ghanaian businesses. These include vehicle leasing and rentals, construction and civil works, basic fabrication and construction, security services, waste management services, insurance and reinsurance services, manpower services, financial, banking and legal services. These designated reserved areas represent efforts to build backward linkages in Ghana's oil and gas industry to benefit local firms through the value chain. Several contracts were awarded in the sector within the first 3 years of the implementation of the law. For example, the Jubilee/ TEN Field Partners (GNPC, Tullow Ghana Limited, Kosmos Energy, Anadarko and Petro SA) in the first three years of the implementation of the local content law awarded a total of \$3.2 billion contracts in the supply chain of the oil and gas sector as shown in the table 7.

Between 2014 and 2016, there was a progressive increase in their expenses towards this project. In those three years, a total of \$ 890 million (28%) was spent on indigenous companies, \$1.22 billion (38%) on joint ventures and \$1.09 billion (34%) on international companies. Additionally, ENI Ghana reported that a total of \$6.3 billion was invested in developing the oil field, of which about \$1.76 billion (28%) of the contracts went to Ghanaian firms and \$4.54 billion (72%) to non-Ghanaian companies in the sector (ENI, 2016 cited in ACEP, 2017: 21). While these figures reveal some progress in local contracting, the domination of joint ventures and international firms is an indication that the control over high-value contracts remains largely foreign which is not unusual. Rather it is indicative of a certain kind of structural truth in global oil. Contracts that typically encompass engineering, subsea systems and installations, FPSO construction, and seismic data processing require, by their nature, proprietary technologies, heavy capital-intensive infrastructure, and decades of experience operating in complex spaces capabilities that few

Ghanaian companies have. International firms, therefore, execute such contracts either by themselves or in JV with local firms as a form of compliance with local content requirements to “indigenise” the structures of contracts while strategically retaining ownership/control over the technical and revenue-rich aspects of production.

Nonetheless, the Chief Procurement Officer of Tullow Oil Plc Ghana in their 2024 January Newsletter mentioned that “32% (\$202 million) of the total value of contracts (\$619 million) was awarded in 2023 with indigenous entities, reflecting a 4% increase from 2022. Additionally, \$317 million worth of contracts was awarded to JV companies” (Tullow Oil Plc, 2024a). It was also reported that, in 2023, 85% (990) of Tullow’s total workforce of 1,158 were Ghanaians, while 168 employees (15%) were expatriates (Tullow Oil Plc, 2024b). Tables 7 and 8 provide a summary of investments made in the sector and the contracts awarded. Although this information suggests that there is a gradual improvement in indigenisation, it also unsurprisingly re-echoes the persistence of dependency on foreign capital and foreign expertise. Table 7 indicates a high percentage of investment in Joint Ventures, many of which exist primarily as legal structures to satisfy regulatory requirements rather than as genuine partnerships aimed at transferring knowledge and technology. Consistent with the contract award data in Table 7, interview evidence further reveals that most contracts awarded to local firms have been concentrated in low- to mid-value service sectors, such as transport and logistics, catering, and unskilled or non-specialized civil works. In contrast, as indicated earlier, high-value contracts that have involved subsea engineering, FPSO fabrication, petroleum systems design, and other complex technical scopes were largely awarded to JVs and international firms with proprietary technology and highly specialized technical capacity an area where most local firms in Ghana have not yet matched up in practice, as the interviews with PC

officials and two Ghanaian oil service companies conducted revealed.⁸⁴ Respondents indicated that “contracts are local in name, but often foreign in delivery, in terms of the technical scope being performed, because in-country capacity has not been sufficient to perform certain contracts, particularly technical, specialized contracts.”⁸⁵

Furthermore, a large share of the increase in JV spending between 2014 and 2015 (\$134 million to \$619 million) was contract awards to partnerships made in compliance with local content requirements, but without necessarily any real change in ownership or sharing of technical expertise. In many cases, while JVs are legally bound to support knowledge transfer to Ghanaian partners, value added to local industry is often minimal, and in many cases the Ghanaian partner is there as a “silent partner” to provide market access or regulatory legitimacy, with the actual work being performed by the foreign firm. These have been trends that some analysts have labelled as “local content without localization” a development that is not transformative despite being counted in statistical analyses (Somiah et al., 2022). In this respect, while Table 7 reflects positive increases in financial local participation, this data by itself cannot be used to say that the indicators also reflect empowerment, industrial upgrading, or longer-term capability development.

⁸⁴ Interviews #67, #68, #59, #60

⁸⁵ Interviews #67, #68

Table 7 First three Years of Local Content Investment in the Oil and Gas Sector⁸⁶

Years	International	Joint Venture	Indigenous	Total Cost
2014	\$218,000,000	\$134,000,000	\$152,000,000	\$504,002,014
2015	\$467,000,000	\$619,000,000	\$249,000,000	\$1,335,002,015
2016	\$414,000,000	\$470,000,000	\$489,000,000	\$1,373,000,000
Total	\$1,099,000,000	\$1,223,000,000	\$890,000,000	\$3,212,004,029

Source: Author's Creation with data from ACEP(2017b: 20).

The reliance on joint ventures suggests that while foreign firms are compelled to include local partners, the degree of actual control and ownership by Ghanaians remains questionable. Thus, while local content policies have facilitated increased Ghanaian participation, the figures suggest that true resource nationalism remains constrained by structural dependencies on foreign expertise and capital. The continued dominance of joint ventures indicates that Ghana's oil sector is still largely integrated into global capitalist frameworks, where local participation exists but remains secondary to transnational corporate interests.

⁸⁶ Table 7 systematically breaks down the total \$3.2 billion worth of contracts awarded between 2014 and 2016 into three categories: IOCs, joint ventures, and indigenous firms. The figures provided earlier in the section correspond directly with these totals: IOCs received \$1.099 billion (34%), showing their continued dominance. Joint ventures were allocated \$1.223 billion (38%), emphasizing the hybrid nature of many contracts. Indigenous Ghanaian firms secured \$890 million (28%), highlighting the limitations of fully local enterprises in penetrating high-value contracts. These numbers underscore the broader argument that while local participation has increased, Ghanaian firms still struggle to compete independently.

Table 8 Summary of Local Content Supply Chain Investment

Goods and Services	Local Content Achieved
Fabrication	In 2013, a local company known as Belmet 7 is reported to have invested \$8M in the fabrication yard at the Takoradi Port producing 16 suction plies for the TEN field. JVC such as Orsam, Harlequin and Groups Five are reported to have fabricated Jumpers, Mud Mats, Riser Base, Manifold and Sleepers in Ghana making a total of 15,000 metric tonnes of steel fabrication by Ghanaian companies.
Subsea Installation	Sri Emas Limited which is Ghanaian owned won \$ 300M worth of contracts for subsea umbilical, Risers and FLOWlines (SURF).
Machine Shop Services	In 2016, Amaja Oilfield Services did the threading and rethreading at the TEN and OCTP Fields.
Waste Management	Indigenous Ghanaian companies such as Zeal Environmental Technologies, Zoil Limited and Omni Energy have developed their capacities in waste management.
Pipe Coating	It was reported in 2013 that Eni Ghana awarded a \$15M pipe coating contract to the Ghanaian owned company Amaja Oilfield Limited for a gas pipeline project of 60km from the OCTP field to a Gas Processing Facility located at Sanzule in the Western Region.
Aviation Services	PHC Century (JVC) with majority Ghanaian ownership won a contract of over \$100M to provide aviation services for TEN and Jubilee Fields.
Supply of Vessels	PSV service for ENI's OCTP field is contracted to a JVC (Hydrocol and Petroserve) with majority ownership being Ghanaian.
Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) Operations and Maintenance	The operation and management are by OY Offshore Limited (a JVC) with Ghanaians being majority shareholders.

Source: Author's compilation with data from (ACEP, 2017b).

While table 7 summarises contract distribution among IOCs and joint ventures and indigenous firms, table 8 gives a closer look at specific areas where Ghanaian companies are active. Local companies participate in multiple segments of the oil and gas supply chain, including fabrication, subsea installation services, machine shop operations, waste management, pipe coating, aviation services, and vessel supply.

Subsequently, with the passage of the local content law, the Ghanaian neoliberal integral state appeared, at least on paper, to be pursuing a developmental strategy that would use its oil resources to create an environment for up to 90% local participation in the oil and gas sector by

2020 (Petroleum Commission, 2013). To implement this objective, the government set up the Enterprise Development Centre (EDC) to ensure support is given to small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) to put them in good positions to take advantage of the various business opportunities that can be found in the oil and gas value chain (Ablo, 2015, 2020). The EDC was established in 2013 by the Ghana government and its Jubilee partners (Tullow Ghana Plc, Anadarko, Kosmos Energy, Petro SA and the GNPC). The EDC was stationed at Takoradi with a project funding of \$5 million for 5 years (2013 to 2018).

Despite these efforts to support local development and participation in the oil and gas sector, the EDC's full implementation was hindered by several structural flaws and politics. First, the EDC was institutionally anchored to outside players, despite being a government initiative. Its funding, strategy and training platforms were, to a large extent, ceded to the private oil companies and development partners such as the World Bank. To a certain degree, the EDC was driven by donor and IOC interests and lacked a foundation in a nationally articulated industrial strategy (Erastus et al., 2014). The framing of this EDC agenda by Ghanaian officials was less than candid about this governance structure. The EDC was a concession to the national project of local empowerment and inclusion, but one that in its practice left largely intact the corporate, private and global nature of oil governance.

Second, the EDC was affected by neo-patrimonial patterns within the political economy. One interviewee stated that contracts and training were easily captured by “insiders” who had access to the EDC through patronage, indicating the EDC was not fully open to all interested and eligible firms (Key Informant Interview September 4, 2023).⁸⁷ This broadly corroborates the

⁸⁷ Interview #70

literature on neo-patrimonial practices in Ghana, whereby clientelist relationships cut across formal, supposedly developmental government programmes (Abdulai, 2021; Ayelazuno and Mawuko-Yevugah, 2021). This limited the reach and impact of the EDC. Its location within the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum also exposed it to the risk of bureaucratic stagnation, annual budget variability, and lack of medium to long-term planning.

Third, the articulation of the EDC/local content knowledge was rooted in a technical and business-oriented language. This sidesteps raises the questions of class power, capitalist dependency and structural change. While training SMEs to match international procurement standards is no doubt important for increasing domestic uptake of services and technologies, it does not automatically translate into structural transformation, given that the “commanding heights” of Ghanaian oil (i.e., offshore drilling technologies, capital financing, FPSOs, etc.) are not in national hands. The EDC is thus more akin to a neoliberal device of inclusion, rather than transformation. It shows how local content policies can be diluted by global economic limitations, technocratic implementation, elite capture and political economy constraints, producing little gain without challenging the hegemonic dominance of transnational capital in Ghana’s oil and gas sector.

Furthermore, one clear observation in the Ghanaian case is the dominance of JVs as the compromise mechanism due to strong external influence. The impact has been dire; for instance, data from PC which details the total amount of contracts awarded in the oil gas sector from 2011 to 2022 shows that joint ventures and foreign companies received 60.78% and 26.38% compared with 12.87% which went to Indigenous Companies as shown in Table 9. The challenge in assessing JVs lies in their shared ownership structure, which makes it difficult to determine the exact

shareholding of Ghanaians and foreigners. Such details are usually specified in individual JV agreements, often registered under trusts or deeds and kept confidential.

Table 9 Contracts awarded in Ghana's Oil and Gas Sector (2011-2020)

Year	Foreign Companies (US\$) MM	Indigenous Companies (US\$)MM	Joint Ventures (JVs) (US\$)MM	Grand Total (US\$)MM
Total	\$2,628.89 (26.36%)	\$1,283.28 (12.87%)	\$6,062.07 (60.78)	\$9,974.24 (100%)

Source: (Ablo and Otchere-Darko, 2022: 304)

Indeed, the strategic dilution of the LCP to accommodate JVs aligns with the Neo-Gramscian notion of passive revolution. The government of Ghana introduced the LCP as a transformative tool but, under both local and external pressures, diluted it to fit within the hegemonic neoliberal order. As a result, the policy ceased to be structurally transformative and instead reinforced Ghana's continued dependency on foreign capital. The tables show that IOCs and joint ventures secure the highest-value contracts despite the achievements of local firms. This represents one fundamental challenge to attaining resource nationalism since Ghanaian firms involved in the sector encounter structural obstacles while trying to enter capital-intensive and technologically advanced sector. These challenges upset the actualisation of resource nationalism in Ghana especially using the oil and gas sector as a catalyst for development. The next section discusses this in much detail with both findings from fieldwork and other preliminary research work on LCP in Ghana.

5.4.5. Political Interferences, LCP Legislations , Regulatory Weakness, IOCs and Global Capital

The politics that surrounds the oil and gas sector reflects the broader trends of elite-driven policy making and external influence over Ghana's natural resources (Gyimah-Boadi and

Prempeh, 2012; Graham et al., 2016; Osse, 2016). The earlier strategies of the legislation of the LCP and Law were not spared these politics and elite interests. As pointed out by Ayanoore (2020) the local content structure in Ghana illustrates the main tendencies within the political circles of the country, especially within the NDC coalition who developed strict and quite ambitious policy initiatives during their time in office. Indeed, during the early stage of the legislation there was a revived ambitious use of oil revenue as a catalyst for development, so many Ghanaian political elites supported an increased in local participation in the petroleum sector. The NDC and NPP both promised to replace the old local content strategies under the PNDC law 84 with better ones though they both had diverse approaches to it.

The two dominant political parties in Ghana, the NPP and the NDC adopted divergent approaches to the LCP, their political ideology and electoral incentives shaped these decisions. The NPP government was in power in 2007 when oil was discovered, their approach to local content was to secure a moderate level of Ghanaian involvement taking into account the perceived limitations in technical strength and capital capabilities of local enterprises and consolidating all policy initiatives through the one-stop Ghana Petroleum Authority Regulatory Bill (Ayanoore, 2018). The main reason for adopting such an approach was underpinned by a liberal “pro-market” ideology to attract foreign investment a fundamental feature of the integral state. This approach received a backlash from those in the public domain who support the LCP. The NDC, who were in opposition leveraged the disaffection of the pro-local content elites to build a broad coalition with civil society organisations and private sector people with a focus on oil governance in general but deepening local content involvement (Ayanoore, 2018). This was in connection with the NDC's resource nationalist character, which provided a medium through which pro-local content elites pushed for uncompromising targets that secured high Ghanaian participation (Ayanoore, 2018).

This is what I call local forces and local interests changing the agenda of the political interest of the political elite.

After winning the 2008 elections, the NDC fulfilled their promise, they created the Local Content Directorate (LCD) an institution-based consultative platform at the Ministry of Petroleum which allowed elites who were pro-local content to partake in key initiatives that centred on local content with the government. It was these LCD suggestions and inputs that ultimately led to the formulation of the Local Content Regulations which eventually became law in 2013 under the NDC's administration. With NDC and NPP being the two major political parties ruling Ghana respectively since 1992 who have divergent political ideological foundations, it will usually lead to divergence in policy approaches during the implementation of LCP under their regimes when they are in power.

In 2016, the Jubilee Partners terminated the EDC contract because it collapsed as a result of the structural issues and institutional issues pointed above so the management was handed over to the Ghana Institute of Management and Public (GIMPA) due to “political interest and expediency” according to an official from the PC (Key Informant Interview, December 8, 2022).⁸⁸

This corroborates the views of Ablo (2020) that:

The Jubilee Partners had revoked the contract with the previous managers, but because 2016 was an election year, the then NDC government considered the collapse of the EDC politically detrimental to their electoral fortunes. GIMPA was therefore brought in to keep the EDC open so that the government would not look bad. Thus, GIMPA's management of the EDC was mostly temporary. By the end of December 2016, the EDC project had folded up, and interviews with some officials of the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum revealed that the project was poorly designed and executed, which culminated in its failure (Ablo, 2020: 324).

The key question is whether the NDC was truly committed to making the EDC effective. A key informant from the party mentioned that the NDC was committed to national development through LCP in the oil sector. He said, “we are a social democratic party and seek the interest of the

⁸⁸ Interview #61

ordinary Ghanaian” (Key Informant Interview, May 5, 2023).⁸⁹ Nonetheless, in practice, the NDC like their political counterparts, the NPP appeared more concerned with winning the next elections. As one professor of politics and resource governance observed, “the NDC and NPP are smart at doing whatever it takes to win power even if they have to implement a policy or law like the LCP after the elections nothing truly changes like the case of EDC” (Key Informant Interview November 20, 2022).⁹⁰

Another factor which impacted LCP efficacy was external pressure and the watering down of regulations. In the early days of the LCP legislation, external influence played a significant role. Several meetings were held between the PC, IOCs, and International Service Companies (ISCs) aimed at persuading the PC against adopting a strict implementation policy. These organizations argued that local companies lacked the financial and technical capacity to meet industry standards, cautioned against rapidly increasing local participation, and even called for a review of the policy (Ayanoore, 2020). Although Ghana Parliament went ahead and passed the law the IOCs and ISCs capitalised on process of legislature which allows for a 90 period of transition for the development of the law (within these 90 days the law can be amended). Hence, the ISCs had several meetings with the PC and Petroleum Minister to water down the law to include joint ventures. As aptly described by Ayanoore (2020: 286) :

[they] pressed the PC to harmonise the requirements for joint ventures with the ownership structure of ISCs. This bargain essentially prevailed on the PC to overlook the mandatory 10% local equity requirement in JVs and replace this with project-based partnerships between Ghanaian companies and ISCs, where the former will own this equity stake. The Forum also drew on the existing limited local manpower to urge the PC to relax the requirements for employing Ghanaians in senior-level positions within IOCs and ISC operations and rather implement this on an availability basis.

This corroborates Ovadia's (2016: 25) notion that “international capital has found new ways of organising and watering down the aspects of LCPs it deems most unfavourable” which further

⁸⁹ Interview #51

⁹⁰ Interview #12

confirms the argument of this dissertation that several external forces influenced and continue to influence Ghana's oil and gas sector.

Additionally, there were also regulatory weaknesses and political interference in the LCP process. Although the PC is responsible for monitoring the LCP compliance its effectiveness has been limited by weak institutional enforcement mechanisms and political interference. It is the PC's job to enforce regulations related to the local content in Ghana but, unfortunately, the PC's website has no records of reports or data on the number of local people who have been sponsored to undergo training and skills development in the oil and gas industry in one area or another.⁹¹ This undermines the PC's ability to effectively monitor the upstream sector under LI 2204, since the Commission is responsible for sanctioning firms that fail to comply with Ghana's oil and gas regulations. In practice, however, many non-local subcontractor companies continue to provide services to IOCs without proper approval from the PC, in clear violation of the local content laws (Key Informant Interview, December 5, 2022).⁹² This malpractice usually gets to the attention of the PC late, so the right sanctions are not usually given to the offenders. This is due to several structural and procedural challenges.

Moreover, there are instances where expatriates work without submitting succession plans to the PC and even in some cases expatriates work illegally without a permit (ACEP, 2017b). There

⁹¹ Although PC's websites do not show records or reports on the number of people sponsored for training in the sector, PC ensures compliance through the following means: (1). Company-Submitted Reports: Operating oil and gas companies in Ghana must provide local content plans and regular compliance reports about their employment practices and procurement and skills development targets (Petroleum Commission, 2013). The PC reviews these reports internally while the public does not have automatic access to them. (2). Inspections and Audits: Through site inspections and audits, the PC checks company compliance with local employment quotas and training commitments. Enforcement impact from these audits remains uncertain due to the lack of published findings. (3). Annual Conferences and Stakeholder Engagements: The PC organises local content conferences and workshops to discuss implementation progress but does not publish detailed reports from these events. (4). Enforcement Actions and Penalties: The PC holds the legal power to enforce fines upon firms and can suspend their operations or remove their licences when they fail to comply (L.I. 2204, Regulation 49). 2204, Regulation 49). The absence of transparent enforcement records makes it challenging to evaluate the regularity and success of penalty applications (Petroleum Commission, 2013).

⁹² Interview #59

are cases of some of these expatriates having only visas yet working without work authorisation. For example, during the field interviews, a Ghanaian SME owner mentioned that he knew of some expatriates who came on tourist visas but were working. He explained that the company only began processing the workers' permits when someone exposed their situation. He lamented that the authorities frequently respond slowly to such situations (Key Informant Interview, December 9, 2022).⁹³ Additionally, an oil and gas consultant and expert complained as follows:

foreign workers enter under short-term contracts while their employing companies avoid following the quota system. PC officials know about these violations yet take little action to enforce rules unless a public scandal occurs (Key Informant Interview, December 5, 2022).⁹⁴

Regrettably, the PC has also been influenced by party politics like any other public institution. Ghana's winner-take-all politics allows the president to appoint several officials at the PC. The tenure of office has normally been based on political appointment linked to the year that the political party is in power. For instance, when NPP won power in 2017 they changed most of the board members of the PC and appointed several pro-NPP public members. This has had a long-term impact on institutional memory at the PC. In some cases, some information is lost in the process making it difficult for the new appointees to be up to date on the state of affairs (Key Informant Interview, December 2022).⁹⁵ The PC's institutional memory and operational effectiveness have suffered greatly due to extensive political interference. The regular shift in leadership positions prevents the proper execution of long-term policies which creates uneven regulatory supervision. The loss and de-prioritisation of crucial records combined with suspended investigations into LCP violations impedes new leadership from monitoring compliance and implementing sanctions.

⁹³ Interview #66

⁹⁴ Interview #14

⁹⁵ Interview #60

Political appointments have created conflicts of interest causing regulatory actions against IOCs and their subcontractors to face delays or total cancellations because of existing political and business connections. PC officials have faced accusations of biased regulation enforcement since LCP monitoring is used to either reward or punish companies according to their political connections instead of maintaining consistent sector-wide compliance. The PC's credibility suffered due to politicised enforcement practices which led local firms to stop reporting violations because they believed politically connected foreign companies escaped penalties. The oil and gas sector stands as one of Ghana's leading industries which has led to political elites facing accusations of focusing on immediate economic benefits and rent-seeking activities instead of building robust PC institutions (Key Informant Interview, November 2022).⁹⁶ These challenges explain the difficulty in carrying out basic regulatory tasks specifically regarding LCP compliance monitoring and offender discipline. The LCP remains at risk of manipulation because Ghana lacks a powerful and independent technical regulatory authority which curtails its ability to promote local industry involvement and technology sharing.

5.4.6. Weak Local Business Capacity and Financial Constraints⁹⁷

A major setback in implementation of LCP in Ghana is the limited capacity of local businesses in terms of limited financial capital and technical capacity. From fieldwork and literature on the topic three interrelated categories of challenges were identified. First is financial constraints and capital access. Financial capacity remains a major challenge for Ghanaian SMEs in the sector, making it difficult for local companies to mobilize the necessary capital for investment. Economic conditions and high interest rates have also made it nearly impossible for

⁹⁶ Interview #16

⁹⁷ Several research corroborate this limitation see the following (Ablo, 2015, 2020; Ablo and Otchere-Darko, 2022; Acheampong et al., 2022; Ackah and Mohammed, 2020).

loan applications for many local businessmen. All these limitations were corroborated by excerpts from the field interviews, with some informants noting that the situation worsened during the COVID-19 era, when many SMEs in the oil and gas sector were adversely affected. All these limitations were corroborated by the excerpts and key informants' interview on the field.⁹⁸

Additionally, one representative from the PC mentioned that “some of the Ghanaian companies lack financial capacity and in some cases they go for huge loans and are not able to pay only for the company to collapse” (Key Informant November 14, 2022).⁹⁹ This confirms the position of Amoako-Tuffour et al. (2015) that although Ghana's local content law revealed a high commitment to bringing in more benefits in the petroleum sector for Ghanaians, a limited capital capacity and technical experts are impediments to enforcing the policy.

A second challenge relates to technical capacity and the ability of local companies to comply with industry standards. It has been argued that many indigenous companies struggle to meet international standards in the extractive sector (Asamoah, 2009; Asafu-Adjaye, 2010; ACEP, 2017; Ackah and Mohammed, 2020). For instance, local businesses struggle to obtain certifications such as ISO 9001 and API standards which offshore platforms require to operate (Key Informant Interview, December 5, 2022).¹⁰⁰ These technical gaps limit the ability of local companies to compete in such a capital-intensive sector. Additionally, a former representative of an IOC operating in one of Ghana's oil fields expressed concern about lapses in professionalism among some Ghanaian companies, citing issues such as poor punctuality. He mentioned that “...in

⁹⁸ Interviews #15, #57, #58, #66, #67, #68, #69, #70, # 71.

⁹⁹ Interview #15

¹⁰⁰ Interview #64.

Ghana there is what is called the Ghana man time “GMT”...this has led to delays in several projects” (Key Informant Interview, December 5, 2022).¹⁰¹

Moreover, there is a lack of skilled personnel from the local SMEs in the sector. It has been pointed out that local SMEs did not prioritise skill training and development because they have limited financial capabilities (Ackah and Mohammed, 2020). Fieldwork interviews with experts, IOCs and some SMEs confirmed some of these limitations. For example, an official from the PC stated that “...SMEs lack both the necessary skills and equipment to perform specialised services such as drilling support, subsea engineering or advanced welding...” (Key Informant Interview, November 22, 2022).¹⁰² A local business owner in the oil sector lamented that “oil companies have repeatedly rejected our contract bids by claiming our workers lack appropriate qualifications (Key Informant Interview, September 4, 2023).¹⁰³ Unfortunately, when local SMEs have sought to upgrade their work forces and skills, the cost has been discouraging. An executive from a Ghanaian SME in Technical Services also stated “...it costs approximately \$15,000 to send one person for this training abroad. How can a small business afford that?” (Key Informant Interview, December 9, 2022).¹⁰⁴ Additionally, a senior training coordinator at a vocational institute mentioned that although they offer several training programmes local SMEs find it difficult to enrol due to the lack of funds. Another worker from a local SME mentioned that: “Our company offers specific training programmes for oil and gas sectors, yet numerous SMEs find it impossible to fund their staff for these educational opportunities (Interview, September 2, 2023).”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Interview #64.

¹⁰² Interview #57

¹⁰³ Interview #70

¹⁰⁴ Interview #66

¹⁰⁵ Interview #67

Subsequently, the issues of capacity also crippled the LCD which was at the Ministry of Energy because it had strong presidential control which influenced its effectiveness, especially during the NPP administration which operated a closed-door approach to the policy process. As one expert mentioned “the staff were changed when NPP won the 2016 elections and this led to no retention of institutional memory making the new staff start afresh...some of these were political party faithful” (Key Informant Interview, November 21, 2022).¹⁰⁶ In trying to address the challenge of capacity the PC tried to introduce avenues of capacity building and training and encouraging joint ventures. Nonetheless, one representative from the PC who was interviewed confirmed that the issue of business capacity still persists (Key Informant November 14, 2022).¹⁰⁷

Third, there are constraints arising from informational asymmetry. Many Ghanaian SMEs lack awareness of upcoming tenders, procurement opportunities, and bid requirements in the sector. Their limited access to information on supplying services to IOCs causes them to miss out on potential contracts. This lack of vital industry information places them at a competitive disadvantage, preventing them from fully benefiting from industry opportunities despite the existence of local content policies (Ablo and Overå, 2015). Similarly, one respondent mentioned that:

The main challenge we face consists of ensuring Ghanaian SMEs possess adequate delivery capabilities. While they manage basic fabrication and supply tasks their capabilities end there because they lack the necessary information, skills and equipment to perform specialised services such as drilling support, subsea engineering or advanced welding. The few companies that have tried to enter these areas either struggle with funding or lack the expertise to compete with international firms.” (Key Informant Interview, November 22, 2022).¹⁰⁸

Regrettably, all these limitations further create a self-reinforcing cycle, where local firms continue to remain peripherally involved in low-value services like catering, security, janitorial services

¹⁰⁶ Interview #16

¹⁰⁷ Interview #15

¹⁰⁸ Interview #57

instead of high-value contracts in major fields such as engineering, drilling, geological science, fabrication and many more.

5.4.7. Discriminatory Policies in Favour of IOCs

Despite the LCP goal and mandates, IOCs continue to enjoy significant privileges at the expense of local companies such as those in the SMEs. One area of discrimination is different taxes for expatriates and Ghanaian SMEs. Taxes are one of the best ways governments around the world capture revenue from companies, but the contracts signed by the government of Ghana and the IOCs gave many exemptions to expatriates (Petroleum Commission, 2016). They are exempted from paying VAT, and other duties at the ports on their imports and exports. For instance, the IOCs can import machinery into the country and export them out for free. They also export the oil that is extracted from Ghana to their home countries for free (Ayelazuno and Graham, 2022). Their expat employees are also able to import and export personal and other items of their choice in and out of the country for free which is quite unthinkable since the state needs all the revenue it can get to embark on developmental projects. Unfortunately, this practice of import exemption for employees is common practice in the extractive sectors especially the mining sector under the Mineral and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 203) and stabilisation clauses in the mining agreement (NRGI, 2025). Moreover, on the foreign exchange front, the state allows the IOCs to take back to their home countries revenues gained from exploiting oil and gas resources in Ghana.

In the Petroleum Agreement, there are sections on procurement that essentially wipe out all the gains that the LCP gives the state in the name of cost efficacy and contractor discretion. The IOCs were able to get the government to agree to terms that were favourable to them in terms of purchasing goods, services and machinery. The state agreed that the multinationals would purchase resources needed from Ghana on the condition that they would be “supplied at prices,

grades, delivery dates, and on other commercial terms equal to or advantageous to them than the ones which can be supplied from outside Ghana” (Petroleum Commission, 2016 cited in Ayelazuno, 2016: 16). In a similar manner the PA on the ownership of equipment and goods is not structured in a way that provides leverage for Ghana to have control of something very important for technology transfer. While the primary aim of Ghana’s LCP places emphasis on enabling IOCs to share technology and skills with Ghanaians the existing clauses in Ghana’s PAs directly oppose this purpose. The agreements enable IOCs to maintain complete control over key machinery and equipment as well as proprietary technologies and grant them permission to take these assets out of the country when operations finish. Rather than build Ghana’s industrial capacity, these provisions sustain its reliance on foreign technological expertise. Article 19. B of the PA mentions that the assets of subcontractors cannot be transferred to GNPC; also the machinery and equipment not affected by the substantive agreement can be exported at the discretion of the “Contractor or its Subcontractor” (Petroleum Commission, 2016 cited in Ayelazuno, 2016: 16).

Furthermore, as pointed out by Ayelazuno (2016) although this particular article makes avenues available for Ghana to take possession of machinery and equipment from the IOCs, it has loopholes that IOCs can exploit by making it hard for the state to take over these plants and equipment. For example, some contracts require such transfer of assets to be “mutually agreed” or for the state to “compensate” the IOC for the depreciated value of the equipment effectively a transfer price that may be cost-prohibitive. In others, the IOC is expressly allowed to remove or dispose of equipment before the end date if the machinery in question is determined to be “non-essential” or “uneconomical” to maintain in-country (Ayelazuno, 2016).

In all these instances, the contract clauses provide escape-routes that IOCs can use to retain control over post-contract assets. The material implication is that, in most cases, high-value

industrial infrastructure whether a drilling rig or subsea equipment or onshore processing facilities will be moved or sold offshore, rather than retained to develop Ghana's domestic capacity. This outcome directly thwarts one of the anticipated benefits of LCP, that of physical capital accumulation for future domestic production.

Further, in terms of technical capacity and legal leverage, the state may have little power to challenge this. IOCs are typically supported by international legal teams and can often draw on precedents from other countries. Ghana's negotiators, on the other hand, are often constrained by time and political pressure to close deals. This contracting relationship helps to reproduce patterns of dependency through legal-technical means, by ensuring that the capital goods, and the technological knowledge associated with it, remain foreign-controlled. As such, the "transfer of assets" provisions in the PAs are not, in reality, enforceable mechanisms to drive resource nationalism. They remain, instead, largely symbolic assertions that have little material impact. This is not to say that this dynamic is unique to Ghana. Similar asset-repatriation clauses in Nigeria's early oil agreements have been documented by Ovadia (2016), as well as Angola's petroleum contracts, where the formal rights of the state to keep the infrastructure was often diluted by contractual carve-outs that favoured IOCs discretion. In the Ghanaian case, the loopholes embedded in the PA serve to ensure that post-contract outcomes are more likely to reflect the interests of transnational capital than those of local industrialisation.

This situation may not be surprising yet serves as evidence of a broader trend where host nations face challenges in managing their resources under global capitalism's rules. IOCs maintain strong control over resource contracts in the extractive industry which remains especially prevalent in developing nations such as Ghana. African states have historically integrated similar procurement clauses into their mining, oil and gas industry agreements with MNCs which

maintained dependency while constraining local industrial development. The agreements usually protect foreign investors' interests while allowing IOCs to meet only basic legal requirements to host countries through taxation and royalty payments. The Nigerian government had minimal influence over procurement choices and employment quotas in its initial oil sector contracts with Shell-BP and it failed to secure technology transfer agreements which enabled IOCs to optimise their profits and reduce industrial benefits to Nigeria's economy (Obi, 2010a, 2010b).

Subsequently, there is clear discrimination between expatriates and Ghanaian workers; it is mostly the global capitalist IOCs who benefit from their expatriate employers. Many of the IOCs only bring in their expertise (expatriates) to work in their host countries and often, it is difficult for the local enterprise to compete. Hence the implementation of LCP in the oil sector has been difficult because of this competition with these IOCs. A major challenge is qualification. For example, upon the commencement of the EDC project in 2013 only 247 local businesses registered, but over half of them did not qualify for training. However, 40 businesses commenced the training, comprising 25 firms based in Tarkwa, Takoradi, Accra, and Tema, and successfully completed the certification in 2013 (Ablo, 2015). Key Informants who were interviewed on the field confirm that the issue of discrimination has generally not changed a decade after the implantation of the LCP in the oil and gas sector of Ghana (Key Informant Interviews 2023).¹⁰⁹

A major area of discrimination cited by interviewees is in employment and promotions. While LCP quotas mandate Ghanaian employment, many key positions especially in technical and managerial roles remain dominated by expatriates. A local oil rig worker noted: “They bring in expats and pay them five times what a Ghanaian earns for the same job. Even when we prove we are capable, they won’t promote us” (Key Informant Interview, September 5, 2023).¹¹⁰ Some

¹⁰⁹ Interviews #66, #67, #68, #69

¹¹⁰ Interview #71

expatriates reportedly hold positions that Ghanaians are fully qualified for, with companies exploiting loopholes in succession planning to justify continued reliance on foreign workers. An activist in the sector explained:

Companies are supposed to train Ghanaians to replace expatriates within a set period. But what happens? The timeline keeps shifting, and new excuses keep coming up lack of experience, technical gaps, or global company policy (Key Informant Interview, March 1, 2023).¹¹¹

Consequently, there is discrimination in the pay cheques of locals and expatriates. This problem has been there since the commencement of the oil and gas sector. Those who work on the rig are paid differently for the same job with a difference in pay as high as US\$600 a month (Ablo, 2012). One Ghanaian rig worker interviewed mentioned that “our pays are different though we are all out there running monthly shifts. When we spoke with management about it, they said the expatriates are using different recruitment agencies and the company has a contract with them” (Key Informant Interview, September 5, 2023).¹¹² In the past, there have been some protests, but these led to several oil workers being victimised. These discriminatory practices contradict resource nationalist’s goal of the LCP and further amplify the limitation of the LCP as a tool for structural transformation.

5.4.8. Local Fronting and IOCs Co-optation

One major loophole in Ghana LCP is the practice of local fronting. This is a situation whereby IOCs amongst other firms circumvent the LCP requirement by partnering with some Ghanaian entities in name and on paper only, while retaining full control over the business operations and financial capital control. This is fundamentally against the logic of resource nationalism. From a Neo-Gramscian view local fronting exemplifies hegemonic co-optations, a

¹¹¹ Interview #30

¹¹² Interview #71

strategy used by many dominant actors in the oil and gas sector to absorb counter-hegemonic forces into the existing structure of capitalism without disrupting the power dynamics (Gramsci, 1971; Cox, 1981). In Ghana's oil and gas sector, some IOCs and transnational subcontractors actively engage in fronting to neutralize the radical potential of the LCP, ensuring that local firms remain dependent appendages rather than independent economic actors. To corroborate this, earlier research done on Ghana's LCP pointed to instances of "local fronting". It was reported by ACEP (2017: 35) that 5% and 10% local participation requirements of the LCP have led to local fronting for foreign companies. To corroborate this one board member from the PC pointed out that the fronting in the sector can be described as "co-optation". In the view of the person:

...so that is what happens with some of these multinational companies... There are a lot of co-optations going on. For example, a Ghanaian could be making \$20,000 per month or \$10,000 per month with nothing to lose if you look at it long-term... so many have fallen victim to IOC co-optation which is antithetical resource nationalism (Key Informant Interview November 22, 2022).¹¹³

The impact of fronting in Ghana's oil and gas sector undermines the fundamental objectives of the LCP by allowing foreign firms to operate under the guise of local ownership, ultimately limiting the participation of genuine Ghanaian businesses. This loophole in the policy enables IOCs to circumvent local content regulations, effectively reducing the intended benefits of technology transfer, skill development, and wealth retention within the country. While detailed official statistics on fronting are scarce due to its covert nature, studies and interviews with industry experts suggest that fronting is widespread in Ghana's petroleum sector. Ablo (2019) found that several businesses registered under Ghanaian ownership were foreign-controlled, with expatriates holding the actual decision-making power (cited in Ablo and Otchere-Darko, 2022). This false localisation strategy means that many contracts that appear to be awarded to Ghanaian companies still functionally benefit foreign enterprises, preventing meaningful local economic gains. Industry

¹¹³ Interview #57

professionals interviewed in Takoradi, Accra, and within the PC provided anecdotal evidence of fronting practices. One local supplier revealed:

Many of these so-called Ghanaian companies winning contracts are actually foreign businesses in disguise. You will see a Ghanaian name on paper, but the actual contracts, financial control, and key decisions are all made by expatriates (Key Informant Interview, December 9, 2023).¹¹⁴

Another oil and gas industry consultant highlighted how some foreign firms strategically partner with local businesses for contracts, but Ghanaians have little or no managerial control:

We have cases where a Ghanaian director is appointed just for compliance purposes, but the financial resources, operations, and technology all remain under foreign management. This means that instead of building real Ghanaian capacity, we are just creating middlemen for external firms (Key Informant Interview, September 3, 2023).¹¹⁵

Moreover, another official from PC acknowledged concerns about fronting, stating that efforts were being made to strengthen monitoring and auditing mechanisms to detect such practices. However, enforcement remains weak, as penalties for fronting are rarely enforced.¹¹⁶ Nonetheless, when caught licences are terminated and legal ramifications are pursued.

A major consequence of fronting is that technology transfer a key goal of the LCP is effectively stalled. Since foreign firms control expertise and technical operations, Ghanaian businesses fail to develop independent capacity in engineering, drilling, and project management. This reinforces Ghana's reliance on expatriate knowledge and weakens local industry competitiveness. The evidence from field interviews, contract allocation reports, and previous studies confirms that fronting is a persistent issue in Ghana's oil sector. While the LCP was intended to empower local businesses, loopholes in enforcement allow foreign firms to maintain dominance while creating the illusion of local participation. Stronger legal mechanisms, strict

¹¹⁴ Interview #66

¹¹⁵ Interview #69

¹¹⁶ Interview #58

contract audits, and genuine capacity-building programmes are needed to close this loophole and ensure that Ghanaian companies genuinely benefit from oil sector contracts.

5.4.9. Absence of New Project Post Covid 19: A Structural Setback for Local Content Implementation

The economic landscape after COVID-19 has exacerbated structural limitations in Ghana's oil and gas sector. This has hindered the full implementations of the LCP in the oil and gas sector. The overall global energy slowdown after COVID-19, coupled with the decline in oil production between 5% and 7% from Jubilee, TEN, and Sankofa Gye-Nyame (SGN) oil fields between 2019 and 2023 contributed to the stagnation in new projects which further limited local business opportunity and work forces development (Acheampong, 2024).¹¹⁷ This raises concerns about the sustainability of resource nationalism in Ghana in dispensation of energy transitions. As one petroleum sector expert noted, Ghana's local content progress was hindered in the post-COVID-19 era due to the absence of new contracts, a consequence of the pandemic's impact. This challenge was compounded by the declining production of the Jubilee field, which left only a few fields active (Key Informant Interview, November 14, 2022).¹¹⁸

Although there is ongoing exploration of the Voltaian basin, it is early days yet for one to predict its benefits to Ghanaian SMEs since all the other fields have timelines of extinction (Abu et al., 2020). A few key informants mentioned how COVID-19 affected some of these local SMEs with several of them never recovering. For instance, a local oil service provider described the post-pandemic downturn as follows:

Before COVID-19, we had steady contracts with some of the IOCs, and things were moving. But since 2020, the industry has been unpredictable. Contracts dried up, banks stopped lending, and the foreign companies

¹¹⁷ Although oil production increased by 10.7% in the first half of 2024 (Adombila, 2024) it was not been sustainable.

¹¹⁸ Interview #15

took over many of the services that we used to handle. Many local businesses just couldn't survive, and the government did little to support us (Key Informant Interview, September 4, 2023).¹¹⁹

This trend reinforces Ghana's dependence on foreign oil firms, making it even harder for local businesses to compete in the sector. Despite the existence of local content regulations, the post-pandemic economic realities further weakened the structural capacity of local companies exacerbating the enclave nature of the sector.

5.5. Conclusion

Through a Neo-Gramscian analysis this chapter investigated Ghana's LCP to demonstrate how it manifests the inherent contradictions of resource nationalism in a capitalist global order. The findings show that LCP has been a contested terrain of possibilities and structural limitation. This can be described as a site of "active contestations" involving state agencies, SMEs, CSOs and IOCs with an outcome shaped by the interplay between local political economy and the neoliberal hegemony (i.e. a feature of the integral state). On one hand LCP in the oil and gas sector has attained some success. The policy has enabled local involvement in oil and gas projects while establishing job opportunities, nurturing human capital development, and attracting limited local sector investments. Institutions such as PC and EDC (before it closed down) facilitated the building of local capacity, vendor registration and training programmes, and through the support of IOCs investments have been made in education, vocational training and infrastructure to support skill transfer. These interventions enabled a number of SMEs to enter the service sector, creating expanded opportunities in areas such as hospitality, logistics, and construction. This demonstrates that a well-designed LCP can generate tangible results for the country. Nonetheless, the progresses made in local participation has faced restrictions from systemic barriers including the involvement

¹¹⁹ Interview #70

of elites, inadequate institutional enforcement, dominance from foreign investors, fronting where local firms act as nominal partners for foreign companies, procurement rules that favour foreign firms and tax rules skewed against local players.

Moreover, the LCP shows structural weaknesses through JVs where foreign companies control essential resources while maintaining minimal partnerships with local businesses. The strategy of local fronting which enables Ghanaian-owned businesses to act as stand-ins for foreign investments has weakened the effectiveness of the policy. The unequal taxation system and procurement biases that benefit foreign businesses reveal how neoliberal governance practices impede maximising domestic advantages. The analysis presented in this chapter reveals that resource nationalism in semi-peripheral countries such as Ghana must be interpreted through the lens of global capitalist demands. The Ghanaian LCP has therefore been one that advances the interests of capital and maintains the parameters of a global neoliberal order with very limited space for resource nationalism despite domestic contestation over the policy.

Therefore, dynamics of Ghana's LCP as observed from a more panoramic view could be understood as the workings of the integral state. This is where elements of force, consent and reform combine and recombine in the reproduction of neoliberal hegemony. The convergences among and between arms of the government and state, IOCs and fractions of the national elite-cum-capitalist class constitute a dominant power bloc that exercises authority in a dialectic of exclusion and inclusion, or rule-through-partnership. As such, the participation institutions and capacity-building initiatives surrounding the LCP are its ideological moment, tasked with generating consent from below, diffusing dissent by channelling it into circuits of compliance. The policy could thus be said to function as a "passive revolution", an elite-engineered reform that partially absorbs pressures for local capacity and opportunity while preserving the structural

supremacy of global capital. In this respect, the Ghanaian case makes an original contribution to the debates on resource nationalism. It demonstrates how, in democratic petro-states, developmental policies can create genuine societal benefits but also how they remain an aspect of accumulation on a world scale. The LCP is not a break with neoliberalism but a negotiated transformation within it. It is a form of resource nationalism that embodies and stabilizes the inherent contradictions of Ghana's semi-peripheral position in the world economy.

Looking ahead, Ghana's oil LCP can have a positive impact in the future if those initial gains are consolidated and expanded to new areas and sectors beyond oil and protect against political capture and change in government. As such, the key challenge for Ghana's future policy and practice will be to go beyond the limited successes of LCP. Instead, it should be integrated in a broader industrial policy through backward and forward linkages to diversified, high-value production. Without this, the policy is unlikely to have a major impact on the structural imbalances of the sector and of the economy even as oil production itself may be expected to decline in coming years and the global energy transition takes the centre stage.

Chapter 6. Local Community Engagement, Contestation and Social Justice in Ghana's Oil Governance

6.1. Introduction

When Ghana found oil in 2007 local communities had great hopes, especially those in the Western Region where offshore production is located (Andrews, 2013). Many anticipated that oil production would create jobs while developing infrastructure and leading to economic growth (Oteng-Ababio, 2016). Over ten years have passed, and oil-producing communities still face marginalisation and economic inequalities while also enduring environmental degradation. The current situation of Ghana's oil producing community can best be described as "social injustice" as argued by Ayelazuno and Ayanoore (2022). It is essential to emphasise that although well-structured institutions, laws, and CSRs in the oil sectors can provide some benefit, it has not guaranteed social justice for oil producing communities in the Western Region of Ghana since oil production began in 2010.

I argue that the policy framework in Ghana's oil and gas sector fails to meet local community expectations which reveals how Ghana's regulatory system inadequately addresses socio-economic disparities and justice. Moreover, local contestation over the benefits and impacts of extraction has been constrained by several factors. These include fear of the state, as law enforcement agencies and security forces suppress community mobilisation; political interference, where state actors manipulating engagement processes to maintain hegemony; disunity among community members, where partisan divisions undermine collective action; and economic survival pressures, whereby limited livelihood alternatives compel many locals to accept the negative consequences of oil extraction as a necessary trade-off for economic stability. These factors have neutralised community contestation, making locals passively accommodate the socio-

economic and environmental consequences of the oil and gas sector rather than actively challenging the existing order. This chapter applies a Neo-Gramscian approach to examine how local communities engage with, contest, or accommodate oil governance in Ghana. Ghana's oil industry functions under a complex hegemonic structure where key players like the state along with IOCs and transnational institutions create governance frameworks that serve global capitalist needs and suppress local resistance. A Neo-Gramscian perspective reveals Ghana's oil governance as a battleground for hegemonic control which introduces minor reforms to meet local needs without threatening the global capitalist system which is a clear manifestation of an integral state. The dominance of IOCs and global financial systems endures due to these mechanisms which block local industrial growth while maintaining structural dependencies so Ghana's role in oil stays mainly focused on extraction instead of development.

After the introduction the chapter is organised as follows; there is a discussion on local community engagement which begins by examining the unmet expectations of oil-producing communities which remains marginalised by an extractive and hegemonic governance structure despite development promises. The analysis reveals two simultaneous dynamics of local community engagement where state and corporate actors use co-optation alongside limited consultation to mitigate local demands. The next section is an evaluation of the PRMA and the local content framework which shows how these policies maintain state-centralised control and exclusion despite their participatory framing. After that is a section that discusses power dynamics and social injustice in oil-producing regions pointing to the environmental, economic and social effects which significantly disrupt local livelihoods. The next section investigates local contestation efforts and their limitations while highlighting four primary structural barriers state repression, political interference, intra-community division, and economic dependency that

obstruct ongoing grassroots resistance. The chapter concludes, drawing on both empirical evidence and theoretical insight, that Ghana's oil governance system sustains and reproduces a hegemonic structure that privileges elite and transnational interests while neglecting local development and social justice.

6.2. Local Community Engagement: Between Co-optation and Contestation

The focus community for this research is located in the Western Region of Ghana, specifically the six districts near Ghana's offshore oil fields. When it was announced that oil was discovered in Ghana there was a lot of excitement across the country (Agbefu, 2011). This excitement was felt stronger in the Western Region of Ghana especially among the six oil producing communities where the focus group discussions took place, and in the words of one Journalist who captured the story from all the six districts "the energy, jubilation, celebrations name it was felt all over like Ghana had won the World Cup...this led many to name the Western Region as the Oil Region"(Key Informant Interview, July 28, 2023).¹²⁰ Several media houses quickly rushed to these localities to get a sense of their excitement and expectations from the oil discovery. Many expressed views that the Western Region had changed for good because God had blessed them with oil and gas (Key Informant Interview, July 28, 2023).¹²¹ A local assembly representative who was present at the time of discovery mentioned:

In fact, when we heard that the oil has been discovered in Cape Three Points, all indigenes of Ahanta West, particularly Dixcove were very happy. We were very excited in the sense that we know what oil can do for the country and the communities as well. So, we were happy. In fact, we were very happy. However, later we realised that the way the people were thinking has changed (Key Informant Interview, July 16, 2023).¹²²

This generally describes the views of many community members during the oil discovery. It sums up the general national views during the discovery and a decade after oil production.

¹²⁰ Interview #38

¹²¹ Interview #38

¹²² Interview #77

In essence community members anticipated substantial economic improvements through new jobs and infrastructure projects which would strengthen local livelihoods. The anticipated outcomes failed to materialise resulting in increasing discontent among local residents (Ayelazuno and Ovadia, 2022). Despite the policy frameworks like the LCP and PRMA community engagement processes in Ghana have been both co-optation and contestation in nature: through consultation forums and CSR initiatives as well as political promises, companies and governments reach out to communities. But these methods act as passive revolution tools by absorbing local grievance while maintaining the control of IOC and global capital. The analysis in this section reveals how local community engagement within Ghana's oil industry operates through political and corporate strategies that define interactions between the state and IOCs alongside community members. Through the Neo-Gramscian viewpoint this analysis shows that local engagement mechanisms operate as instruments of hegemonic dominance to suppress opposition and reduce transformative power in community movements.

6.2.1 Preliminary Engagement and Unfulfilled Political Promises

Indeed, Ghana's political actors engaged local communities from the moment oil was discovered in 2007 through promises of economic transformation along with job creation and regional development. The initial community interactions were presented as inclusive consultations, but they mainly benefited political elites instead of promoting true public involvement. The chronological examination of engagement stages in this section reveals how political actors employed oil governance to uphold their dominance while avoiding structural reform demands through early promises, consultation mechanisms, and electoral strategies.

6.2.1.1. 2007 - 2008: The Initial Phase of Engagement and Political Opportunism

It is important to mention that there were several forms of community engagement such as consultation forums. Many were organised by the state in 2007 and 2008 which had a few representatives such as chiefs, CSOs from the Western Region and other stakeholders. As one local representative mentioned “Well there have been several engagements, and they are still ongoing. What I am expecting from the agencies, and the companies didn’t happen” (Key Informant Interview, July 16, 2023).¹²³ In a focus group discussion members of all six districts in the Western Region corroborated this view. One member’s view summarises their experience. He said:

Yes, there were a lot of engagements that took place. I think, prior to, and after the drilling, I think NGOs like Friends of the Nation were instrumental in engaging the local communities. We had the Western Regional Coastal Foundation, which also had a set of NGOs including Friends of the Nation and COLANDEF and other NGOs from the Western Region. So, we had the Oil Dialogue. I was part of it. It was really a good thing because this was something that came when oil came so there was massive community engagement. Even in the area of oil spillage and all that. So that was one good thing the oil brought. It helped the NGOs to engage us the more. It served as an opportunity for them to engage us (FGD, August -September 2023).

There was a clear distinction between government engagement and CSOs engagement in the first years of oil discovery. The oil discovery pushed several CSOs to engage with the community; however, government engagement was not that intensive. Nonetheless, political elites from the beginning sought to position themselves as main intermediaries between local communities and international oil firms. The NDC and the NPP used the oil discovery to win electoral support. As national elections in 2008 approached, political leaders made visits to oil-producing areas and engaged with local chiefs to make extensive promises about oil wealth benefits. A paramount chief from the Western Region recalled:

For interactions and communication plenty has taken place. Between the elders in this area headed by the paramount chief and people in government and the firms involved themselves. Almost every president and member of parliament since the discovery in 2006/2007 have come to have conversations with us concerning the oil. We are always telling them what the communities need so they can provide but only a few have been done (Key Informant Interview, August 7, 2023).¹²⁴

¹²³ Interview #77

¹²⁴ Interview #90

This shows that multiple interactions and communication efforts took place between community leaders and government officials. These paramount chiefs acted as leaders in discussions between the regional elders and government officials alongside representatives from the involved companies. Majority of the community respondents believed that all the consultation and community visitation were in the political interest of the political elites who are seeking electoral votes although this was not the entire perception during the earlier days of the oil discovery.¹²⁵ Nonetheless these elites, although they had a political agenda, yet under the pretence of following processes and traditions of the oil producing communities, used those platforms to make promises.

A leading commitment emerged from John Mahama as the NDC candidate who pledged to direct 10% of oil revenue to the development of the Western Region (Reuters, 2010). The promise received strong approval from local communities because they trusted it would deliver real advantages to individuals impacted by oil extraction. While political leaders used oil-related rhetoric to gain support they preserved state control over oil operations. Neo-Gramscian theory explains this situation as passive revolution which presents reforms as promises but maintains existing hegemonic structures instead of enabling radical change (Gramsci 1971; Cox 1987). This passive revolution unfolded over the duration of the electoral cycle.

6.2.1.2. 2009 – 2010: Formal Consultation, Parliamentary Petition and the Rejection of Local Revenue Demands

Once the NDC won the 2008 election, engagement with local communities shifted from campaign rhetoric to formal policy discussions. The government worked together with CSOs to conduct national consultations throughout the country to gather opinions on oil revenue spending in 2009. Traditional leaders along with CSOs and community representatives had the chance to

¹²⁵ This was prominent in 10 out of the 12 FGD discussion. However, this was not the entire situation during the earlier days of the oil discovery.

express their concerns during consultations held across the ten regions of the country. An executive member of the CSOPOG mentioned that the government engagement peaked from the second year of oil discovery which was 2008, an election year. He mentioned that “the government in collaboration with CSOs in the oil sector organised national consultations in all the 10 regions of Ghana (at the time) to seek views on how to spend the money” (Key Informant Interview, January 14, 2023).¹²⁶ These consultations shaped the twelve priority areas of the PRMA (PRMA, 2011; PRMA-Amendment, 2015), corroborating earlier research (Debrah and Graham, 2015; Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh, 2012).

6.2.1.3. 2011 – 2012: Electoral Mobilisation and the Manipulation of Community Expectations

As Ghana approached another election cycle in 2012, the issue of oil revenue distribution re-emerged in political discourse. Both the NDC and NPP sought to capitalise on unmet community expectations to gain electoral advantage. The NPP promised to convert the Western Region into Ghana's oil and gas industry centre during their 2012 campaign. The party's platform included the Accelerated Oil and Capacity Development programme which intended to teach Ghanaians skills in equipment manufacturing, fabrication, installation, and welding (Graham et al., 2016). Similarly, then-NPP candidate Nana Akufo-Addo promised to use oil revenues to fund the Free Senior High School (Free SHS) policy (*Modern Ghana*, 2012; NPP's-Manifesto, 2012). Although this was a national promise and not a community specific promise it motivated some members from the oil communities to go and vote. Some of the community members confirmed during the focus group that it was one of the factors that made them vote for the NPP during the 2012 and 2016 elections (FGD, July- September 2023).

¹²⁶ Interview #17

Despite these renewed promises, communities remained sceptical. Many recognised that similar pledges had been made during the 2008 election cycle, only to be discarded once political power was secured. A resident of an oil-producing district reflected: “The visits to our community only intensified because the 2008 elections were just around the corner, so all the presidential candidates came around making promises, and we also told them what we expected from the oil.” (Key Informant Interview, March 4, 2023).¹²⁷ This scepticism was reinforced when, despite continued political engagement, no structural changes were made to oil revenue distribution mechanisms. The government’s decision to reject the 10% regional allocation proposal remained unchanged, and local development projects were slow to materialise.

6.2.1.4. 2013 – Present: Disillusionment and the Decline of Political Trust

By 2013, the effects of unfulfilled promises had become evident many local communities felt disillusioned with political actors. Although the 2013 LCP attempted to boost local participation it ended up strengthening IOCs' control by limiting local involvement in the oil and gas sector. Successive governments used oil governance to interact with local communities around election times, yet they consistently avoided substantial policy changes. Over time, community members have lost faith in political actors, recognising that oil governance remains concentrated in elite hands. As one community leader summarised: “We tell them what the communities need we have done this several times but only a few things have been done. Unfortunately, after every general election, they forget about us” (Key Informant Interview August 7, 2023, Half Assini).¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Interview #31

¹²⁸ Interview #91

From this one can say that while Ghanaian political elites have consistently engaged with oil-producing communities, this engagement has been strategically designed to sustain hegemony (i.e. elite-IOCs power bloc) rather than promote genuine development.

By analysing the chronological trajectory of political engagement from early promises (2007–2008), formal consultations and parliamentary petition (2009–2010), electoral mobilisation (2011–2012), and eventual disillusionment (2013–present) this section highlights the systemic nature of political opportunism and elite-driven governance in Ghana’s oil sector. Without structural changes that prioritise local empowerment over hegemonic stability, community participation in oil governance will remain symbolic rather than transformative.

6.2.2 The Western Regional Chiefs Demands: Co-optation and Deflecting of Demands

The demand for a 10% allocation of oil revenues to the Western Region in 2010 marked a critical moment in Ghana’s oil governance discourse. Chiefs and civic groups, recognising the economic and environmental burdens of oil extraction, petitioned Parliament to secure a direct reinvestment mechanism that would ensure tangible benefits for local communities (Mohan et al., 2018; Reuters, 2010). However, rather than engaging with the substantive grievances raised, the Ghanaian state employed strategic co-optation and controlled consultations to neutralise local contestation, ensuring that elite and corporate dominance in the oil sector remained intact. When the chiefs’ petition reached Parliament, it was swiftly rejected on the grounds that allocating 10% of oil revenues to one region would set a constitutional and political precedent that could encourage similar demands from other resource-rich areas (Mohan et al., 2018).

Notwithstanding the rejection, the demand had attained substantial political traction, provoking both the ruling NDC and opposition NPP to respond strategically. Within Parliament,

the NPP initially expressed support for the demand, with five of its members mounting a campaign in favour of the proposal. As the NPP's Dominic Nitiwul stated:

we are going to ensure that this thing is carried and there are several tactics we are going to use or weapons at our disposal; including challenging a voice vote and ensuring that we do a head count of this particular call because we are really serious with this call (Modern Ghana, 2010).

However, analysts argue that the NPP's support was not entirely altruistic but rather a political manoeuvre to destabilise the NDC government by increasing demands for revenue decentralisation (Mohan et al., 2018). The NDC, fearing the ripple effects of such a concession, rejected the demand and redirected engagement efforts towards controlled consultations, ensuring that grievances were absorbed without fundamentally altering the existing governance framework. One NDC official later justified this decision, stating:

The chiefs from the Western Region did not get their 10% request, but we factored their demands in the local content law in 2013... We had numerous meetings with them and assured them jobs would come to the region (Key Informant Interview, February 5, 2023).¹²⁹

Similarly, another NDC representative emphasised the party's resource-nationalist stance:

If we had accepted the proposal, we would have opened the floodgates for similar demands by other regions. The local content policy was the best compromise since it was national in scope, and since the oil is in the Western Region, they would benefit directly from it (Key Informant Interview, February 10, 2023).¹³⁰

A key dimension of the state's strategy to neutralise contestation was the selective incorporation of local elites into advisory committees and oil-sector forums for discussion. This process fragmented grassroots mobilisation by drawing key figures away from collective action and integrating them into state-led governance mechanisms. One member of the Parliamentary Select Committee for Energy explained this approach, stating:

We brought local voices into the decision-making process through advisory roles. We believed that engaging chiefs and community representatives at this level would ensure that oil revenue distribution was handled inclusively (Key Informant Interview, April 10, 2023).¹³¹

¹²⁹ Interview #11

¹³⁰ Interview #8

¹³¹ Interview #46

However, some local activists viewed this incorporation as a divide-and-rule strategy that weakened their bargaining power. An activist from Takoradi lamented: “Once some of the chiefs’ got seats at the table, they stopped speaking loudly about our issues. It became about their individual gains rather than the community’s collective needs” (Key Informant Interview, Takoradi, December 13, 2022).¹³²

Similar sentiment was expressed by community based organisations and fisherfolk groups in the region, who noted a relative decrease in public criticism by traditional leaders following their inclusion in oil company or state agency meetings or the provision of allowances, logistics, or other direct benefits (FGD July - August 2023; Key Informant Interviews July 18, 2023; Key Informant Interviews August 4, 2023).¹³³ This is not entirely new and is consistent with existing literature on elite co-optation in the Ghanaian extractive industries. Ablo and Overå (2015) highlight how oil companies in the Western Region made strategic investments in traditional leaders, such as donations, sponsorship of festivals and tournaments, and infrastructural and social amenities projects, often bypassing elected local government officials. Presented as CSR initiatives, these gifts often temper with potential opposition in the future.

On the one hand, this co-optation of chiefs demonstrates how organic intellectuals that are meant to represent particular subaltern groups can be repositioned to advance hegemonic interests. By allowing traditional leaders to have a voice and seat in formal governance spaces often with limited tangible influence on decision-making power state and corporate actors are also deflecting more radical demands for redistribution (oil revenue, infrastructure), environmental remediation, or community consent mechanisms. On the other hand, the impact is a partial defanging of the social movement for just oil governance in the region. Demands for, and the articulation of, local

¹³² Interview #24

¹³³ Interview #79, #87 and FGD.

content provisions, environmental protection measures, or revenue sharing are often individualised rather than collective, thus weakening the bargaining power of communities in negotiations with the state and/or IOCs.

Another crucial factor in the neutralisation of local contestation was the role of IFIs, particularly the World Bank and IMF. These organisations prioritised macroeconomic stability over regional equity, reinforcing the government's position that oil revenues should be centrally managed rather than allocated regionally. A policy expert explained the alignment between IFIs and state priorities: "The World Bank and IMF encouraged Ghana to focus on national fiscal stability rather than regionalised allocations. Their priority was ensuring that oil revenues contributed to economic growth at the macro level" (Key Informant Interview, November 20, 2022).¹³⁴ This perspective was institutionalised through Ghana's PRMA in 2011, which channelled oil funds into national development projects rather than direct community reinvestment. A youth leader in the Western Region criticised this externally driven policy direction: "Global institutions backed the government's position. Their focus was on economic stability, not the struggles of local communities. So, in the end, their policies helped justify our exclusion" (Key Informant Interview, March 8, 2023).¹³⁵

This external validation further strengthened state authority, providing a legitimising framework for the centralisation of oil revenues while deflecting regional demands. The Western Region's demand for 10% of oil revenues represented one of the most significant local challenges to Ghana's oil governance framework. Nevertheless, instead of engaging with the core of these requests, the state used a range of co-optation strategies, to deflect, neutralise and halt local contestation. State-led consultations provided an illusion of engagement while maintaining elite

¹³⁴ Interview #12

¹³⁵ Interview #33

control over decision-making. Selective incorporation of local elites fragmented grassroots mobilisation, redirecting leadership away from collective resistance. International development partners reinforced the state's macroeconomic approach, further sidelining local grievances. Through these mechanisms, the state and corporate actors sustained their hegemonic dominance over Ghana's oil sector, ensuring that local communities remained structurally marginalised.

6.3. Petroleum Revenue Management and Local Development: Limited Impact and Systemic Exclusion

Ghana established the PRMA in 2011 to serve as the main legal structure for managing petroleum revenue collection and spending. The PRMA law from 2011 aimed to establish transparent practices and accountable distribution methods for petroleum revenues throughout Ghana. However, the framework emphasises macroeconomic stability and national development but does not satisfy oil-producing communities in the Western Region. It has failed to meet the expectations of oil producing communities' members.

6.3.1. The PRMA Formation and Preliminary National and Regional Consultation: An illusion of Local Participation

The PRMA does not mention a specific community for which petroleum revenues are to be spent. In this case everything goes to the central government which decides on where expenses are allocated based on the annual budget. Prior to the oil production several consultations which involved professional agencies, media, traditional authorities, and other stakeholders all mentioned the need for oil revenues to support public spending and development. In the PRMA the ABFA is the main source of petroleum financing projects from the annual budget. The PRMA amended the ABFA spending which falls into three core areas namely; public investment (i.e., capital spending such as investment to Ghana Infrastructure Investment Fund (GIIF), PIAC and consumption (i.e., recurrent spending).

In the absence of a national development or long-term development plan there are 12 priority areas to serve as a guide for oil expenditure (PRMA, 2011; PRMA-Amendment, 2015).¹³⁶

Figure 3 is a pictorial summary of the 12-priority areas in the PRMA.

Figure 3 PRMA 12 Priority Areas and Allocations



Source: Author's Creations.

Despite the various regional and national input made by stakeholders into the PRMA, and areas of revenue expenditures, it all appears to have been an illusion of participation. Many participants emphasised the need to use oil for development of the oil producing communities in the Western region which is one of the poorest regions of the country. However, the dominant forces were state institutions, central government agencies, and political elites, working in

¹³⁶ The 12 priority areas are: 1. Agriculture and industry, 2. Physical infrastructure and service delivery in education, science and technology, 3. Potable water delivery and sanitation, 4. Infrastructure development in telecommunication, road, rail and port, 5. Physical infrastructure and service delivery in health, 6. Housing delivery, 7. Environmental protection, sustainable utilisation, and protection of natural resources. 8. Rural development, 9. Developing alternative energy sources 10. Strengthening of institutions of government concerned with governance and the maintenance of law and order, 11. Public safety and security, 12. Provision of social welfare and the protection of the physically disabled and disadvantaged citizens (PRMA-Amendment, 2015).

consultation with some IOCs, who ultimately held the power to make the final decisions. Consequently, though the process appeared inclusive, with representation of all stakeholders, only a few decided the outcome which led to the selection of the 12 priority areas for oil expenditure. Indeed, this created an illusion of inclusivity while strengthening state dominance over oil revenue governance management. Although the government held consultations with professional agencies, media entities, traditional authorities, and other stakeholders about petroleum revenue management it did not grant oil-producing communities direct decision-making power through these discussions. The process served as a hegemonic strategy that created manufactured consent while ensuring local actors felt included despite state maintaining absolute control over revenue distribution. Through these consultations a centralised governance system gained acceptance which prevented oil-producing communities from meaningful involvement. The semblance of citizen involvement was strengthened when policymaking authorities created broad expenditure classifications including agriculture, education, infrastructure, and security which served as tools for national development. The lack of concrete obligations toward oil-producing regions resulted in local community issues being subsumed into a technocratic narrative which favoured national economic stability instead of focused local reinvestment.

As part of the advocacy for expenditure for oil, PIAC in 2016 conducted a study on citizen preference as shown in figure 4 (PIAC, 2017b). However, this will become symbolic since in practice the government did not follow its application in the distribution of petroleum funds disregarding the suggestions of PIAC's research finding to some extent. For example, the constant spreading of priority areas has made these projects less impactful in these areas in the communities. Figure 5 shows completed ABFA projects across the country; however, from a pictorial view one can observe that the Western Region has not received fair distribution across the country. This

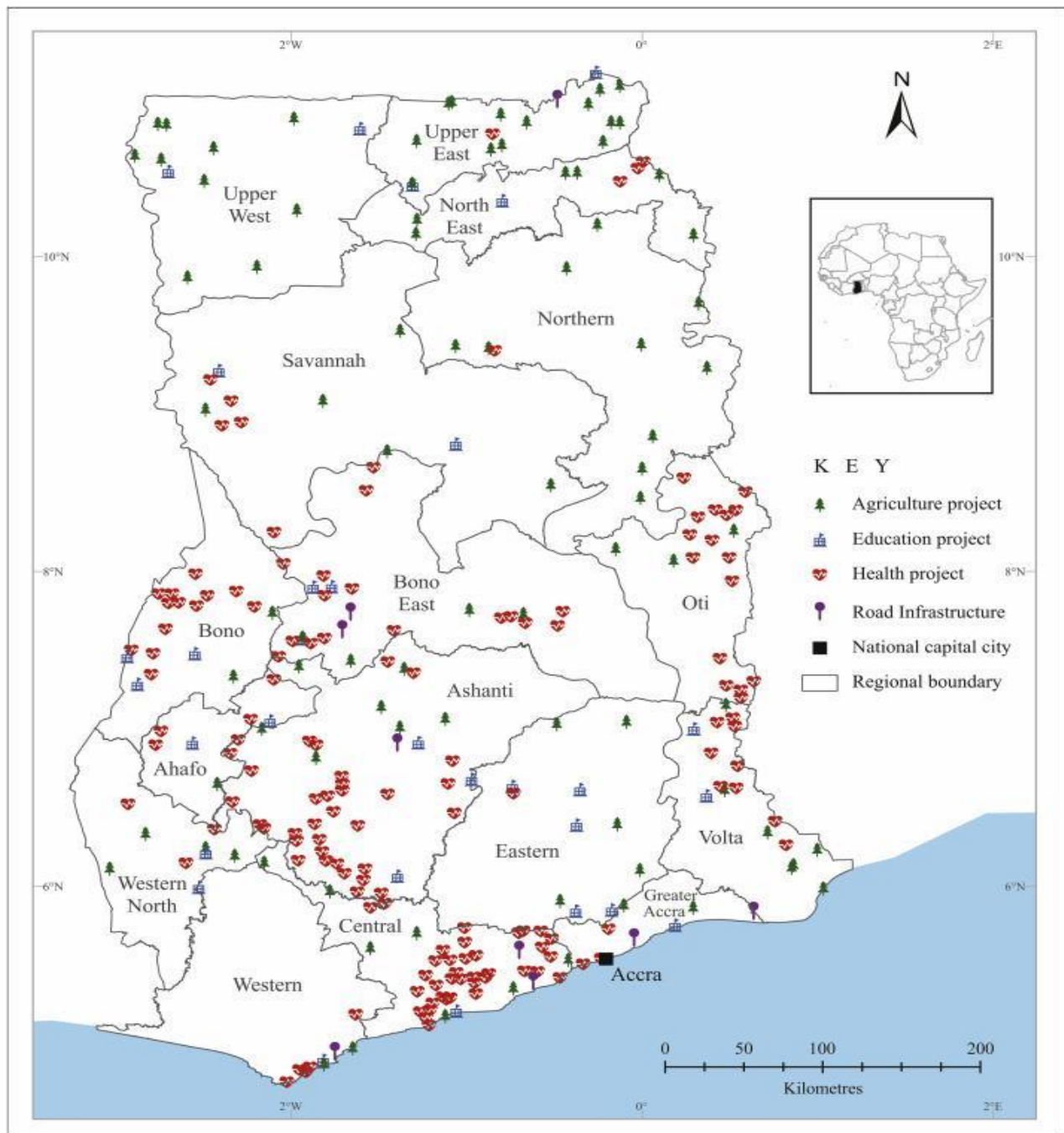
explains the agitation of the members from these oil communities that they have not felt the impact of the project being done by oil money from the ABFA. Despite its participatory facade the consultation process strengthened elite power because it integrated public feedback without changing the existing decision-making frameworks. The PRMA consultation phase served as a façade that validated pre-established governance structures while continuing to deny oil-producing communities their 10% request.

Figure 4 Citizens Preferences for ABFA Priority Areas by Regions in Ghana

CITIZENS' PREFERENCE FOR ABFA PRIORITISATION BY REGIONS: 2016						
Region	Ranked Priorities					
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
Eastern	Agriculture and Industry	Healthcare	Rural Development	Social Welfare	Portable Water	Housing Delivery
Volta	Agriculture and Industry	Healthcare	Rural Development	Social Welfare	Portable Water	Housing Delivery
Central	Agriculture and Industry	Education	Health	Roads	Energy	Finishing of Uncompleted Projects
Greater Accra	Agriculture and Industry	Education	Health	Security	Rural Development	
Western	Agriculture and Industry	Health	Education	Roads	Water	N/A
Brong Ahafo	Agriculture and Industry	Rural Development	Health	Water	Science and Technology	Environment
Northern	Agriculture and Industry	Roads	Education	Health	Water	N/A
Upper West	Agriculture and Industry	Education	Roads	Health	N/A	N/A
Ashanti	Agriculture and Industry	Roads	Rural Development	Health	Social Welfare	Education
Upper East	Agriculture and Industry	Roads	Education	Health	Social Welfare	N/A

Source:(PIAC, 2017a).

Figure 5 Completed ABFA Projects From 2011-2018



Source:(Ogbe and Lujala, 2021: 5).

Figure 5 is a map of completed ABFA-funded projects between 2011 and 2018, categorised into agriculture, education, health, and road infrastructure. The visual distribution highlights several key trends that echo the patterns seen in Table 10's allocations but also reveal important political-economic dynamics. First, road infrastructure projects (purple markers) are unequally concentrated in the southern regions, especially in Greater Accra, Central, and Western Regions. This reflects the 53.51% budget share roads received, but it also raises questions about equity. Many of these projects are located along national economic pathways rather than in oil-bearing districts such as Jomoro or Ellembele in the Western Region, where the environmental and social costs of extraction are high.

Second, health projects (red hearts) are clustered heavily in the southern and middle belt regions, with notable concentrations in Central, Eastern, and Ashanti. The Western Region hosts some projects, but the volume does not reflect its role as the epicentre of petroleum production. This suggests that ABFA health spending has not been strategically targeted to offset the localised health burdens associated with oil production.

Third, agriculture projects (green trees) are more widely dispersed, particularly in the northern savannah belt, which aligns with national agricultural policy priorities. While this distribution supports regional diversification, it further illustrates that ABFA funds are being used for general national development objectives rather than as targeted compensation or local development measures for oil-impacted communities.

Finally, education projects (blue buildings) are sporadically located, with only one located in the Western Region. Given that capacity building for oil sector participation is a stated priority under the PRMA, the scattered siting suggests a missed opportunity to geographically align educational investments with the locations where petroleum-related skills are most needed. In sum,

the distribution of ABFA-funded projects reveals how state spending reflects dominant political and economic interests rather than the needs of marginalised oil-producing areas. The spatial pattern demonstrates a centralised, state-led development approach that serves national infrastructure and political capital accumulation while diluting the redistributive logic of petroleum revenue management. In effect, the ABFA's implementation aligns with the interests of the ruling elite and their political coalitions, rather than constituting a transformative tool for resource justice in host communities.

Table 10 ABFA Distribution to the Priority Areas from 2011-2020

Priority Area	Allocation (GHS) Billion	Allocation (%)
Roads, railways, and other infrastructure	4,560,000,000	53.51%
Physical Infrastructure and service delivery in education	1,850,000,000	21.74%
Expenditure on amortisation of loans for oil and gas infrastructure	860,240,000	10.11%
Agriculture modernisation	682,910,000	8.02%
Capacity building (including oil and gas)	358,000,000	4.21%
Physical infrastructure and service delivery in health	118,820,000	1.40%
Ghana Infrastructure Investment Fund (GIIF)	43,990,000	0.52%
Industrialisation	31,800,000	0.37%
Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC)	11,830,000	0.14%
Total	8,517,590,000	100.00%

Source:(Acheampong et al., 2022: 92).

Similarly, table 10 showing the ABFA distribution confirms the top-down, centralised nature of petroleum revenue spending, with the biggest ABFA allocations going towards “roads, railways, and other infrastructure” (53.51% or GHS 4.56 billion in total). Although infrastructure is of national public benefit, no funds were earmarked for host communities. Indeed, it is difficult to track how much if any is allocated to specific communities since ABFA has other funds added to it. This leaves oil producing regions with little to show for their part as host communities of resource extraction. Fieldwork participants in the Western Region consistently lamented how major road construction projects rarely pass through their districts, or if they do, these are politically calculated votes-banking efforts, not aimed at oil-affected districts (Key Informant Interviews, Takoradi, December 16, 2022).¹³⁷

The second-largest ABFA allocation was for the “construction of infrastructure for the education sector” (21.74%), another national public good. But again, with no information on the sites of projects, it is hard to know if these were located in oil-producing regions. Also, allocations for investments that could more directly benefit these regions in the near term such as agricultural modernisation (8.02%) and industrialisation (0.37%) were far less. This is important because such allocations are better aligned with local needs and contribute to diversifying the economy beyond oil. It is also worth pointing out that the share allocated to capacity building (4.21%), which includes oil and gas training, seems trivial compared to the government’s LCP target of 90% local participation in the sector by 2020. PIAC, by far the most important accountability mechanism in the architecture, received only 0.14% of total ABFA revenue over the same ten-year period.

¹³⁷ Interview #25

In short, the allocations presented in Table 10 show how the fiscal parameters of the agreement were deployed by the central state to serve its own interests, including (centrally defined) national macroeconomic imperatives. These would include the budget deficit spending guidelines of the IMF and World Bank, which Ghana as a credit-dependent state must (publicly) adhere to. The preoccupation with big-ticket infrastructure and loan amortisation also shows how oil revenue management was set up to be capital-intensive, more than serving distributive justice to oil host communities.

6.3.2. The PRMA and Weak Local Reinvestment Strategies

The PRMA's governance structure has three major shortcomings that have contributed to the marginalisation of oil-producing communities: first, the PRMA maintains state authority over revenue distribution which marginalises local communities. Secondly, its macroeconomic focus disregards regional needs and lastly, the political discretion exercised by the Minister of Finance in selecting the four priority areas of expenditure has exacerbated uneven development in oil-producing communities. This has led to a thinly spread distribution of revenue for development. I discuss them below.

6.3.2.1. Centralised Revenue Disbursement and the Exclusion of Local Communities

The PRMA suffers from a significant flaw because its framework is a centralised governance structure which assigns revenue management to state control institutions such as the Ministry of Finance while denying oil-producing communities any decision-making power. The Act established key oversight institutions, including: The Ghana Petroleum Funds (GPF) consisting of both the Stabilisation Fund and Heritage Fund which intended to maintain long-term financial stability. ABFA: Allocating oil revenues to the national budget. The PIAC: Responsible for monitoring petroleum revenue usage. With the exception of PIAC, which monitors the

management of oil revenues, the institutional framework of the PRMA is dominated by national state institutions and central government agencies. Consequently, decision-making power regarding revenue distribution has largely been concentrated in Accra, the capital, and centred around the political elite, with minimal involvement of local communities. A local assembly representative in Takoradi criticized this exclusion, stating:

Communities had no meaningful control over the allocation of oil revenue funds. All the financial decisions are made in Accra before communities learn about them and discover that the money has been allocated to other areas. (Key Informant Interview July 22, 2023).¹³⁸

Similarly, a traditional leader in one of the affected districts lamented:

Local areas provide oil through their waters but neither chiefs nor residents have control over revenue distribution. Local leaders receive consultation invitations only after final decisions have been established (Key Informant Interview August 7, 2023) ¹³⁹.

This false sense of engagement occurred at the preliminary stage of consultations, where the views of stakeholders were sought only at the regional and national levels.

6.3.1.2. Macroeconomic Priorities Over Local Development

Another weakness of PRMA rests in its excessive focus on national macroeconomic projects which results in the disregard of local oil-producing communities' needs. Although there were national consultations and regional consultations on the areas of expenses, the government has consistently focused ABFA on national infrastructure development and educational projects and debt payments which results in limited investments for communities directly impacted by oil extraction. For example, from 2011 to 2020 oil revenue allocations showed that 53.5% supported road and railway projects while agriculture modernisation received only 8% and health infrastructure got a mere 1.4% (Acheampong et al., 2022: 92). A youth leader expressed frustration at this imbalance stating that: “The communities anticipated new schools, hospitals, and job

¹³⁸ Interview #81

¹³⁹ Interview #90

opportunities but found the oil money allocated to road construction in Accra instead. What about us?” (Key Informant Interview, August 2023).¹⁴⁰

This imbalance in revenue allocation reinforces structural inequalities, where the very communities that bear the environmental and social costs of oil production remain underdeveloped while the state channels oil wealth into politically strategic national projects such as the Free Senior High School Policy (GBN, 2025). An assembly member from Ahanta West emphasised this exclusion: “They came to us during consultations, took notes, and promised development, but we are still here waiting. No hospital, no potable water. But in Accra, they are building flyovers with the same oil money” (Key Informant Interview, July 2023).¹⁴¹

The local disillusionment is exacerbated by the selective way in which petroleum revenues are allocated, often influenced by political discretion rather than need-based assessments. One civil society leader in Sekondi-Takoradi pointed out the political underpinnings of the ABFA spending priorities:

Every government chooses its own priority sectors without consulting the communities that should benefit the most. One administration focuses on roads, another on energy, but none of them prioritises real local development (Key Informant Interview, Sekondi-Takoradi, December 2022).¹⁴²

The PRMA’s governance structure ensures that resource control remains centralised, allowing state elites to determine spending priorities in a way that consolidates their political and economic dominance while neutralising demands for regional reinvestment. The consequence is a governance system where local grievances are absorbed into national policy rhetoric but remain structurally unaddressed, leaving oil-producing communities in a state of perpetual marginalisation despite their resource contributions.

¹⁴⁰ Interview #91

¹⁴¹ Interview #77

¹⁴² Interview #24

6.3.1.2. Political Discretion and Unequal Development Patterns

Over a decade of implementation of the PRMA there is no clear justification for the selected preferred areas by the government. Indeed, the selection areas and their allocations have been inconsistent with the preference of Ghanaians nationally and regionally as shown in table 10 and figure 4. Further interrogation into this during fieldwork showed that the selections have mainly been politically influenced. This is mainly because of the discretionary selections of the priority areas by the Minister of Finance who is politically appointed. In the PRMA, Section 21 clause (3) states that “where the long-term national development plan approved by parliament is not in place, the spending of petroleum revenue within the budget shall give priority to but not limited to programmes and activities relating to...”(PRMA, 2011: 12). The phrase “not limited to” provides a loophole that the Minister of Finance has taken advantage of over the years. Over the years, the clause has been exploited enabling expenditures which dilute the intention of the ABFA. For instance, the Minister of Finance can decide to disregard the 12 priority areas listed in the law. Furthermore, in section 21 clause (5) the minister is to select four priority areas at 3 years' interval leaving him or her to determine what these priority areas are. This has led to the minister selecting areas which sometimes are not clearly in the 12 listed areas in the law. For instance, between 2011 and 2016 the minister selected areas such as; expenditure and amortisation of loans for oil and gas infrastructure, road and other infrastructure, agriculture and modernisation and capacity building (PIAC, 2017a). A critical review of PIAC's report and the expenditure revealed that only agricultural modernization fell within the 12 priority areas. In some instances, they went beyond the 4 priority areas as one expert recounted:

The area list in 2015 were education, road and highways, water, energy, and health. In addition to this was the expenditure on transportation and the transfer fund to the Ghana Infrastructure Investment Fund...there were also disbursement into the capacity building which were spent on goods and services in the educational

sector....therefore when you add them up with four priorities you get nine” (Key Informant Interview November 20, 2022).¹⁴³

This ministerial discretion has allowed the ruling party to determine which areas receive state funding, resulting in inconsistent spending priorities. The government directs financial resources to areas with political significance. Political election cycles drive spending decisions that favour immediate projects over sustainable transformation efforts. One expert in the oil and gas sector explained:

the strong hold regions of political parties experience increased spending every election year while the Western Region stays neglected. In fact, we know that all the roads in Kyebi the hometown of the president (Nana Akufo-Addo) were paved before the next elections (Key Informant Interview, March 2023).¹⁴⁴

Similarly, a community leader in Ahanta West District lamented: “Oil money initiated the construction of schools and clinics which remain unfinished projects” (Key Informant Interview, March 2023).¹⁴⁵ From these statements is a clear indication that politicians visit these areas during elections with promises of new development projects which fail to come to fruition. Therefore, the allocation of oil revenue follows hegemonic patterns where resources support elite power bloc and block grassroots contestations.

6.3.3. CSR as a Hegemonic Tool for Pacification of Oil Companies Operating in Ghana

With the influx of several IOCs in the Western Region came demands for CSR by the locals. By CSR in this dissertation, I refer to a comprehensive approach to business whereby companies are seen as ethically and socially responsible for their actions and activities in a host community (Ismail, 2009). In essence it is when companies decide to take responsibility for their activities’ impact on the “customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities and other stakeholders as well as their environment” (Ismail, 2009: 199). Others see CSR as being part of

¹⁴³ Interview #12

¹⁴⁴ Interview #13, this is a well-known public perception about the road development in Kyebi.(GhanaWeb, 2024).

¹⁴⁵ Interview #77

the development process especially when businesses mature in approach to host communities behaviourally and attitudinally (Crowther and Aras, 2008).

However, CSR as concept has evolved in both policy and academic discourse. More contemporary terms such as Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria, and “social license to operate” (SLO), are now more widely used to frame corporate accountability and legitimacy in resource-extractive contexts (Bice, 2014; Owen and Kemp, 2013; Rajak, 2011). Nonetheless, a growing body of critical literature problematises these corporate frameworks, arguing that CSR/ESG often serve as hegemonic instruments that help corporations manage risk, secure access to resources, and depoliticise dissent, rather than addressing structural inequalities or community demands (Frynas, 2005; Idemudia, 2010; Rajak, 2011; Kirsch, 2014). These initiatives frequently prioritise the visibility of benevolence, over the redistribution of power or benefits. As such, CSR and ESG should not be assumed as genuine commitments to justice but rather as strategic tools for corporations to gain community acceptance, fragment resistance, and maintain extractive legitimacy under neoliberal norms (Bice, 2014; Gilberthorpe and Banks, 2012).

Despite visible corporate interventions in oil-producing districts, CSR in Ghana’s oil sector remains a highly contested and uneven terrain, shaped by power asymmetries and driven more by reputational management than developmental transformation. Rather than reflecting genuine corporate responsibility, these interventions often serve as instruments of soft power, allowing IOCs to secure their social licence to operate while mitigating dissent (Rajak, 2011; Frynas, 2005). Fieldwork revealed scattered yet symbolic development projects across the six districts in the Western Region, including boreholes, school blocks, ICT equipment, and occasional scholarships.

These gestures, while welcomed by some community members, often fall short of addressing deeper structural inequalities or community expectations.

One respondent acknowledged the presence of such initiatives but also implied their limitations: “Tullow Oil started something, such as providing our schools with ICT supplies. They gave scholarships to a few students in the communities” (Key Informant Interview, July 5, 2023).¹⁴⁶ While such efforts are not entirely inconsequential, they often function as discursive tools of pacification, offering minor concessions in lieu of more meaningful redistribution or participatory governance (Gilberthorpe and Banks, 2012; Blowfield and Frynas, 2005). As table 11 illustrates, the intensity, scale, and sustainability of these CSR projects remain highly uneven, with no publicly available costing mechanisms to evaluate their true value or impact.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Interview #35

¹⁴⁷The table outlines CSR interventions from multiple oil firms in Ahanta West Municipality; however, it is important to acknowledge the absence of precise financial data due to a few challenges. The primary challenge in acquiring exact financial details about CSR initiatives stems from practical and methodological issues in assessing their monetary value rather than the projects' lack of significance. First, most of the information on project locations, statuses, and responsible companies was drawn from community narratives, key informant interviews, and on-site verification, rather than formal corporate disclosures. The oil companies involved such as GNPC, Jubilee Partners, Kosmos, and others do not publish a centralised, disaggregated breakdown of CSR spending at the community level. Where such figures exist, they are often presented as aggregate annual budgets or promotional materials without details on specific project costs. Second, many of the CSR projects are thinly spread, non-uniform, and often implemented in collaboration with state institutions, local contractors, or NGOs, further complicating the tracking of direct corporate financial contributions. For example, a borehole project may involve partial funding from a company, land allocation from a local chief, and operational oversight from a government agency all of which obscure the attribution of a fixed monetary value. Third, the scattered nature of CSR implementation across numerous small communities also makes it difficult to aggregate the total investment per locality. Some interventions, such as toilet facilities, water kiosks, or livelihood trainings, are episodic, not always officially commissioned, and vary in quality and scale. This reinforces the argument made earlier that CSR functions more as a mechanism of symbolic concession and community pacification, rather than a sustained, developmental investment strategy. As Frynas (2005), Rajak (2011), Gilberthorpe and Banks (2012) argue, the opacity of CSR spending in extractive sectors often reflects a deliberate strategy to avoid accountability and maintain the corporate image of benevolence without facilitating real transparency. In this light, the absence of monetary figures is itself a finding pointing to the broader problem of accountability, measurement, and reporting in CSR governance in Ghana's oil sector.

Table 11 Oil Companies Interventions in the Ahanta West Municipality

Community Name/Location	CSR Project	Status	Company Responsible
Achiowa	Borehole	Working	GNPC
Akwidaa	Community Borehole	Working	Jubilee Partners
Akwidaa	School block	Working	Jubilee Partners
Asemkow	School block	Working	Jubilee Partners
Busua	Clinic	Working	Kosmos
Butre	Borehole	Working	Kosmos
Butre	Portable water	In use maintenance challenges	Jubilee Partners
Butre	Livelihood enhancement	In use maintenance challenges	Jubilee Partners
Cape Three Points	School block	Working	Kosmos
Cape Three Points	Public Toilet facility	Not Working	Jubilee Partners
Cape Three Points	Community Borehole	Working	Jubilee Partners
Cape Three Points	Public Toilet facility	Not Working	GNPC
Egyambra	Safe water project	Working	Kosmos
Funko	Livelihood enhancement	In use maintenance challenges	Jubilee Partners
Funko	Portable water for School	Working	GNPC
Katakori	Washrooms	Completed and not in use	TEN Partners
Lower Discove	School block	Working	Jubilee Partners
Lower Discove	Teachers block	Working	Jubilee Partners
Lower Discove	ICT Lab	Working	Jubilee Partners
Lower Discove	School block	Working	GNPC
New Amanful	Washrooms	Working	Fendecare Marine Limited
New Amanful	Washrooms	Working	Bayfield Oil services
Pumpkin	School block	Working	Jubilee Partners

Source: Author's creation from fieldwork, June 2023.

Table 11 displays the types of CSR projects that oil companies have implemented in the Ahanta West Municipality. These include basic infrastructure such as boreholes, school blocks, washrooms, water and sanitation, clinics and livelihood interventions, as well as ICT facilities. Note that while several entries indicate “working” facilities, there are several examples that are incomplete, or having maintenance challenges and non-functional.

From a development perspective, these projects fill immediate needs of the communities, but they are limited in scope and size when compared to the socio-environmental disruption that accompanies offshore oil production. The pattern of company-specific “contributions” also suggests a fragmented and ad hoc approach, rather than a sustained and integrated development vision. Further, it is evident that some communities like Cape Three Points, Lower Discove have more projects relative to others, possibly due to the physical proximity of oil infrastructure or existing relationships with oil companies or other corporate actors.

Critically, most of the CSR projects are low-cost, low-maintenance outputs that have a high visibility but limited transformative potential. Boreholes, school blocks, and washrooms for example, while meeting basic needs, do not tackle structural issues like unemployment, loss of livelihoods in fishing, or environmental degradation, as have been reported in interviews by members of the local communities (Key Informant Interview August 9, 2023, Shama Bentsir).¹⁴⁸ Additionally, the frequent occurrence of “maintenance challenges” underscores the absence of sustainability planning and the lack of local government or community involvement in managing and sustaining these projects. Therefore, these CSR interventions can be interpreted as part of a larger hegemonic strategy by which corporate actors aim to secure community consent while maintaining the resource extraction *status quo*. By delivering material, but limited benefits, oil

¹⁴⁸ Interview #93

companies can deflect criticism, divide collective demands, and strengthen clientelist relationships with local elites, while also avoiding systemic change that would redistribute power or revenue in favour of host communities.

Furthermore, although some IOCs have shown some commitment to local development with the provision of some development interventions in these communities, a few respondents are not impressed because they are less impactful in their view. One respondent recount that:

on countless occasions the youth cried to these oil companies for jobs because we live in these communities but none of us got these jobs. We are grateful for the water and school supplies, but we want jobs so we can feed our families. They should stop bringing only white people here (Key Informant Interview August 7, 2023, Half Assini).¹⁴⁹

Similarly, a respondent from another community complained that: “they have to build a bigger toilet facility for us; this one is too small for a community of about 700 people” (Key Informant Interview August 9, 2023, Shama Bentsir).¹⁵⁰

The GNPC Foundation, positioned as the developmental arm of Ghana’s national oil company, has actively publicised its interventions across the country, including in the Western Region. These include projects such as the AstroTurf sports complex in Esikofoe-Amantem No. 2, and educational infrastructure in remote communities like Mumuni Camp, Yepomson, and Ohiapenika (GNPC, 2024; MyJoyOnline.com, 2023). At a public event, the Foundation’s CEO emphasised that GNPC had “done projects in all the 13 districts in the region,” ranging from classroom blocks and sanitary facilities to boreholes and scholarships (MyJoyOnline.com, 2023). However, this over-generalisation requires critical unpacking. While these interventions may reflect a commitment to nationwide development, their actual spatial and social targeting raises important questions about distributive justice in oil governance. The core issue is not whether

¹⁴⁹ Interview #91

¹⁵⁰ Interview #93

GNPC has built infrastructure in the Western Region, but whether these interventions adequately prioritise the oil-producing communities who suffer the direct socio-ecological impacts of extraction. As observed during fieldwork, many such communities especially in the six coastal districts feel marginalised and under-served relative to the scale of oil operations and promises made over the past decade. This is because their expectations were derived from a variety of sources. Political rhetoric, the media's representation of oil as a "game changer", and experiences with gold mining all contributed to expectations for jobs, improved infrastructure, and continued social investment from oil companies. While largely understandable, many of these expectations were ultimately unrealistic given oil's offshore, capital-intensive nature and the sector's limited capacity to absorb local labour.

Yet, the visibility of projects like Astro Turfs and boreholes allows GNPC to demonstrate social responsibility in media and political discourse though it is symbolic inclusion. The gap between stated priorities and lived experiences suggests that these projects serve more to preserve elite control and corporate-state narratives of inclusion than to deliver material justice to affected communities. Therefore, the question is not just whether GNPC is investing in the region but whether it is bringing social transformation. The current distribution pattern suggests otherwise. Those interviewed from the fieldwork do not feel that the oil has brought any form of improvement in their community and daily lives. This is all because of how these projects are “thinly spread across” the nation¹⁵¹.

¹⁵¹ For example some GNPC projects completed in other regions such as the Central Region are six fully furnished infrastructure to some schools such as Ghana National College, Mando Senior High School and Technical School, Bisease SHS, Mosano SHS, Effutu SHS, Assin North SHS, Komenda SHS, Dunkwa SHS and Abakrampa SHS (GNA, 2023).

Despite the beneficial appearance of CSR initiatives such as boreholes and sanitation projects along with school and health infrastructure development and scholarships and skill training opportunities, fieldwork data shows that CSR functions as a hegemonic mechanism to pacify community opposition. Oil companies weaken collective community resistance by distributing selective benefits through CSR activities. Oil companies have deliberately targeted local leaders and key influencers with incentives aimed at pacifying community frustrations without tackling the fundamental structural inequalities in oil governance.

To corroborate the pacification of local contestation or resistance through CSR incentives a few respondents pointed to instances of such. For example, a fisherman from Ahanta West captured this dynamic when he remarked: “We remain discontent with current developments yet refrain from protesting because we fear the termination of support” (Key Informant August 3, 2023).¹⁵² A majority of community members who depend on CSR initiatives like boreholes and scholarship programmes feel this way. These initiatives create a false appearance of corporate kindness while failing to solve the economic challenges faced by locals such as disappearing fishing resources or the absence of real job opportunities.¹⁵³

In Shama District, several young men expressed frustration at how CSR initiatives were used as a distraction from real issues: Corporate groups provide school amenities and road repairs yet fail to create jobs for local people. What about our fishing? Our community needs sustainable

¹⁵² Interview #79

¹⁵³ This sentiment was generally expressed across all the FGDs done in July and August of 2023. It reflects a new development arising from unmet local expectations and frustrations, and how CSR initiatives are, to some extent, helping to meet community needs. CSR has also become a source of support for communities that are largely displeased with IOCs, the oil sector’s activities, and the impact on their primary livelihoods especially fishing. At the same time, these communities also need clean water and other basic social amenities, some of which are being provided by oil companies. My attempts to follow up with IOCs in the sector were unsuccessful, as they all declined interview requests and referred me to their websites. A former employee noted that the goal of their CSR activities has always been to maintain good relations with local communities. However, two respondents from GNPC recounted an incident in which youth in the Ahanta West area, out of frustration, chased them out of the town. As a result, the company sought to make amends by re-engaging with local community leaders.

solutions instead of these tiny gift projects here and there (FGD, August 2023, Shama District). Similarly, a local chief in Jomoro emphasised how oil companies use selective co-optation to silence dissent: “Whenever people raise too much noise about their grievances the chiefs receive invitations for meetings where they receive small promises. This is how they keep us quiet.” (Key Informant Interview August 7, 2023).¹⁵⁴ Another informant mentioned that oil companies co-opt local elites by absorbing not only chiefs but also youth leaders and community activists into advisory positions and providing them with small contracts to secure their allegiance.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, one civil society activist in Takoradi pointed out how CSR programmes serve a containment strategy: “They identify outspoken individuals and provide them with benefits. After receiving benefits such as their child’s scholarship or a contract to supply materials or an invitation to Accra for a stakeholder meeting, they stop representing us (Key Informant Interview, December 13, 2022).”¹⁵⁶

The strategic use of CSR programmes to pacify communities becomes clear when examining where corporate projects are geographically located. Major oil companies distribute CSR resources to communities that have shown mobilisation instead of directing assistance based on genuine necessity. CSR activities by oil companies serve as a strategy to prevent and mitigate resistance rather than fulfilling a sense of obligation or displaying goodwill. When communities express their needs more loudly, they tend to receive more CSR interventions which supports Gramsci’s view of hegemony being maintained through both coercion and selective concessions (Gramsci, 1971; Morton, 2007). Corporate influence through CSR creates artificial dependencies which prevent communities from taking collective action because beneficiaries fear losing their

¹⁵⁴ Interview #90

¹⁵⁵ Interview #12

¹⁵⁶ Interview #24

minimal benefits. Oil companies maintain their strong control in Ghana's oil sector by keeping resistance efforts fragmented and local while using CSR as a means to dominate rather than empower communities. CSR will persist as a pacifying tool instead of an agent of transformation without structural changes that create fair resource distribution and tangible economic opportunities.

6.4. Power Dynamics, Social (In)justice in Oil Producing Communities

6.4.1 The Intersection of Global Capital, State Power, and Local Agency

Social justice is often defined by perceptions of fairness, morality, and equitable distribution of societal costs and benefits (Hatfield et al., 2011; Jost and Kay, 2010). It is essential to mention that social injustice and inequality is based on the individual's worldview and differs from society to society. Social justice is believed to revolve around ethics and morality which is universally constructed by social beings who grow up in societies. In essence social justice is a universal social phenomenon with its basis and practices found in all societies and cultures found around the world. Almost every person in the world has a sense of what is fair, just, and equitable and what is not (Hatfield et al., 2011). From a Neo-Gramscian perspective, social (in)justice in Ghana's oil-producing communities must be understood through the lens of hegemony, where dominant ideas and alliances shape societal norms and institutional arrangements in favour of capital. Hegemony in this sense is not simply domination through coercion but is also embedded in the consensual alignment of institutions and ideologies, which work together to normalise capitalist interests as common sense (Cox, 1983; Gill, 1993).

The experience of oil-producing communities in Ghana illustrates how hegemonic alliances between transnational capital, the state, and international institutions serve to naturalise and reproduce unequal power relations and accumulation by dispossession (Ayelazuno and

Ayanoore, 2022). These hegemonic arrangements are enabled by elite consensus and policy frameworks that reflect the neoliberal priorities of market deregulation, privatisation, and foreign direct investment, all framed as development strategies as I have pointed out in chapters 4 and 5. Oil contract or PAs have regularly favoured IOCs at the expense of local communities (Ayelazuno and Graham, 2022). Despite the existence of LCPs that ostensibly aim to benefit Ghanaian firms and workers, in practice, many of these policies are weakly enforced or circumvented altogether as demonstrated in chapter 5. The elite actors who facilitated these deals often rationalise them through development discourses that promise national economic growth while marginalising local grievances.

Political elites have facilitated these arrangements, aligning the state with global capitalist networks a phenomenon Cox (1981) describes as the “internationalisation of the state.”, even more appropriately the Ghanaian “integral state” and the manifestation of power blocs. In this framework, the Ghanaian state becomes a medium for global capital accumulation and a sponsor of national or local development under external constraints. The Ghana National Gas Company’s sole-sourcing of deals with firms like SINOPEC and the ENI/Sankofa deal are illustrative. These contracts included long-term purchase agreements at rates significantly higher than global market prices, locking Ghana into fiscal obligations with limited public oversight (Mensah, 2022). These deals did not emerge in a political vacuum. They reflect a deeper hegemonic logic wherein elite actors normalise capital-friendly policies as pragmatic or inevitable, even as they generate substantial economic risk and undercut local development priorities. The absence of public consultation or parliamentary debate on these contracts illustrates how decision-making is increasingly detached from democratic accountability. Moreover, the social costs of these agreements borne disproportionately by oil-producing communities in the form of environmental

degradation, displacement, and limited job access are rarely acknowledged in official policy narratives.

Although successive governments (NDC and NPP) have traded blame for these arrangements, both have been complicit in reinforcing the Ghanaian integral state's role as a facilitator of global capital rather than a protector of local interests. The hybrid production-sharing agreements introduced under the 2016 E&P Act significantly reduced Ghana's share of oil revenues compared to the earlier PNDC Laws 64 and 84. Analysts such as Dr Raymond Atuguba have criticized the new legal framework for privileging foreign investors under the guise of promoting investor confidence (Kwawukume, 2018). At a Ghana Oil Conference, Atuguba described the law as "garbage," noting that Ghana could have earned over US\$8.9 billion (47.6% of total production) under the earlier framework, compared to the US\$3.5 billion (18.95%) projected under the hybrid model even with corporate taxes factored in. This shift was not merely a technical adjustment but a hegemonic reconfiguration of Ghana's oil governance (Kwawukume, 2018). It reflected a broader ideological commitment to neoliberal norms of investor protection, risk minimisation for IOCs, and the framing of Ghana's development trajectory as dependent on foreign capital. The rationalisation for adopting Act 919 that Ghana lacked sufficient legal frameworks at the time of oil discovery was strongly contested by experts at the IEA, who underscored that PNDC-era laws were not only sufficient but more beneficial to the state. From a Neo-Gramscian perspective, the adoption of the hybrid system illustrates how elite interests, embedded within global capitalist structures, overwrite nationalist or redistributive legal legacies. Rather than leveraging oil as a catalyst for structural transformation, the legal reordering institutionalised a regime of accumulation that privileges external investors over local

communities. This legal shift has directly contributed to the persistent inequalities and social injustices experienced in oil-producing districts.

A field interview with a civil society actor revealed, “These laws were passed in the name of attracting investment, but no one asked the communities losing their land and sea. The people are not part of this conversation” (Key Informant Interview, December 12, 2022).¹⁵⁷ Another key informant in Axim stated, “All the big money moves happen in Accra, but the suffering is here. What kind of development is that?” (Key Informant Interview, July 23, 2022).¹⁵⁸ Local perceptions of injustice are therefore not intangible; they are lived experiences shaped by institutional and spatial exclusions. The state’s orientation with global capital is displayed in the form of rising inequality, dispossession, and marginalisation.

These findings were echoed in focus group discussions (FGDs) across the Western Region. In Shama, one fisherfolk lamented, “They say the oil is for Ghana, but who in Shama is seeing the money? We cannot even fish in peace anymore” (FGD, August 2023, Shama). Similar sentiments were expressed in Ellembelle, where youth activists questioned why local job opportunities remained elusive: “We have degrees, we have skills, but they bring Chinese and Americans to work” (FGD, August 2023, Ellembelle).

The transnationalisation of oil governance is also facilitated through IFIs like the World Bank, which provided loan guarantees for the ENI/Sankofa project (GhanaWeb, 2016a; Sward, 2020; Mensah, 2022). These global institutions serve to legitimise and stabilise the hegemonic order by framing such projects as development milestones. These arrangements deepen dependency and perpetuate neoliberal norms that obstruct genuine structural transformation. The neoliberal restructuring of the oil sector has redefined the state’s priorities away from redistribution

¹⁵⁷ Interview #23

¹⁵⁸ Interview #84

and inclusive governance, towards fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability. These priorities are deeply hegemonic in the Gramscian sense: they reflect the ideological dominance of global capital and the restructuring of state institutions to serve that dominance.

In summary, from a Neo-Gramscian perspective, social (in)justice in Ghana's oil-producing communities emerges from a hegemonic/power bloc consisting of the state, IOCs, and international institutions. Yet the state is contradictory structurally limited by global capitalism and elite alliances, but also at times responsive to popular pressures. The overall structural constraints are huge, limiting transformative possibilities, but there have been instances where civil society and local resistance have influenced policy debates and achieved some minor concessions. Such openings, often fragmented or co-opted, suggest that while the state enforces the hegemonic order, it is also a contested terrain where strategic mobilisation may secure more equitable resource governance.

6.4.2. Economic Inequalities in Oil-Producing Communities

Oil production in Ghana's coastal regions has generated sharp economic asymmetries between the extractive zones and centres of political and financial decision-making. While early resource nationalist narratives promised broad-based prosperity, the reality has been a spatial and class-based concentration of benefits. This is especially evident in the six oil-producing districts covered in this study, where fieldwork revealed a deepening crisis of affordability, access to employment, and livelihood security particularly among artisanal fishers and urban low-income residents. These patterns reflect what Ayelazuno and Ovadia (2022) describe as a form of "accumulation by exclusion", driven by elite-aligned governance frameworks and the spatialised logic of oil capitalism.

FGDs and interviews conducted in the Western Region confirm that the cost of living in towns like Sekondi-Takoradi and Shama has escalated. Rents, for example, have seen a dramatic spike. One fisherman explained:

I can't even pay my rent...because it is now 600 GHS a room for one month and my landlord has been chasing me because the rent is due for the next two years...you do the maths where I'm going to get the 14,400 GHS. I only make 800 GHS from fishing a month. You know the fishing season is on and off. These high costs are affecting us daily. I mean how do I take care of my wife and 4 children? (FGD August 8, 2023, Shama).

These economic constraints are exacerbated by limited employment opportunities in the oil industry for locals. Respondents lamented the fact that youth with university degrees are often bypassed for jobs in favour of expatriates or individuals with political connections. A young graduate in Takoradi stated, "I went to school at Tech, but all the jobs are going to people from Accra or abroad" (Key Informant Interview March 7, 2023).¹⁵⁹

Oil production has also affected the cost of fishing in these communities. According to a report in 2014 one of the local chiefs alleged that the oil and gas sector had led to the increase in fishing cost from GHS 500 (US\$ 171.67) to GHS 1000 (US\$ 343.35) (Modern Ghana, 2014). One fisherman interviewed during the fieldwork confirmed the increase in fishing cost stating that "now in 2023 it is about 5,000 GHS" (Key Informant Interview, July 20, 2023).¹⁶⁰ He explained the reason for this high cost is that "now we have to go further into the deep sea to catch these fish. It means we have to spend more money on premix (fuel for their canoe) because the fish have all moved to the rig because of the light and we cannot go close to fish we have to go far away" (Key Informant Interview, July 20, 2023).¹⁶¹ This declining fish stock many also attributed to seismic surveys, noise from rigs, and restricted access to traditional fishing grounds. A fishmonger in Upper Dixcove expressed a similar sentiment stating "the fish have moved, or maybe they've died.

¹⁵⁹ Interview #34

¹⁶⁰ Interview #80

¹⁶¹ Interview #80

We don't get anything unless we go very far. But the cost of premix fuel makes it almost impossible" (Key Informant Interview, July 17, 2023).¹⁶² These sentiments are not new but have been well documented by preliminary research in these communities (Ackah-Baidoo, 2013; Graham et al., 2016; Ovadia and Graham, 2022). Some earlier research mentioned how this has impacted fisherfolks in areas such as Half-Assini, Abaodze, Atuabo, Cape Three Point, European City, Senzule, etc (Ayelazuno, 2016). This problem remains: all the fisherfolks interviewed corroborated this view. One mentioned that:

Our fathers were fishermen. They handed over the fishing to us now but look at the number of fish we are catching... just look. These oil people are disturbing our business, and they won't employ our children who have been to school at Legon (University of Ghana) or Tech (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology). Look, the oil is just taken on their ships. We sit here and we see big ships come and take the oil, it does not even come to the land. We also hear and see many helicopters come and go towards the rig (Fields Interview August 4, 2023).¹⁶³

This confirms similar views expressed by fisherfolks in the fieldwork and FGD which were done a decade ago by Ackah-Baidoo (2013) and recently by Ayelazuno and Ovadia (2022). The finding from my fieldwork is that the situation is getting worse by the day and the locals are getting furious with the situation, for instance a fisherman in Axim shared his growing frustration: "They say oil is development. But what kind of development makes our work more difficult? Now we fish and return empty. And we spend more than we earn. It's better to stop fishing altogether." (FGD, July 23, 2023, Axim). Another fisherman from Ahanta West expressed anger at the perceived indifference of government: "We have spoken, we have complained. They just come and hold workshops. No action. No compensation. We are dying slowly, and no one cares" (FGD, July 18, 2023, Ahanta West).

¹⁶² Interview #78

¹⁶³ Interview #87

6.4.3. Social Impact of Oil Production

The FGD and Key Informant Interviews revealed that since 2007 when oil was found the communities have been affected socially. Some of these impacts are high rent, high cost of food, high cost of living and increase in social vices. One respondent mentioned that social vices have gone up in the communities. Some of the youths have been involved in internet scam known as “Sakawa” and even blood money which is using spiritual means to make money. A key informant mentioned that:

The high cost of living has made several young people seek money through dubious means. These days you hear of ritual or serial killings and whereby they take delicate parts of the body for money rituals. A lot of the students in SHS and Takoradi Technical University are into these things whereby they become rich overnight. My son told me the other time that is what some of his classmates are doing and I was really scared (Key Informant Interview July 21, 2023).¹⁶⁴

A report from 2022 explained some of the reasons in the rise of ritual killings in the Western regions stating:

[t]he most dominant motivation for ritual murder in Ghana is pecuniary gain. Among the key factors that account for the prevalence and persistence of ritual murders in the country are widespread unemployment and concomitant economic privations, obsession with juju, the increasing popularity of “cyber-criminality” and the so-called Sakawa Boys, exposure of Ghanaian youth to African movies that portray juju and juju rituals as an efficient wealth-guaranteeing religious practice, illiteracy, and the emergence of a new “consumerist ethos” that has engrossed the Ghanaian society and which is marked by the unrestrained quest for material success and the flamboyant display of luxury (Modern Ghana, 2022).

Although this study is not stating that oil production has led solely to ritual murders in the Western Region it is clear that the social impact of oil has only exacerbated these problems mentioned from the 2022 report. Another social vice which has increased since oil discovery in the Western Region was prostitution. It was mentioned at the FGD that there has been an increase in prostitution and teenage pregnancy is on the rise. One respondent said, “due to high cost of living and unemployment some of these young girls have dropped out of school to go into prostitution and many of them have gotten pregnant” (FGD August 08, 2023, Shama).

¹⁶⁴ Interview #81

Another respondent mentioned “that the increase in population and presence of expatriates has led to crimes in these communities because these robbers have the perception that these expatriates have foreign currency. Since the cedi is not doing too well these robbers see the need target these expatriates which they see as hitting the jackpot”(FGD July 22, 2023, STMA). Oil has also led to the influx of people from neighbouring countries such as Côte d’Ivoire, Togo, and Nigeria into the capital of the Western Region known as the oil city. This influx has placed a lot of pressure on the social amenities and other resources making living expenditures high. This led the locals to express the sentiments above which are similar and in some cases worse than those expressed in earlier studies almost a decade ago (Ackah-Baidoo, 2013; Obeng-Odoom, 2013, 2014b; Eduful and Hooper, 2015).

Alongside these developments is a significant increase in prostitution and teenage pregnancy, particularly in areas that have experienced high migration flows and the establishment of oil-related infrastructure. Participants in Shama and Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Area (STMA) pointed to the direct link between oil-led economic disruption and the breakdown of traditional family and social structures: “Since the oil came, you see girls as young as 13 or 14 by the roadside at night. Some drop out of school because they say the money is faster this way. And many end up pregnant or worse” (FGD, July 20, 2023, STMA). Additionally, it was mentioned that “When expatriates came to our area, some of them gave big money to these girls. That spoiled the mindset of many of them. Now many girls don’t want to go back to school or learn a trade” (FGD, August 6, 2023, Shama).

6.4.4. Ecological Impact of Oil Production

Oil production in the coastal communities of Western Region has had ecological and environmental impact on those who live in these six districts in the region. The fishermen and

other key informants interviewed in Axim, Dixcove, Shama and Ellembelle mentioned that there was an increasing amount of sea weeds which was not the case pre-oil discovery and production. The first case of this occurred when there was an oil spillage by Kosmos Energy in 2010 (Ghana Business News, 2010). Another report in 2012 mentioned that there was a total of 26 dead whales found in these oil producing communities (Obeng-Odoom, 2014a). One fisherman recounted that “I have been doing this job for over 30 years, and we hardly find sea weeds in our net when we go fishing now we see it every week we go fishing...they continue to choke our small nets so we are not able to use the small net to catch the little fish” (FGD, July 22 2023, STMA). Another interviewee mentioned that “the community is always smelling not only of fresh fish which we are used to but now it’s also the smell from dead fishes and sea weeds” (Key Informant Interview, August 9, 2023, Shama).¹⁶⁵ In a focus group discussion, it was indicated that the gas flaring and production of oil is impacting the air quality in the neighbourhood giving many people coughing problems.¹⁶⁶ This, in their view, is a new to them. These stories only confirm the argument that the Ghanaian integral state (led by political elites) has been successful at enforcing IOCs interest at the expense of the local fisherfolks fostering social injustice against fisherfolks in these communities (Ayelazuno, 2014a, 2016). The state in essence has failed to protect the interest of the people who elected them to office, not just that it has also failed to implement policies that protects the interest of the ordinary fisherfolk in these oil producing communities, it has failed to implement policies that would foster industrialisation and development in Western Region.

¹⁶⁵ Interview #93

¹⁶⁶ FGDs Ahanta West

Additionally, in few of the coastal towns visited, interviewees cited the worsening air quality associated with gas flaring and chemical processing.¹⁶⁷ Earlier reports by ACEP points to how Ghana flared gas worth US\$300 Million between 2019 to 2021 (norvanreports.com, 2022). This amount of flaring in the long term has impacted the air quality in some of the communities close to the TEN and Jubilee fields especially Anokyi and Sanzule in the Ellembele District. A youth leader in Ellembele commented: “We never used to have people coughing all the time. But now, especially in the evenings, the air gets heavy. Sometimes it smells like burnt rubber. It didn’t use to be this way before the oil ”(Key Informant Interview, August 5, 2023, Ellembele).¹⁶⁸

Another ecological concern voiced by communities particularly in Axim (Nzema East) and Shama (Shama District) is shoreline erosion, which has intensified in recent years. Although erosion is a pre-existing problem (Akpalu, 2025a; Jonah, 2015), several residents attribute its worsening to the expansion of oil infrastructure and dredging activities near the coast particularly in Axim. One fisherman and assembly member from Shama said: “The sea has come closer than before. We have lost parts of the beach where we used to dry our fish. They say it is natural, but the dredging and machines are not helping” (Key Informant Interview August 10, 2023).¹⁶⁹

From a structural standpoint, these ecological challenges point to a failure of environmental governance. The EPA, GNPC, and Ministry of Environment have all been criticised for being under-resourced or politically compromised, particularly in monitoring and sanctioning IOCs. An official from a local NGO commented: “There are laws, yes. But the institutions are either captured

¹⁶⁷ This is particularly prominent in the Ellembele District. It must be stated that these developing problems may have long-term impacts. According to the locals, the rubber-like smell is intermittent. During our field visit, we could also smell it, although it was difficult to isolate due to various activities in the communities, such as open-space cooking and a few burning dumpsites.

¹⁶⁸ Interview #88

¹⁶⁹ Interview #93

or ignored. IOCs act as if the coastline is theirs. The government doesn't intervene because they are all benefitting" (Key Informant Interview, December 12, 2022).¹⁷⁰ These stories and patterns strongly support the argument that the Ghanaian integral state dominated by political elites and acting in tandem with IOCs has effectively externalised the ecological costs of oil production onto local communities. Earlier research highlights how the failure to enforce environmental protections, consult affected communities, or invest in coastal resilience projects reflects the logic of accumulation by dispossession (Ayelazuno and Ovadia, 2022), whereby extractive activities advance global and elite interests at the expense of local well-being. The ecological degradation experienced by these communities is not just an environmental concern; it represents a form of environmental injustice that intersects with livelihood loss, cultural disruption, and health vulnerabilities. It reinforces the broader argument of earlier studies: that the governance of Ghana's oil sector has marginalised the very people living closest to the resource (Ayelazuno and Ovadia, 2022).

6.4.5 Structural Barriers to Equitable Oil Governance

The governance of Ghana's oil sector remains deeply structurally exclusionary, both in its legal architecture and everyday practice. Decision-making is centralised in Accra, far removed from the communities most directly impacted by offshore oil production. As a result, affected groups particularly coastal fisherfolk experience not only material marginalisation but political and institutional abandonment. What emerges is a model of governance that enforces control from above, with little room for horizontal accountability or grassroots participation. Fieldwork in communities such as Shama, Esiama, and Half-Assini revealed a widespread perception of betrayal, not only by the central government but also by local political representatives who are

¹⁷⁰ Interview #23

seen as having been co-opted by oil companies or state actors. One fisherman in Shama, expressing frustration, noted: “They only come here during elections. After that, they are in Accra. When we complain, they say the matter is above them. So, who is for us? Nobody.”(FGD, August 10, 2023, Shama).

This distance between state actors and local populations is further compounded by coercive encounters with security forces. Numerous respondents described violent treatment at the hands of the Ghana Navy and, in some cases, soldiers, particularly when boats accidentally entered restricted “catchment zones” around oil rigs. A fisherman from Shama recounted: "Last week, my boat was seized and all our equipment taken. My brother tried to explain, but he got slapped before he could finish" (Key Informant Interview August 9, 2023).¹⁷¹ This sentiment echoes concerns raised nearly a decade ago. At a 2014 press conference, fishermen in the Western Region alleged routine abuse by Navy personnel. One fisher noted that, even in cases where trespassing was accidental, they were beaten and their fishing gear confiscated. He stated: "This has led to some misunderstanding between us and the naval officers, and in extreme cases, we are abused, and our fishing gears are also seized”(Modern Ghana, 2014).

The persistence of these abuses over time despite multiple administrations and public outcries reveals the deeper structural inertia of oil governance in Ghana. As one elder in Esiama remarked: "It is an open secret. Everybody knows that if you are caught near the rig, it is between you and your God" (FGD, July 23, 2023, Esiama Nzema East). Several respondents also emphasised that military and naval patrols now outnumber fisheries officers, suggesting that the state prioritises the protection of oil infrastructure over the regulation or support of local

¹⁷¹ Interview #93

livelihoods. In Shama a youth leader stated: “The Navy will arrive within minutes if you enter the oil zone, but when we report pollution or fuel shortage, nobody comes” (FGD August 10, 2023, Shama). Similar stories have been captured by Ayelazuno and Ovadia (2022), and Ovadia et al.(2020). Regrettably, locals have complained of not just the Navy but soldiers coming to areas such as Esiam to beat them because of fishing in areas close to the oil rig (Ayelazuno and Ovadia, 2022).

These dynamics illustrate how the Ghanaian integral state while rhetorically committed to participatory governance and transparency deploys coercive power to silence or control community behaviour, rather than engaging with or addressing underlying grievances. The PRMA and the E&P Act, while celebrated as milestones in legal reform, have not translated into meaningful participatory frameworks. Implementation is stifled by elite capture, bureaucratic opacity, and the marginalisation of civil society actors. CSOs such as ACEP, IEA, FON and others in the oil and gas sector have consistently highlighted these gaps. Criticising the government of lack of community consultation, disregard for the environmental assessment and social impact assessment (Manteaw and Graham, 2022). From a Neo-Gramscian perspective, these structural barriers are not incidental they are the necessary support of a hegemonic project that aligns state power (i.e. elite power bloc) with global capital. As Gramsci argued, hegemony is maintained through both coercion and consent. In Ghana, security forces repress resistance and dissent, while elite discourses about national development, foreign investment, and economic modernisation suppress counter-narratives and exclude local voices.

6.5. Local Contestation and Its Limitations

Despite the frustration of oil producing communities over unfulfilled promises and limited developmental benefits derived from Ghana’s oil and gas sector, local contestation against oil

governance remains weak, fragmented, and largely ineffective. Multiple structural and socio-political constraints have inhibited communities from organising sustainable contestation or resistance to oil-sector injustices perpetuated by extractive regimes. These constraints include fear of state security apparatus, political interference and elite co-optation, intra-community divisions and economic desperation among communities. All these have contributed to the entrenchment of hegemonic dominance of IOCs in Ghana's oil and gas sector.

In the Ghanaian context, state and corporate actors maintain control not only through formal institutions but also by pre-empting or pacifying resistance. This is achieved through the deployment of security forces to oil-affected communities, politicisation of local leadership, and the co-optation of key actors via contracts, compensation, or token development projects. In many cases, communities report intimidation by naval officers, surveillance, and suppression of protests, all of which contribute to a culture of fear. Moreover, economic desperation and youth unemployment have created a climate in which dependency on oil-linked opportunities, however limited or exploitative, undermines the political will for resistance. Simultaneously, partisan politics and intra-community disunity make it difficult to form unified platforms of contestation. In some instances, rival local leaders align with different political parties, fracturing communal solidarity and facilitating elite capture. The result is a situation in which many local actors have become passive recipients of extractive harm, rather than active challengers of oil-sector governance. Instead of fostering collective resistance, the current hegemonic structure encourages resignation and depoliticisation. Community grievances are often redirected into individual appeals for compensation rather than systemic demands for justice and reform. Thus, the limitations of local contestation are not due to apathy, but to the systemic structuring of consent and fear, which channels dissent into manageable, non-threatening forms. Without new forms of

organisation and counter-hegemonic alliances that transcend party and class divisions, resistance is likely to remain episodic and easily contained. Below I discuss these limiting factors in detail.

6.5.1. Fear and Coercion: The Role of State Repression

State repression is a major obstacle to contestation because security forces systematically suppress activism while intimidating protestors and criminalising dissent. Despite Ghana's reputation as a stable democracy the state and fieldwork reveal that use of security forces to protect oil infrastructure has produced a climate of fear in coastal communities. Community protests and demonstrations are frequently suppressed by state security apparatus. A fisherman in Esiama expressed their fear of protesting stating:

A few of us were planning to protest against restricted fishing zones because these regulations negatively impact our source of income. Not too long that we noticed the increasing presence of soldiers issuing threats against future demonstrations. We are now afraid because we saw how these men resisted protests in some neighbouring mining communities" (FGD, August 4, 2023, (Esiama)Ellembelle).

Similarly, a youth activist in Takoradi highlighted the targeted intimidation of community leaders: "We were prevented by police from beginning our demonstration about job shortages. The police claimed we needed a permit, but we were aware their real intention was to prevent us from protesting" (FGD July 20, 2023, STMA). The state's use of force to maintain control when public consent is inadequate reflects Gramsci's concept of coercion (Gramsci, 1971). Security forces use surveillance and military-style tactics to suppress resistance instead of responding to authentic community issues. The threat of state retaliation prevents prolonged collective action which allows dominant forces to maintain their power.

An elder in Atuabo remarked even voicing concerns publicly about oil-related issues feels risky: "We cannot talk too much in public anymore. You never know who is watching or recording. The soldiers come randomly" (Key Informant Interview, August 5, 2023, Atuabo, Ellembelle). In Half-Assini, a fishmonger recounted how fear had discouraged women in the community from

participating in discussions on oil governance: “We used to attend town hall meetings and speak, but these days we are quiet. One woman who spoke loudly about the oil people lost her place at the market. No one wants that trouble” (FGD, August 6, 2023, Half-Assini, Jomoro). This fear is not only rooted in past experiences but is also actively reinforced by the visible presence of armed forces in coastal communities and neighbouring mining communities such as Tarkwa, Binsere, Dokyiwa and Anywiam. Fisherfolk across several districts reported that they routinely see naval patrols and military vehicles near the shore. A young man in Axim noted: “The Navy does not come to help us. They come to protect the oil. When we complain about fish or costs, no one listens. But if they think we are organising something, they show up fast.” (FGD August 2, 2023, Axim, Nzema East).

These empirical insights reflect Gramsci’s concept of coercion, where state authority is exercised not merely through laws but through disciplinary practices that suppress dissent when public consent is lacking. Rather than responding to authentic community grievances through dialogue or reform, state actors rely on surveillance, intimidation, and force. This creates an environment where pre-emptive fear inhibits organising, making collective action too costly or dangerous.

One youth leader in Dixcove summed it up: “We know we are suffering. We know we must speak. But we are also scared. The soldiers, the politicians they all work together. So, who is going to protect us if we speak out?” (FGD, July 16, 2023, Dixcove, Ahanta West). This structural fear, embedded in everyday life, effectively insulates the oil governance regime from resistance. It ensures that grievances remain private and fragmented, rather than collective and organised. In this way, coercion becomes not just an occasional tactic, but a permanent condition, reinforcing the broader hegemonic order.

6.5.2 Political Interference and Elite Co-optation

When coercion alone does not suffice, the state and its allies often rely on more insidious mechanisms of control, notably political interference and elite co-optation. These practices are central to how hegemonic structures are maintained in Ghana's oil-producing regions not by silencing communities entirely, but by absorbing their demands, redirecting their grievances, and offering symbolic inclusion that neutralises meaningful opposition. A clear example of this dynamic is the well-known 2010 Western Region House of Chiefs' petition, which demanded that 10% of Ghana's oil revenue be allocated for regional development. As observed in chapter 4 these local chiefs were selectively co-opted into various levels of consultation and forums such as the forum on LCP in the oil sector. This approach of the state and political elites eventually fragmented the movement and grassroots mobilisation.

Additionally, as one local leader in Ellembelle recounted: "The government summoned us to meetings, promised future developments, and asked us to wait. But after the 2012 elections, they disappeared. The promises were just for votes." (Key Informant Interview, August 5, 2023, Ellembelle).¹⁷² In many communities, local leaders and activists have been co-opted into committees or forums that offer them a seat at the table but only under conditions that discourage critique. A youth leader in Nzema East lamented: "Our leaders used to fight for us. Now they are sitting on committees and several meetings with oil companies. They have gone quiet. The people we once followed are now defending the very people we were resisting" (FGD, July 24, 2023, Nzema East).

The strategic use of committee appointments, forums, dialogues, CSR, development contracts, and financial incentives has effectively transformed radical leaders into intermediaries

¹⁷² Interview #88

of the state-corporate apparatus. This is particularly evident during election cycles, where politicians promise development projects or jobs in exchange for loyalty and silence. A fisherman in Upper Dixcove reflected on this: “During elections, they promise everything. Roads, schools, even jobs in the oil companies. But once they win, they vanish. And our chiefs stop talking. It’s like a trade we give them votes, and they give us silence” (Key Informant Interview, July 18, 2023).¹⁷³

Political interference also manifests through party polarisation. Intra-community tensions are exacerbated when local leaders align with opposing political parties, creating rivalry and suspicion. This division undermines collective resistance and allows external actors to exploit partisan divisions. In Shama, a local elder explained: “When the NPP is in power, the NDC people complain. When the NDC was in power, the NPP did the same. We end up fighting among ourselves instead of coming together” (FGD, August 8, 2023, Shama).

Beyond individual leaders, civil society and youth groups have also been targets of co-optation. Prominent activists have reported being offered roles in local development committees or advisory boards positions that limit their ability to mobilise publicly. An NGO coordinator in Sekondi-Takoradi stated: “I was approached and asked to join one of these committees. They said it would give me a voice. But once you join, you cannot speak against the government or the companies. It’s silence in exchange for access” (Key Informant Interview, December 13, 2022, STMA).¹⁷⁴ This subtle yet powerful form of neutralisation demonstrates how elite actors maintain hegemony not just by suppressing dissent, but by reorganising it transforming potential threats into compliant parts of the system. By offering selective access, symbolic inclusion, and short-term

¹⁷³ Interview #79

¹⁷⁴ Interview #24

material benefits, the state and IOCs effectively undermine grassroots opposition while projecting the image of participatory governance.

From a Neo-Gramscian perspective, this is not democratic inclusion it is hegemony through co-optation. Community participation is orchestrated in ways that disarm critique and reward conformity. Rather than being platforms for contestation, many consultation mechanisms serve as tools for managing dissent and absorbing resistance into elite-led development frameworks. In sum, political interference and elite co-optation function as key pillars of Ghana's oil governance regime. They allow the state and corporate actors' power bloc to; control the narrative, dilute oppositional movements, and secure consent through manipulation rather than transformation. This leaves communities politically immobilised and structurally disempowered participating in a system over which they have little meaningful influence.

6.5.3 Fragmentation from Within: Intra-Community Divisions

One of the most insidious yet often overlooked barriers to collective resistance in Ghana's oil-producing communities is the internal fragmentation that exists within these communities themselves. While the broader structure of oil governance imposes top-down constraints through coercion and co-optation, it is the divisions within communities fuelled by partisan politics, selective benefit-sharing, and elite capture that further weaken the capacity for sustained opposition.

Fieldwork revealed that political partisanship has deeply infiltrated local dynamics, transforming what could be a united community front into a series of rival factions, each aligned with competing political and economic interests. A community elder in Ahanta West noted how this dynamic undermines unity: "Members of the NDC criticise the government while their NPP counterparts defend it. We end up fighting one another instead of coming together. This division

helps the politicians and oil companies” (FGD July 18, 2023, Ahanta West). These political splits are not merely ideological they often translate into material inequality, as benefits such as contracts, compensation, or appointments are distributed along party lines especially with the Winner-Takes-All politics rife in Ghana (Gyampo, 2015). In this context, oil extraction does not just generate environmental or economic harm it reconfigures community relations, introducing new hierarchies of access and exclusion.

A youth leader in Sekondi-Takoradi described how these divisions are maintained: “Being close to chiefs or politicians guarantees you access to benefits. If you speak out against them, you get nothing. That’s why many of us just keep quiet, we do not want to be blacklisted.”(FGD, July 2023, STMA). This form of selective patronage whether from state agencies or through CSR projects has intensified competition among different community groups, undermining solidarity. Instead of mobilising around shared grievances, many individuals or factions pursue individual gain, often at the expense of collective interest. This is not just an oil producing communities' problem but a characteristic of the patron-client politics that exist in Ghana (Abdulai and Hickey, 2016; Appiah and Abdulai, 2017; Abdulai, 2021).

In Half-Assini, a local activist noted: “Once a few people get small contracts or are invited to Accra for meetings, they change. They no longer want to speak for us. They become part of the system.” (FGD, August 7, 2023, Half-Assini, Jomoro). Gramsci’s analysis of hegemony helps explain this phenomenon. Hegemony is not only imposed from above it is internalised and reproduced within communities, often through the very actors who once resisted. The fragmentation of resistance is therefore not just a product of state repression or corporate manipulation; it is sustained by everyday social practices, by interpersonal rivalries, and by the unequal distribution of resources within the community itself.

Traditional authority structures also play a role. In some districts, chieftaincy disputes and elite alignments have further divided communities. One respondent from Shama remarked: “Even our chiefs are divided. Some are with the NPP, others with the NDC. When the community wants to protest, they can’t agree on who will lead it.” (FGD, August 8, 2023, Shama). These divisions reduce the legitimacy of local leadership, making it difficult to build trust and coordinate collective action. Meanwhile, the state and IOCs continue to engage with the most compliant or influential actors, thereby reinforcing existing divisions and excluding dissenting voices.

This intra-community fragmentation serves hegemonic interests well. When resistance is fragmented, dissent is easier to manage, grievances are less visible, and corporate operations continue unchallenged. The result is a population that may be deeply dissatisfied, but unable to organise in a coherent or sustained manner. A youth organiser in Axim captured the frustration succinctly: “We all know the oil hasn’t helped us. But we are not united. Everyone is chasing something for themselves. And that’s why we are stuck.” (FGD July 2023, Axim, Nzema East). In this way, internal divisions do not just weaken resistance they help to normalise domination. Community members come to accept their place in the hierarchy, not because they believe it is just, but because they see no alternative path that does not involve either exclusion or punishment.

6.5.4 Economic Dependency and the Struggle for Survival

Perhaps the most profound constraint on community resistance in Ghana’s oil-producing regions is the structural economic dependency that binds local populations to the very forces they would otherwise oppose. While grievances about rising living costs, unemployment, and environmental degradation are widespread, the imperatives of daily survival often override the motivation or ability to engage in sustained contestation. Fieldwork conducted across all six oil-producing districts revealed a consistent theme: economic desperation forces people into silence.

Many residents particularly those in fishing communities expressed a keen awareness of how oil extraction has worsened their livelihoods. Yet, the fear of losing what little access or opportunity they do have compels them to avoid confrontation.

A fisherman from Shama District captured this tension: “The oil companies ought to support us more, but we need food to live. What options remain for our survival if our protests result in the withdrawal of their support?” (FGD, August 20, 2023, Shama). Similarly, a young woman in Dixcove emphasised the heavy burden of economic precarity: “When you face economic challenges paying rent and buying food you find little time for protesting. People are tired. They are just trying to survive.” (Key Informant Interview, July 16, 2023, Dixcove, Ahanta West).

In the absence of alternative income-generating activities, many community members are forced to accommodate the very system that marginalises them. Some do so out of necessity; others hold on to the hope of eventually receiving jobs, compensation, or CSR-linked benefits. This dynamic results in what Gramsci described as a “manufactured consent” a consent born not of agreement, but of structural constraint. The promise of oil-sector employment, while rarely fulfilled, serves as a powerful mechanism of pacification. In Takoradi, a recent graduate lamented: “We keep hoping for jobs, but they never come. Still, we stay quiet because we don’t want to risk even that small chance.” (FGD, July 20, 2023, STMA)

In other cases, economic survival is directly tied to the presence of oil operations, however exploitative. In Atuabo, a canoe owner explained that his small fuel supply business now relies on indirect trade with offshore workers and logistics contractors: “If I speak too loudly, they might cut me off. I don’t support what they are doing, but I also need to feed my family.” (FGD, August 4, 2023, Atuabo, Ellembelle). This logic of survival while rational reinforces the *status quo*. It

ensures that communities internalise the costs of oil production as inevitable trade-offs, rather than injustices that could be collectively challenged. Over time, this leads to what can be described as a form of passive consent, wherein the population tolerates exploitation in exchange for minimal and uncertain benefits (Gramsci, 1971).

Furthermore, the rising cost of living particularly in towns like Sekondi-Takoradi has placed even more strain on already precarious households. One FGD participant in STMA mentioned that: “Rent is going up. Food is expensive. Yet they say the oil is bringing development. We don’t see it. But we can’t fight them because we have no strength.” (FGD, July 16, 2023, STMA). The lack of economic alternatives means that even symbolic resistance like petitions or media interviews feels too risky for many. As one woman in Axim puts it: “We watch the news and see people protest in Accra. But we can’t do that here. We are small people. Who will defend us if we lose our work?” (Key Informant Interview, July 24, 2023, Axim, Nzema East).

In this environment, economic dependency becomes a tool of hegemonic control. It does not require physical force to maintain it works through fear of exclusion, the hope of inclusion, and the logic of self-preservation (Gramsci 1971). These mechanisms render communities more governable and less rebellious, even in the face of deepening inequality and dispossession. This is not merely a failure of distribution it is a strategic outcome of an extractive order designed to subordinate local economies to global capital. The promise of future development pacifies discontent, while the immediate struggle for subsistence suppresses resistance. As a result, oil governance in Ghana continues largely unchallenged by those it most adversely affects.

6.6. Conclusion

The chapter provides a critical examination of Ghana's oil governance from local community perspectives which unveils intricate patterns of anticipated outcomes and actual

engagement juxtaposed with exclusionary practices and constrained contestation. The Western Region communities expected oil discovery to bring transformative development through job creation, infrastructure advancements, and improved living conditions. Over ten years since oil production began communities are still waiting for the promised development benefits. Communities are confronted with diverse social challenges alongside economic downturns and environmental damage including fish population drops and cost of living increases as well as air contamination and land degradation coupled with social fragmentation. The results reveal a deep contradiction between the expected benefits of oil-led development and the actual everyday experience in oil-producing regions.

The chapter employs a Neo-Gramscian framework to show that the disconnect between development promises and their outcomes stems from deliberate structural processes maintained by a hegemonic system which uses a mixture of coercion, co-optation, and passive revolution. Consultation forums, development committees and CSR programmes work primarily as pacifying instruments that prevent power disruption by absorbing grievances rather than serving as empowerment platforms. Political meddling combined with elite manipulation and patronage networks break down community unity and transform collective action into partisan or personal interests. Military intimidation and surveillance by the state effectively suppress open resistance while maintaining strict limits on acceptable political engagement.

At the core of this dynamic is a deeply unequal balance of forces. On one side stand IOCs, IFIs, and a central government oriented towards macroeconomic stability and investor confidence. On the other side are marginalised communities whose agency is constrained by structural poverty, dependency, and limited political access. Local leaders who might otherwise mobilise resistance

are often drawn into elite networks through promises of development, appointments, or contracts. As a result, community contestation remains fragmented, episodic, and easily neutralised.

The analysis essentially shows how Ghana's oil governance functions as part of the integral state. The state's own growth, industry and civil society actions and CSR are all modalities of the state in the exercise of the dual objective to manage contradiction. Local participation in Ghana's oil does not take place outside of power; on the contrary, it is one of its strategic practices. Responsiveness (however limited) and appeasement tactics co-opt and alleviate pressure. They are assimilated into the current system to legitimate it. The oil state's structural power (its accumulation, revenue, policy and regulatory apparatus) lies also in the primacy of its terms of engagement and how it redefines how communities understand and interpret opportunity, grievance and citizenship, especially in development. Contestation is therefore a regulated channel of negotiation rather than open-ended and potentially destabilising. The broader pattern of managed inclusion discerned in the analysis is not only congruent with the conceptualisation of the passive revolution (change from above that co-opts, contains and re-legitimises without conceding power to the forces from below), it is illustrative of it. In spite of such confines, local actors' claims for recognition and justice continue.

In sum, Ghana's oil governance regime reflects a broader neoliberal order in which resource extraction is framed as national progress but remains deeply contested. Those most directly affected are sidelined from decision-making and denied equitable benefits. Yet, moments of local contestation, negotiation, and partial policy gains reveal the ongoing contradictions and struggles over how oil resources are governed and whose interests they ultimately serve. Without a fundamental rebalancing of power through structural reforms that democratise governance,

prioritise local reinvestment, and enable autonomous community organising local participation will continue to be symbolic rather than transformative.

Chapter 7. Conclusion and Summary

7.1. Introduction

This concluding chapter synthesises the key findings of the dissertation, offering reflections on the broader implications of resource nationalism in Ghana's oil and gas sector. At the core of this dissertation lies a fundamental puzzle: that despite the rise of nationalist rhetoric, legal frameworks, and policy instruments designed to assert sovereign control over Ghana's petroleum resources, the country remains entangled in structural dependencies limiting its ability to utilise oil for meaningful industrial and socio-economic transformation. Nonetheless, there has been some tangible successes that demonstrate how Ghana's resource nationalism in the oil and gas sector remains an active site of continuous contestation between local developmental needs and structural limitations.

The dissertation's central question was: Why has Ghana's natural resources-driven industrialisation agenda not attained its full potential? In response, it interrogated three interrelated case studies: national policy responses and hegemony, the evolution and implications of the LCP, and local community engagement and contestation, through a Neo-Gramscian perspective that focused on the global-local dialectic and how hegemonic entanglements affect counter-hegemonic resistance fragmentation.

The analysis demonstrates that Ghana's oil governance regime has been shaped not solely by domestic aspirations, but by a transnational power bloc that constrains the exercise of national autonomy. Oil's promise as a development solution exists alongside sectoral structures that reveal how a postcolonial state balances its place in a neoliberal world through fiscal systems and local content rules along with community engagement. The end result therefore is a form of resource nationalism that is concurrently assertive in rhetoric and accommodative in practice.

7.2 Summary of Key Findings

7.2.1. National Policy Response and Hegemony

Ghana developed its oil and gas legal and institutional frameworks including the PRMA and the E&P Law under intense international scrutiny and investor pressure. These frameworks earn recognition for their transparent operations and global standard adherence, but they also embed neoliberal principles that advantage foreign investors while restricting government autonomy. As a benchmark for transparent resource revenue management the PRMA set up structures like the PIAC which monitors the oil revenue expenditures, and Ghana Petroleum Funds (Stabilisation and Heritage Funds) which oversee the petroleum revenues of current generations and those yet to come. The PRMA maintains fiscal control by setting strict expenditure limits and implementing stabilisation clauses which represent a neoliberal focus on austerity and macroeconomic rules at the expense of developmental spending. The alignment of these principles reflects the standards set by major global financial organisations such as the IMF and World Bank (who were instrumental in shaping the policy) rather than meeting transformative development objectives. The PRMA legal framework limits Ghana's government from using its oil earnings to fund strategic investments that would help transform the economy beyond commodity export reliance; this is because the oil revenue is added to the ABFA. This means that once oil revenues are channelled into the ABFA, it is the Minister of Finance who determines, every three years, which four out of twelve priority areas will receive oil-funded expenditure or investment, alongside other budgetary allocations.

The E&P Law which manages upstream activities was established to enforce transparency and accountability throughout the licensing and contract allocation procedures. The creation of Ghana's E&P Law required legal reforms because of institutional weaknesses before oil development but donor conditions, IFIs and IOCs lobbying significantly impacted its drafting and implementation.

The legislative measures meant to grant the GNPC operational control in the sector have been weakened and generous fiscal incentives keep drawing foreign investment without requiring technology transfer or skills development commitments. Consequently, the legal frameworks have institutionalised a dual structure: the legal framework creates a system that promotes state power and public welfare on paper while keeping conditions beneficial for investors in practice.

CSOs have played a significant part in national policy response but faced several limitations. CSOs played a key role in pushing for public participation and accountability as well as transparency within oil governance systems such as the proposal for the incorporation of PIAC in the PRMA. CSOs also promoted the EITI initiative which resulted in heightened public understanding of petroleum revenue distribution. These activities showcase the momentum of collective associations which served as a counter-hegemonic force in Ghana's oil and gas sector. Nonetheless, civil society impact in Ghana faces limitations due to governmental structures which absorb dissent through participatory processes that give voice but fail to grant substantial power to alter the neoliberal hegemonic structures. Hence, the integration of CSOs into structured policy environments like stakeholder forums and advisory committees changes their role to consensus builders rather than hegemony challengers. Civil society advocacy becomes part of good governance narratives that stress compliance and transparency but avoids addressing deeper issues of ownership and structural change.

The central finding from this study reveals a contradiction in civil society participation which serves to reinforce neoliberal hegemony instead of challenging it. Policy reforms intended to initiate system-wide changes now function as mechanisms that validate governance models which favour investor trust instead of developmental needs. The study uses a Neo-Gramscian perspective that explains how neoliberal hegemony maintain power through both coercive measures and the

integration of subordinate groups into dominant systems by gaining their consent with limited impact. Although Ghana has managed to prevent extreme resource mismanagement that other countries experience, its development remains limited by adherence to standard macroeconomic policies and investment assurance instead of pursuing state-led industrial development and inclusive growth. On one hand, IOCs, IFIs and segments of the domestic elite promote and sustain a governance model which is founded on investor protection, fiscal discipline and export-oriented growth. On the other hand, CSOs, technocratic agencies and some parliamentarians pushed for transparency accountability and greater public benefits. This results in a situation that is neither full resource sovereignty nor outright foreign domination, but rather a contradictory and evolving arrangement one that achieves some tangible, though limited, successes while simultaneously coexisting with persistent structural constraints. Therefore, dependence on formal institutions and legal reforms alone cannot achieve resource nationalism goals. Ultimately, effective resource sovereignty depends not only on institutional reforms but also on the broader navigation of domestic and international forces that shape the design, implementation, and transformative potential of such reforms.

7.2.2. The LCP: Resource Nationalism or Neoliberal Accommodation?

The Ghanaian LCP was established to guarantee direct benefits for Ghanaians from the oil and gas sector through job creation and business involvement along with skill development opportunities. The LCP functions as an essential strategy aimed at strengthening domestic oversight of petroleum resources by requiring local involvement in upstream and midstream operations. The study reveals that Ghana's integration into global capitalism constrains how the LCP functions. The policy sets ambitious goals for local participation, but these targets remain unmet because of existing legal loopholes and inadequate enforcement coupled with insufficient

local capabilities. IOCs maintain control over capital-heavy operations but pass low-wage low-skilled work to local companies. Local companies struggle to meet both financial and technical requirements for major contracts which results in their exclusion from competitive industry opportunities. The LCP is frequently reduced to a mere formality as international firms create partnerships with Ghanaian entities that provide minimal real local ownership.

The LCP's implementation follows market competitiveness and investment protection principles despite its supposed commitment to national interests. The neoliberal approach that values cost-efficiency and risk reduction prevent the creation of strict local participation rules which could discourage foreign investment. This situation results in a contested site of LCP which is neither purely transformative nor entirely contested resulting in a hybrid model where selective measures coexist with structural accommodation to capitalist hegemony. The challenge is whether this hybrid model can ultimately evolve into a more developmental oriented framework for local development. Until then, the fact remains that through framing its policy as nationalistic and appealing to investors the Ghanaian government satisfies local interests while keeping foreign investment opportunities open. Transnational actors maintain their dominance through this dual strategy which blocks the advancement of any transformative nationalist project.

7.2.3. Local Engagement, Contestation and the Limits of Resistance

The third case study of the dissertation highlighted the voices and experiences of communities living in oil-producing areas. Despite high expectations in the wake of oil discovery, many community members express deep dissatisfaction with no tangible benefits of oil production. IOCs use CSR/SLO measures like scholarships and infrastructure projects as strategic pacification tools rather than true developmental investments. Selective interventions establish dependencies that deepen community divisions and undermine collective action. The fear of state security apparatus

threatens local resistance, while patronage networks co-opt potential leaders by offering incentives and small contracts. Communities generally do not have sufficient access to essential information and technical expertise which they need to mount effective challenges against oil sector practices. Stakeholder participation occurs symbolically during consultations that serve procedural purposes instead of enabling real dialogue and decision-making. Local residents without power are forced to manoeuvre through complicated power networks which mainly benefit government bodies and corporate entities.

This study reveals that local responses to oil extraction are shaped not merely by material deprivation, but by the strategic governance of dissent. Resistance is fragmented, individualised, and often short-lived not because grievances are absent, but because the political and economic costs of sustained opposition are too high. In this context, CSR becomes an instrument of hegemony, functioning to manage expectations, neutralise conflict, and secure the SLO. From a Neo-Gramscian perspective, the inability of communities to mount sustained resistance is not simply a matter of capacity or awareness. It reflects broader structural constraints in which the state and capitalist collaborate to manage and contain local agency. The social forces that might otherwise fuse into a counter-hegemonic bloc are diffused through mechanisms of co-optation, patronage, and fear. Therefore, community engagement in Ghana's oil producing regions must be understood not as a straightforward process of empowerment, but as an avenue of contestation by power asymmetries, selective inclusion and hegemonic consolidation.

Taken together, the findings across these three case studies underscore a central argument of this dissertation: the development of oil resources in Ghana demonstrates a distinctive case of an African democratic state that, superficially, is attempting to balance global capitalist demands with local developmental purposes, particularly within the shifting context of global energy markets.

7.3 Theoretical Reflections

This study contributes to the evolving literature on resource nationalism by situating the Ghanaian experience within the broader framework of Neo-Gramscian political economy. Rather than viewing resource nationalism as a coherent state-led project, the dissertation conceptualises it as a contested terrain shaped by hegemonic struggles, transnational alliances, and localised forms of counter-hegemony. Ghana's case reveals how resource nationalism can operate simultaneously as a language of resistance and as a mechanism of incorporation to prevailing global capitalist structures.

Reforms such as the PRMA, E&P Law and LCP, were introduced to address the demands for transparency, accountability and local benefit by CSOs and the general public. Although these reforms did not change the fundamental political economy of oil extraction, they created the institutional space for participation and oversight. Moreover, the reforms maintained transnational capital dominance but also legitimised elite power by promoting narratives about good governance and national progress.

Civil society functions as a representative model through which these political dynamics become apparent. Although CSOs have become prominent figures in oil governance discussions their placement within consultative frameworks restricts their ability to challenge the *status quo*. CSOs depend on donor money, technocratic engagement and advocacy support which binds them to neoliberal systems and weakens their ability to offer strong critiques about ownership rights, resource redistribution and environmental justice. Consequently, civil society in the oil and gas sector have emerged as both a counter-hegemonic force against dominant power structures and a mechanism that supports the maintenance of neoliberal governance systems.

Similarly, community engagement in Ghana's oil-producing regions shows the limits of localised resistance. Chapter 6 shows that grievances within communities extend broadly and

impact people profoundly. Collective action potential faced with the following constraints: fear of state security agencies, political influences and elite co-optation tactics, intra-community disunity and economic desperations. Moreover, through CSR initiatives and stakeholder forums alongside selective incentives oil companies and state actors control local contestation or resistance while continuing their extractive operations.

Using Neo-Gramscian tenets as an analytical framework reveals how governance reforms and participatory mechanisms simultaneously express democratic aspirations and reinforce hegemonic consolidation. This is revealed through a critical reflection of coercion and consent, together with hegemony and counter-hegemony. Through its emphasis on the political and ideological struggles that influence reform framing and implementation this approach challenges traditional linear institutional development models.

The research demonstrates how transnational power blocs influence national resource governance. The formation of Ghana's oil policies derives from a global political economy established around multinational corporations, financial institutions, and the interests of powerful states. The partnership between Ghanaian political elites and global entities maintains a transnational coalition that preserves neoliberalism while contesting opportunities, localised development and industrialisation. Indeed, Ghana's situation as demonstrated by the three case studies challenges traditional interpretations of resource nationalism. The pursuit of resource sovereignty extends beyond policy design and institutional capacity because it involves challenging hegemonic structures that dictate resource wealth distribution and its conditions and benefits. Resource nationalism in Ghana represents not a definitive break from neoliberalism but instead functions as an arena where negotiation and selective opposition create an active site of contestation with some gains under a persistent hegemonic system.

In essence, Ghana's oil governance is emblematic of an integral state in action. Coercive and consensual statecraft form a dialectical pair, with the frontier between them obscured by the participatory mechanisms, donor conditionalities and reform discourses which serve to legitimate entrenched hierarchies. The PRMA, PIAC, and EITI act as both conduits of global norms of transparency and fiscal discipline and disciplining institutions in their own right. In this regard, democratic inclusion serves as a strategy of hegemony, the effect of which is to stabilise a transnational power bloc comprising national elites, IOCs, and IFIs.

The findings also point to continuities between Ghana's ISI-era developmentalism and its current resource nationalism. Both projects shared an endogenous logic of turning primary commodities into industrial sovereignty but were limited by external dependency and the cementing of domestic elite blocs. The current oil boom is thus a rearticulated form of the developmental state. It is developmental in the nationalist ends it serves, but market-compatible in its strategies and a reaffirmation of structural dependence.

Oil also has an independent structural power in its capacity to reconfigure state fiscal priorities, elite coalitions, and political imagination. Revenue rules, investor protection clauses and other forms of discipline structure the state to the effect of naturalising neoliberal categories of what is "sound". In this way, the material and ideological power of hydrocarbons in the twenty-first century reaches far beyond the physical act of extraction to a reconfiguration of the political field. The Ghana case thereby refines the Neo-Gramscian approach to hegemony by showing the role of participatory and reformist mechanisms in the local reproduction of global capitalist norms. The country is a case of hybrid democratic hegemony, in which consent is mobilised through formal civil-society participation, but remains circumscribed by structural subordination to global capital. Resource nationalism is an incomplete hegemonic project in this sense, a constant

negotiation of sovereignty and dependency in the shifting global order of energy. The prospects of oil and gas for development in Ghana are further complicated by the global shift towards just transition and climate change, which I discuss below as a prospective area for further research.

7.4. Just Transitions and Climate Change in Africa: An Emerging Research Area

Sub-Saharan Africa is regarded as one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions, with climate change undermining food security, compounded by the economic impacts of COVID-19 since 2019 (Otlhogile and Shirley, 2023). Clean energy is arguably the future of energy in the world today with many countries across the global gradually moving towards clean or renewable energy. It is against this background that the discourse of a just transition becomes salient, especially in the light of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s warning that climate change constitutes an emergency requiring unprecedented, rapid, and far-reaching global action (Otlhogile and Shirley, 2023: 1). The AU's agenda 2063 acknowledges the importance of inclusive development which is done in a friendly environment considering the impact of climate change on the continent (Otlhogile and Shirley, 2023: 1). This reemphasises the importance of just transition which has been defined by the African Development Bank (ADB) as the "means of improving the lives of the most vulnerable while also building low-carbon, resilient economies" (Otlhogile and Shirley, 2023: 4). Although just transition as a concept has begun to resonate in Africa, and has potential to address some of Africa's economic, social and environmental issues its prospect on the continent is faced with several challenges due to the many complications and contradictions that Africa finds itself in. For just transition to be successful in Africa it must consider the labour force of the North and South, local factors and global linkages (Otlhogile and Shirley, 2023: 4).

Ironically, there are ongoing explorations for more oil in several parts of Africa (Graham and Ovadia, 2019). In Ghana one of the locations for potential oil discovery is the Voltaian basin (Zobah et al., 2022). In the midst of this oil exploration prospect and current oil production, Ghana developed its National Energy Transition Framework (NETF) which states that the country's energy transition and investment goal is to achieve net zero emissions by 2060 (Ghana Energy Transition Plan, 2024).¹⁷⁵It also mentions Ghana's six decarbonisation techniques namely; electrification and renewables, carbon capture hydrogen, battery electric vehicle technologies, clean cooking technologies and negative emission solutions. Recent studies have examined the Ghanaian government's justifications for moving slowly towards net zero emission by 2070 (now amended to 2060) without prioritising green energy, the finding shows that Ghana's decision making with regard to energy transition is to a large extent influenced by geopolitics and external thrust intertwined with domestic political considerations (Sefa-Nyarko, 2024). Against this backdrop, and in light of similar dynamics in the oil and gas sector, it will be important to examine how these contradictions may shape Ghana's pursuit of renewable energy and a just transition, particularly in relation to the issues raised in this dissertation. Due to the scope of my work and time lines this dissertation did not delve into such matters; however, I would recommend that further studies examine the nexus of oil exploration and production with its externalities and the drive towards just transitions and just transitional movements in Africa what has become known in the literature as evolving just transition (Otlhogile and Shirley, 2023).

7.5 Conclusion: Navigating the Future of Resource Nationalism

This dissertation has argued that Ghana's attempt to harness oil for development is emblematic of the contradictions of resource nationalism in the Global South. The study revealed that oil

¹⁷⁵ An earlier version of this was to achieve zero emissions by 2070 (GNETF, 2022).

nationalisation served as a symbol of state sovereignty and development however the institutions created to control oil revenues connected Ghana to both the material reality and ideological frameworks of global capitalism. The coexistence of nationalist rhetoric with market-conforming reforms reveals not merely policy incoherence but the operation of hegemony: a process where diverse political elites, technocrats, and transnational actors converge within a legitimising discourse of national interest.

The analysis demonstrated that this hegemony created a power bloc that incorporated the Ghanaian political class, the state apparatus, and international capital. This bloc consolidates the structural power of oil: perpetuating dependence through fiscal rules, transparency norms, and contractual regimes that favour investors over redistribution. The integral state's organisation of consent through "good governance" discourse, PPPs, and donor-driven reforms illustrates how coercion and consent merge within the same apparatus, reconciling popular demands with the structural imperatives of global capital. Thus, Ghana's resource nationalism emerges as a passive revolution, a reformist transformation from above that absorbs and dissipates transformative energies, deflecting social contestation and re-articulating hegemony in the neoliberal era.

The dissertation also explored how civil society, and local communities relate to this order. Their mobilisation over revenue transparency, local content, and environmental protection expressed counter-hegemonic demands, but these were channelled and ultimately contained by institutional constraints. The traditional authorities' engagement for regional equity was a genuine articulation of local grievances, but it was co-opted into the state-capital negotiations, not a force to radically shift them. This exemplifies that in the integral state where resistance often takes the form of negotiated inclusion rather than systemic rupture.

The dissertation placed Ghana's experience in a historical context. It found important continuities between the post-independence ISI project and the current oil governance. Both have represented efforts to translate resource wealth into industrial autonomy, but they operated in different power configurations. Nkrumah's statist-developmental bloc sought to transform the economy through direct state control, while the current neoliberal bloc invokes the same development rhetoric but through market mechanisms and foreign investment. The pathway into global commodity production thus becomes also the pathway through which dependence is reproduced.

The Neo-Gramscian framework was appropriate to the study because it grasped this relational and historical dimension. Hegemony, passive revolution, and the integral state are concepts that explain how economic policies and institutional reforms are not simply technical fixes but moments in the ongoing reproduction of power. They illuminate the reasons why resource nationalism in Ghana has been reformist rather than transformative, re-articulating the discourse without a significant redistribution of material control. By contrast, other approaches such as those that emphasise governance quality or the resource curse overlook the class alliances and ideological processes that produce consent for dependency.

Ghana thus provides a significant contribution to wider debates on resource politics in the energy transition era. The case study shows that, in democratised but donor-dependent states, the resource struggle unfolds less as a zero-sum game between nationalism and global capital than as a contested negotiation within the same hegemonic framework. The challenge, then, is not just to legislate state participation but to reconfigure the social coalition around resource governance. This new developmental bloc would need to link labour, communities, and progressive business interests towards reclaiming the rent and reorienting it to productive diversification.

Resource nationalism in Ghana thus remains an open and unfinished process. It is a product of historical conjunctures of external constraint and domestic agency, and its future is equally contingent on new social forces and visions. The developmental horizon that has always been at stake, since the ISI period, persists but in a different moment of world history. The pursuit of national autonomy now has to be framed in terms of globalised circuits of finance, technology, and investment. Achieving genuine sovereignty would thus require disrupting the structural coupling of political and economic power that anchors the current bloc. Whether a shift in that direction is possible or not is a question for future research.

Ghana, in this sense, affirms that resource nationalism is not a single event in policy but a continual hegemonic process a process in which nations are permanently re-positioning themselves in the world economy. The future of that process, ultimately, depends on how Ghana's institutions and its citizens convert the new rent into social power. This is the challenge of transforming the integral state from an instrument of external adaptation into a lever for democratic emancipation.

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Appendix 1: Methodology

1.1. Introduction

The dissertation adopts a case study methodological approach to analyse Ghana's oil and gas industry using resource nationalism from the lenses of Neo-Gramscian theoretical framework which examines the interplay or nexus of global and local forces. The case study approach is ideal to examine the complexities of Ghana's resource governance because it allows for us to move beyond the surface but do an in-depth, context specific analysis of choices, policies and results with a case specific phenomenon. The Neo-Gramscian approach adds an important layer to this methodology by placing the Ghanaian oil and gas sector policies in the broader nexus of global capitalism, historical bloc, power bloc, hegemonic power structures, counter-hegemony and passive revolution. This approach emphasises the role of several social forces, transitional actors and state intuitions shaping resources governance in Ghana. This allowed me to move beyond descriptive analyses but critically analysing the interaction of local and global interest.

Using the Neo-Gramscian approach, this dissertation moves beyond a state centric approach and examines structural limitations, hegemony and local mobilisation in Ghana's oil and gas industry. It guides the research design, data collection and analysis and provides a critique to understand both the past and present of resource nationalism.

A case study is essentially "concerned with description. It seeks to record why a given decision was taken, how it was worked out, and what happened as result...[a] case study of any size will deal with the number of decisions taken in the course of carrying out the original decision, will describe the situation in which they were taken, and the procedures involved in carrying them out, and the effects of doing so". In some instances, a case study could contribute to policy decision-making, rather than to contribute to science (Schramm, 1971: 5). A case study is defined as "an in-depth study of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar's aim

is to elucidate features of larger class of similar phenomena” or “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units (Gerring, 2004: 341)”. Unit here represents “a spatially bounded phenomenon e.g., nation-state, revolutions, political party, election, or persons observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time” (Gerring, 2004: 341).

There are twofold definitions of case studies. The first is the scope of the case study, and the second is the features of case studies. The scope is: “A case study is an empirical method that (a) investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and in its real-world context, especially when (b) the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context may not be clearly evident”. The features of a case study are: “a case study (a) copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result, (b) benefits from the prior development of theoretical proposition guide design, data collections and analysis, and as another result, (c) relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion” (Yin, 2017: 15). Some of the underlying features of a case study are as follows; (i) its methods is qualitative or small-N (Yin, 2009), (ii) it is ethnographic, clinical, participant observations (Yin, 2009), (iii) the investigator or research examines the characteristics of a single unit or case (Eckstein, 1991), (iv) it involves process tracing (George and Bennett, 2005), and (v) the researcher examines a single phenomenon, unit, or instance (Gerring, 2004: 342). All this were taken into consideration in doing a case study on Ghana and resource nationalism in the oil and gas sector. I applied these case approach in my research design and data collection techniques. I discuss them below.

1.2. Research Design

This dissertation used a qualitative case study design to examine resources nationalism in Ghana's oil and gas sector. I employed a qualitative research design for the data collection: in-depth interviews (94 in total); process tracing; focus group discussion (12 in total), and participant observation over one year of fieldwork. All participants are purposively selected based on their expertise, and role in the oil and gas sector since discovery of oil in 2007.¹⁷⁶ All interviews were transcribed and grouped into themes and subthemes for in-depth analysis to answer the proposed questions.

1.2.1 Neo-Gramscian Integration into Research Design

The Neo-Gramscian approach shape my research design by the following:

1. Case Study Situating: by placing Ghana's oil and gas sector within the broader global capitalist world order to examine the interactions between several actors, such as international actors, political elites, local community actor and civil society.
2. Analyses Guidance: by utilisation concept of concepts like historical bloc, power bloc, hegemony, counter-hegemony and passive revolution to interprets oil and gas policies, practices and social responses.
3. Power Dynamic: I hight the structural power dynamics and constraints place on Ghana's resource nationalism prospects by IFIs, IOCs and the global market demands.

¹⁷⁶ I have kept a close eye in Ghana's oil and gas sectors since 2007. I have an exhaustive list of all those who have been involved in the sector based on much research work I conducted on the topic.

1.3.Data Sources

1.3.1. Primary Data

Primary data was collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) and in-depth interviews, and interviews with prominent members of Ghana's petroleum industry available online. I developed interview guides for myself and two research assistants for conducting interviews with key informants, individuals, and focus groups. The Neo-Gramscian framework served as the basis for my interview guide and main discussion emphasising important themes such as the influence of hegemony, global capital, local resistance, policy dynamic and counter-hegemony. These themes were the intent behind the questions in the interview guides. These interview guides provided discussion points that elicited responses to key research questions. The interviews covered two spheres of influence. The first was on the national level, where I interviewed petroleum governance experts, academics, lawyers, and civil society leaders. The second was at the district and community levels where my two research assistants and I conducted a series of in-person interviews and focus group discussions from the petroleum extraction communities in Ghana. We adhered to all ethics protocols during the interviews, which lasted a maximum of 1 hour each. Table 12 shows a breakdown of the types of primary data that were collected.

1.3.2. Secondary Data

Secondary data were from archival documents, local newspaper articles, policy and legal documents, books, book chapters, journal articles, online newspapers, reports from CSOs online and reports from government.

Table 12 Data Type and Means of Data Collections

Data Kind	Means of Data Collection	Type of Primary Data
National Level	Online and in-person	Conducted KIIs with experts on oil and gas at the national level.
National Level	Online and in-person	Conducted KIIs with members of parliament, government agency, ministries, political party leaders and political activist, IOCs, etc.
District/Community Level	In-person	Conducted KIIs with district-level leaders, youth leaders, Chiefs, Assemblymen, advocacy groups, and opinion leaders in the petroleum extraction communities.
Community Level	In-person	Conducted KIIs, Ethnographic study and focus group discussions (FGDs) with people who reside in communities where petroleum exploration/ extraction is ongoing.
National Level	In-person and online scoping review	Conducted interviews with journalists who reported on the oil and gas sector. I also used media/ public interviews of prominent members of the petroleum industry in Ghana that are posted online.
National Level	Online and scoping of hardcopies	Local media news items
Supplementary/Archival Studies	Online and In-person	Used archival data from the University of Ghana Library, Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP), and other public libraries in Ghana.

Source: Author's Creation

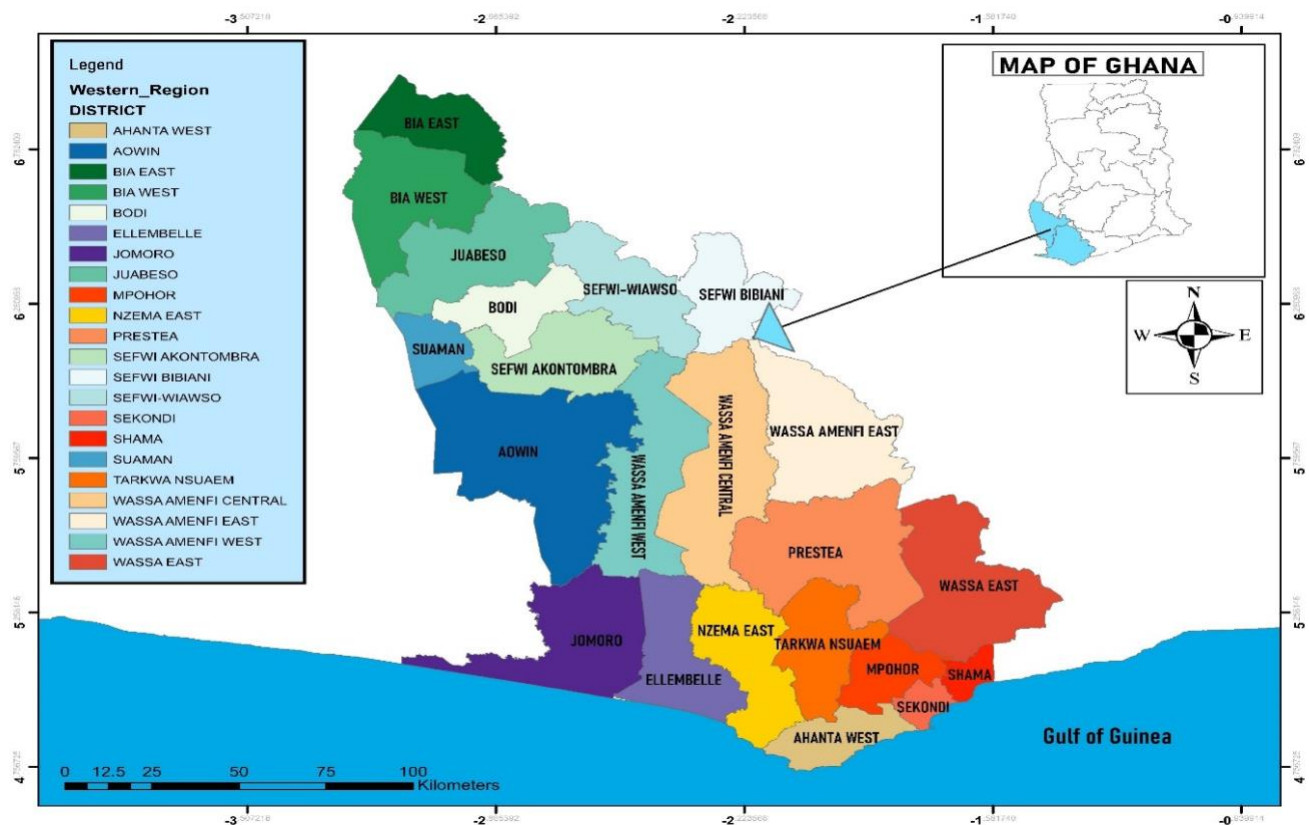
1.4. Study Area

1.4.1. Research Region

The country of study is Ghana. It lies between latitude 4° and 11° north of the equator, on the west coast of Africa. It has an area of 238,535 square kilometres and is about the same size as the United Kingdom without Ireland. The research region is known as Western Region of Ghana which is a mineral research region with abundance of minerals. Sadly, it is one of the poorest regions in

Ghana although several mineral mining has been ongoing there for centuries (Hilson and Yakovleva, 2007; Asamoah, 2014; Owusu-Nimo et al., 2018). Figure 6 show the regional breakdown.

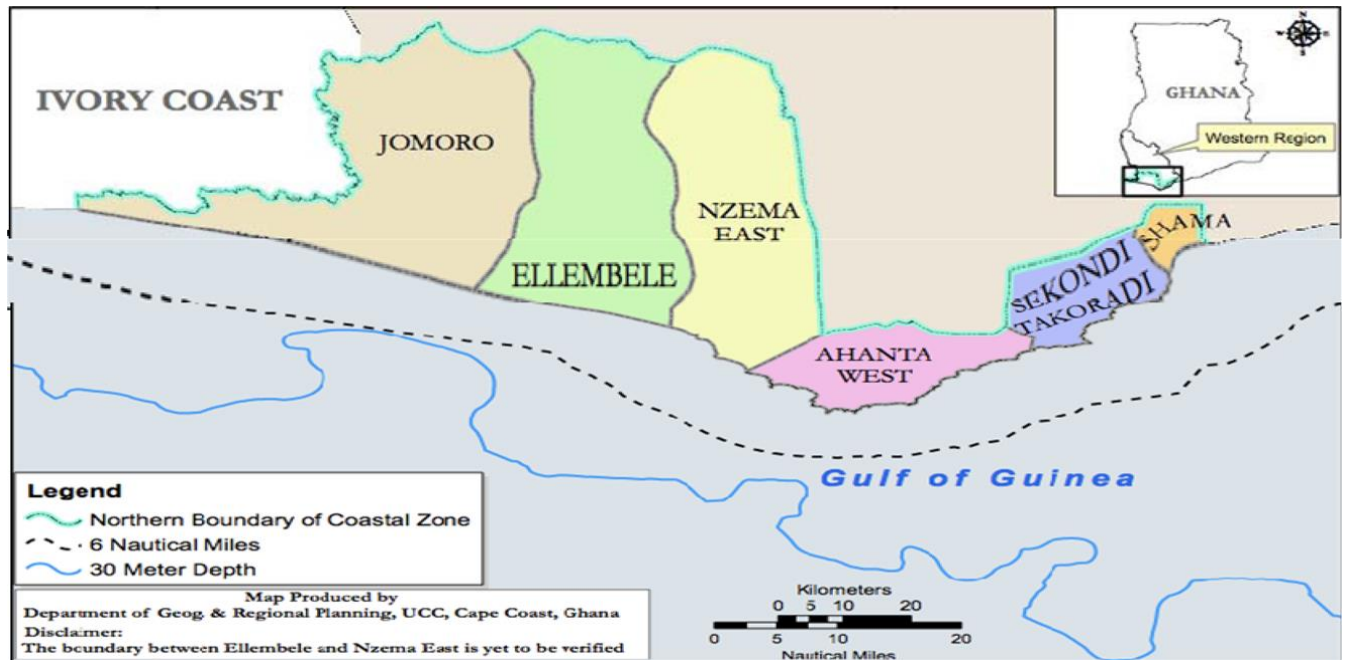
Figure 6 Map of Western Region



Source: Department of Geography, University of Ghana, July 2023.

1.4.2. Research Area

Figure 7 Oil Producing Communities in Western Region of Ghana



Source: University of Cape Coast Ghana cited in Ovadia et al., 2020: 403).¹⁷⁷

The study Area is made up of six municipalities near Ghana's offshore oil producing area along the Gulf of Guinea. Below is a brief description of the research being.

1. Ahanta West Municipal Assembly is found at the southernmost point of Ghana. Its capital is known as Agona Nkwanta (Ahanta West District Assembly, 2020).
2. The Sekondi – Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly, also known as (STMA) or oil city (Ovadia and Graham, 2022).
3. The Nzema East Municipal Assembly

¹⁷⁷ I adopted this map because it captures the location for the fieldwork. I used this research area because previous research works by experts were done in these districts as a good sample to evaluate happenings in the area for example research by (Obeng-Odoom, 2014b, 2015b, 2013; Ovadia et al., 2020; Ovadia and Graham, 2022; Ayelazuno and Ovadia, 2022) all used one or more of these location. Hence my goal was to seek to gain fresh insight from these districts since it had been over a decade of oil production with earlier research being done between 2011-2014. My work seeks to bring fresh inside and to some extent corroborate or refute the sentiments shared by previous studies from these oil producing communities.

4. Ellembelle District
5. Jomoro Municipal District
6. Shama District

The selected communities from these six districts and their total populations are listed as follows respectively : European Town (STMA) with a population of 559,548, Nzema East (Axim) which has a population of 60, 628, Ellembelle (Esiam) with a population of 87,501, Jomoro (Half-Assini) with a total population of 150,107 and Abodze (Shama) with a population of 91,966 (Ovadia et al., 2020: 404). Their main source of livelihood is fishing and farming which involves men, women and sometimes children. The men are the main operators of their canoe, and the women are the fish processors. These communities are judiciously preferred for this dissertation since the oil and gas discovery and production are a few kilometres offshore from these communities. Therefore, there could be a possible impact of oil production directly or indirectly from oil and gas activities, knowing well that the predominant economic activities in these communities are fishing and farming. It was essential to enquire from them their local content demands, expectations, concerns and possible benefits or impact from oil production. Therefore, a qualitative method of examination will be essential for such a study since such a study will allow the researcher to answer the “how” questions (Yin, 2009). I sought to find out how members of these communities feel about the oil and gas sector. Using a qualitative approach enables the researcher to find out the meaning of the phenomena from the perspective of the participant (Thomas 2011, Creswell 2013). Moreover, the adopted case study allows the researcher to concentrate into much detail on one phenomenon or issue (Thomas, 2011).

1.5. Data Collection Process

1.5.1. Exploratory Visits

A one-week separate exploratory visit to many of these communities of the study area was done to enable me to familiarise myself with these oil-producing communities. It enabled me to fish out key actors of the community who were involved in the negotiation for local benefits. This was part of the preliminary data collection to help me affirm these selected communities. It helped me identify other actors through a snowballing effect before the main fieldwork. It also helped me refine my interview questions aligning them with the theme of my dissertation.

1.5.2. Interviewing Key Players

I used structured interview questions which were done face-to-face observing all the COVID-19 protocols. I interviewed 40 key players from the oil-producing communities. The key informants were: 5 local chiefs; 5 youth leaders; 5 fisher folks; 5 local assembly members; 5 civil society organisations; 5 artisans; 5 farmers, and 5 traders. These informants were selected from the 10 oil-producing communities of the study area. The informants were selected based on their involvement in the debates and discussions of oil production and community benefits. All interviews were conducted within 45 minutes to 1 hour to allow for an in-depth discussion allowing each respondent to express their concerns from their perspective and experience.

1.5.3. Focus-group Discussions

I conducted some focus-group discussions to get primary data that were used to complement the information collected from key informants. A total of 12 focus group discussions were done a breakdown of two in all the six districts selecting specific communities. Each of these

focus-group discussions were guided by structured, well-organised questions linked to the research question and objective of this dissertation.

1.5.4. Data Analysis

The analysis and processing of data were done using a qualitative approach. The interviews were recorded and transcribed/typed and saved in folders on my computer (backing them on my external hard drive monthly, using Time Machine). The interview guides were sent to all respondents for them to review. The data was then processed manually and using the computer where I reviewed them several times to understand the perspectives of the respondent. Where there were any inconsistencies, I contacted the respective interviewees to correct all the inconsistencies. Using a case study approach such as ethnography, focus group discussion, and process tracing, interpretations data were organised in themes, textual and contextual analysis.

1.6. Research Question and Data Collection

RQ. 1. What local and global socio-political and economic factors influenced policy formulation in the oil and gas sector?

In answering this question, I conducted **(KIIs) for 61** people in total: 2 Ministry of Finance; 1 from Ministry of Petroleum and Energy; 4 from the New Patriotic Party (NPP); 4 from the National Democratic Congress (NDC), 5 experts who have researched and written on Ghana's oil and gas sectors; 10 with civil societies organisation involved in the oil and gas sector; 5 from community activist groups; 5 Student from tertiary institutions, 5 Journalist who report on the oil and gas sectors; 5 members of the select committee in Parliament in charge of Energy and Petroleum; 5 members of Parliament from the opposition (NDC); 5 members of Parliament from the incumbent administration (NPP) and 5 officials of the PC.

RQ 2. (a) What socio-political and economic forces led to the creation and evolution of Ghana's LCP in the oil and gas sector? (b) How has the LCP influenced the sector's development and impacted local communities, particularly in terms of economic benefits, social equity, and empowerment?

In answering question 2 (a) I posed this same question to the 61 interviewees whom I asked the research question 2. This is because those two questions relate to their area of interest and work in the oil and gas sector.

(b) How has the LCP influenced the sector's development and impacted local communities, particularly in terms of economic benefits, social equity, and empowerment?

I also posed this question to interviewees who responded to research question 1. In addition to this, I conducted **10 interviews** with key players from different oil corporations in the sector such as 2 from GNPC; 1 from Ghana Gas Company; 6 indigenous companies in the oil and gas sector¹⁷⁸, 1 (IOC) Jubilee Partner. Additionally, I **interviewed 5** members of the PIAC as it is the legally mandated institution in monitoring the sector about issues on accountability and transparency. I also reviewed their 13 annual reports since oil production began in 2010.

RQ3. How have local communities engaged with and responded to the oil sector's policies particularly relating to revenue management, social justice and environmental sustainability?

In answering this question, I did an ethnographic study and 12 focus group discussions in comprising 2 each in the 6 districts in the West Region of Ghana. I conducted **interview with 18** KII from the 6 districts comprising 3 from each district.

¹⁷⁸ These respondents did not want their identities captured in any form, so I used local company #1, to #6 to identify them in the appendix.

1.7. Ethical Considerations

- I sought all necessary consent from all interviewees and respondents. This was attained through an introductory letter that was shared with all interviews and respondents. For those who could not speak English, I translated them into the local language(s) such as Fante, Twi and broken English.
- I assured all the interviewees and all respondents of confidentiality in the information obtained. I used pseudonyms/interview codes (numbers) to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees and respondents.
- I observed all laws, community values, norms, taboos, and land acknowledgements.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

One common challenge in conducting research in Ghana and these communities was access to information from some of the oil and gas companies, governments, ministries, and experts. Some never responded to my emails.

Another challenge was the erratic power supply which made it difficult to store my data on my external hard drive immediately after the interviews. I needed to wait for the electricity to be restored in some cases. Transportation to the research district was also another challenge I recount many instances of my means of transportation getting stuck on the road due to muddy roads and as a result of heavy down pour of rain.

Additionally, it was difficult to get IOCs representative to interview I went through a few protocols to get an interview many of them directed me to their websites in their responds to my interview request.

Appendix 2: Ethics Approval



OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
ETHICS (ORE)
3rd Floor, Kaneff
Tower

4700 Keele St.
Toronto ON
Canada M3J 1P3
Tel 416 736 5914
www.research.yorku.ca

Certificate #: STU 2022-122
Approval Period: 11/10/22-11/10/23

ETHICS APPROVAL

To: [REDACTED]
Graduate Student of Political Science

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Director, Research Ethics
(on behalf of You-ta Chuang, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: Thursday, November 10, 2022

Risk Level: ☒ Minimal Risk ☐ More than Minimal Risk

Level of Review: ☒ Delegated Review ☐ Full Committee Review

I am writing to inform you that this research project, "Research Nationalism in Canada and Discovery in 2007" has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics (ore@yorku.ca) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, "RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE".

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LL.M.
Director, Office of Research Ethics

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form



Office of Research Ethics
York University

Kaneff Tower, Fifth Floor – 4700 Keele Street,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M3J 1P3

ore@yorku.ca
research.info.yorku.ca

Informed Consent Form for Interviews

Date: October 31, 2022

[REDACTED]

Research
University

Purpose of the Research:

- It is a case study on Ghana's resource nationalism journey, the oil search, discovery, and production, based on three distinctive case studies (i.e., local content, community engagement and national policy)
- I will employ a qualitative research design for the data collection: in-depth interviews (70 in total); process tracing; focus group discussion (5 in total), and participant observation for one year of fieldwork. All interviews will be transcribed and grouped into themes and subthemes for in-depth analysis to answer the proposed questions.
- The research will be used for my PhD dissertation, it will be presented at various conferences. I will publish the findings in top journals in the field. I will ultimately publish a book from the research findings.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

- Research participants will be interviewed on-one-on-one and in a focus group discussion
- All interviews will be conducted within 45 minutes to 1 hour to allow for an in-depth discussion allowing each respondent to express their concerns from their perspective and experience.
- I will conduct 5 focus groups discussion. I will provide some refreshment for participant's time.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: This will help me gain authentic information and spontaneous observations which I would miss out if I employed a desktop research approach. The recommendation of participants would be used for policy advocacy which will benefit the local community where oil is being extracted.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff, or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future. "If you decide to stop participating, you may withdraw without penalty, financial or otherwise, and you will still receive the promised inducement." In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:

Student Version 12.23.21

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Experts

Research Question

RQ.1. What local and global socio-political and economic factors influenced policy formulation in the oil and gas sector?

1. Was your organisation involved in the national discussions when Ghana discovered oil? If so, how?
2. What was the nature of the debate and how was social justice included?
3. How transparent were these discussions? Were there local or global influences?
4. Did you sense an indication of resource nationalism or national interest at the beginning? And after production began? Did any factor(s) influence this?
5. Do you think Ghana can become a resource-nationalist country?
6. What are your views on using the oil revenue to sponsor the Free SHS Policy?
7. Does your political party or institution have any suggestions for resource nationalism in the oil sector?
8. Would you describe your political leader to be a resource nationalist? If so, why? (*For political party officials*)
9. What would be your assessment of a decade of CSOs in the oil and gas sector so far?
10. What has been the impact of covid on Ghana's oil and gas sector?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Research Question:

RQ 2. (a) What socio-political and economic forces led to the creation and evolution of Ghana's LCP in the oil and gas sector?

1. What was the nature of the deliberations which led to the formation of the various laws and policies in the oil and gas sector such as the LCP and PRMA 815/893?

2. What was the history behind these deliberations and which actors were instrumental?
 3. When and why did these deliberations commence?
 4. Was there any direction towards resource nationalism or national interest?
 5. What role did your ministry/organisation play in this process before, during and after the oil discovery?
 6. How was the parliamentary debate like? What was the central argument? Was there any indication of resource nationalism ? (*Question for members of parliament*)
 7. Has any of Ghana's Presidents been nationalistic with Ghana's resources (e.g., mining/oil and gas) rhetorically and practically?
 8. Does Ghana have the capacity to become a resource-nationalist country?
 9. Do you see any challenges with resource nationalism/ local content in Ghana?
2. (b) How has the LCP influenced the sector's development and impacted local communities, particularly in terms of economic benefits, social equity, and empowerment?
1. What has been the impact of the deliberations that occurred before oil, during the discovery and after oil discovery?
 2. What has been the impact of the Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) since its inspection? What have been the successes and challenges?
 3. How impactful has the PRMA been?
 4. How impactful have the local content policies been? What are the challenges?
 5. Can Ghana's PRMA and LCP in the oil sector be seen as an indication of resource nationalism?
 6. Do you have any recommendations for some of the challenges to resource nationalism?
 7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 5: Interview Guide for Political Parties/Activist/Interest Groups

Research Question

RQ.1. What local and global socio-political and economic factors influenced policy formulation in the oil and gas sector?

1. How do you feel about Ghana's oil discovery and production?
2. Has any of Ghana's Presidents been nationalistic with Ghana's resources (e.g., mining/oil and gas) rhetorically and practically?
3. Does your political party/ institution have any resource nationalist agenda in your manifesto/policy?
4. Did you sense an indication of resource nationalism or national interest at the beginning?
And after production began? Have any factors such as local or global affected this?
5. Does Ghana have the capacity to become a resource-nationalist country?
6. Do you see any challenges with resource nationalism/ local content in Ghana?
7. Was your organisation involved in the national discussions when Ghana discovered oil? If so, how?
8. What was the nature of the debate and how was social justice included? How transparent were these discussions?
9. Do you think Ghana can become a resource-nationalist country?
10. What are your views on using the oil revenue to sponsor the Free SHS Policy or any social interventions?
11. Does your political party or institution have any suggestions for resource nationalism in the oil sector?
12. Would you describe your political leader (flagbearers) to be a resource nationalist? If so, why? *(For political party officials)* Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 6: Interview Guide for Oil Companies (Local/IOCs)

Research Question

1. Does your organisation have any social policies or corporate social responsibility (CSR)?
Can you mention some?
2. How has your company implemented these programmes?
3. How corporative have these oil communities been with your organisation?
4. Do you involve the local communities in you CSR?
5. Are members of these communities satisfied with your company's efforts?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

RQ 2. (a) What socio-political and economic forces led to the creation and evolution of Ghana's LCP in the oil and gas sector?

1. What role did your organisation play in this process before, during and after the oil discovery?
2. What was the nature of the deliberations which led to the formation of the various laws and policies in the oil and gas sector such as the LCP and PRMA 815/893?
3. What role does your organisation play with regard to local content policies?
4. Do you see any challenges with local content in Ghana?

RQ. 2. (b) How has the LCP influenced the sector's development and impacted local communities, particularly in terms of economic benefits, social equity, and empowerment?

1. How impactful have the local content policies been? What are the challenges?
2. Do you have any recommendations for some of the challenges to resource nationalism?
3. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 7: Interview Guide for Community Members and FGD

Research Question (*for community members*)

RQ3. How have local communities engaged with and responded to the oil sector's policies particularly relating to revenue management, social justice and environmental sustainability?

1. How do you feel about Ghana's oil discovery and production?
2. How would you describe the level of engagement between your community and stakeholders in the oil industry? Hint: during discovery and production
3. Can you tell me about some of the demands you made during the oil discovery and post-production?
4. Would you say those demands have changed? If so, what influenced the changes?
5. Considering the demands you made upon oil discovery, and post-production, can you tell me if any of the demands have been met? If so, how were those demands addressed and implemented?
6. Do you have other demands that are yet to be met? If so, kindly tell me about some of the strategies you have adopted thus far in drawing attention to these demands.
7. Kindly describe your experience with oil discovery and production in this community.
Hint: Has the discovery and production been beneficial?
8. How has oil production impacted your life and the community? *Hint: during discovery and after production (negative or positive)*
9. Are there any pressing issues in relation to the oil sector you would like to add?

Appendix 8: Interview List

Interview #	Name ¹⁷⁹	Company/Position	Location	Date
Government officials/Ministries (3)				
1.		Official from Ministry of Finance (#1)	Accra	November 15, 2022
2.		Official from Ministry of Energy and Petroleum	Accra	November 16, 2022
3.		Official from Ministry of Finance (#2)	Accra	March 03, 2023
New Patriotic Party (NPP) (4)				
4.		NPP Official (#1)	Sekondi-Takoradi	January 20, 2023
5.		NPP Official (#2)	Accra	January 22, 2023
6.		NPP Official (#3)	Accra	January 23, 2023
7.		NPP Communication Officer (#4)	Accra	January 23, 2023
National Democratic Congress (NDC) (4)				
8.		NDC Official (#1)	Sekondi-Takoradi	February 10, 2023
9.		NDC Official (#2)	Accra	February 3, 2023
10.		NDC Official (#3)	Sekondi-Takoradi	February 11, 2023
11.		NDC Official (#4)	Accra	February 5, 2023
Experts in Oil and Gas Sector (5)				
12.		Professor and Experts in Oil and Gas Sector	Accra	November 20, 2022
13.		Professor and Experts in Oil and Gas Sector	Online	March 10, 2023
14.		Consultant Extractive Sector Governance	Online	December 15, 2022

¹⁷⁹ All names were removed for ethical reasons because I assured all respondent that their identity will remain anonymous.

15.		Researcher and Expert on Oil and Gas Sector	Accra	November 14, 2022
16.		Researcher and Expert on Oil and Gas Sector	Accra	November 21, 2022
Civil Society Organisation with focus on Oil and Gas Sector (10)				
17.		Former Chairman of the Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas	Online	January 14, 2023
18.		Oil and Gas Experts (Africa Centre for Energy Policy)	Accra	July 31, 2023
19.		(Country Director FES-Ghana)	Accra	July 15, 2023
20.		(Coordinator CSOs platform on Oil and Gas)	Accra	July 4, 2023
21.		(Policy Analyst Extractive, ISODEG)	Accra	July 4, 2023
22.		(Member of the CSOs platform on Oil and Gas and an oil and Gas Expert)	Accra	June 15, 2023
23.		(Project Officer Extractives - Friends of the Nation)	Sekondi-Takoradi	December 12, 2022
24.		(Friends of the Nations, Takoradi)	Sekondi-Takoradi	December 13, 2022
25.		(Coordinator Western Regional Development Network of NGOs (WERENGO))	Sekondi-Takoradi	December 16, 2022
26.		(Executive Director of Foundation for Action Development Western Region, Takoradi)	Sekondi-Takoradi	December 16, 2022
Community Activist Group (5)				

27.		Ghana Youth Environmental Movement (GYEM)	Sekondi-Takoradi	July 8, 2023
28.		Green Africa Youth Organisation (GAYO)	Accra	July 15, 2023
29.		Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA)	Sekondi-Takoradi	July 31, 2023
30.		Arise Ghana Pressure Group	Accra	March 1, 2023
31.		Youth Climate Council (YCC)	Sekondi-Takoradi	March 4, 2023
Tertiary Student (5)				
32.		University of Ghana (UG)	Accra	March 5, 2023
33.		Takoradi Technical University (TTU)	Sekondi-Takoradi	March 8, 2023
34.		Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)	Kumasi	March 7, 2023
35.		University of Mines and Technology (UMaT)	Tarkwa	July 5, 2023
36.		Regional Maritime University (RMU)	Accra	August 4, 2023
Journalist in Oil and Gas Sector (5)				
37.		(President of Ghana Extractive Journalist Association)	Accra	June 3, 2024
38.		(JOYFM-Takoradi Correspondent Extractives)	Sekondi-Takoradi	July 21, 2023
39.		City FM Western Regional Correspondent	Sekondi-Takoradi	July 28, 2023
40.		Sky Power FM	Sekondi-Takoradi	July 7, 2023
41.		Fox FM	Sekondi-Takoradi	July 6, 2023

Parliamentary Select Committee for Energy/Mining and Mineral (5)				
42.		Committee Member (#1)	Accra	April 3, 2023
43.		Committee Member (#2)	Accra	April 4, 2023
44.		Committee Member (#3)	Accra	April 5, 2023
45.		Committee Member (#4)	Accra	April 5, 2023
46.		Committee Member (#5)	Accra	April 10, 2023
NDC Members of Parliamentary (5)				
47.		NDC (#1)	Accra	May 8, 2023
48.		NDC (#2)	Accra	May 8, 2023
49.		NDC (#3)	Accra	May 10, 2023
50.		NDC (#4)	Accra	May 4, 2023
51.		NDC (#5)	Accra	May 5, 2023
NPP Members of Parliamentary (5)				
52.		NPP (#1)	Accra	March 3, 2023
53.		NPP (#2)	Accra	March 3, 2023
54.		NPP (#3)	Accra	March 7, 2023
55.		NPP (#4)	Accra	March 8, 2023
56.		NPP (#5)	Accra	March 8, 2023
Petroleum Commission Members (5)				
57.		Board Member (#1)	Online	November 22, 2022
58.		Board Member (#2)	Online	November 23, 2022
59.		Staff (#1)	Accra	December 5, 2022
60.		Staff (#2)	Accra	December 10, 2022
61.		Staff (#3)	Accra	December 8, 2022
Companies in Ghana's Oil and Gas Sector (10)				

62.		GNPC (#1)	Accra	January 27, 2023
63.		GNPC (#2)	Accra	December 1, 2022
64.		IOC (Jubilee Partner-former staff)	Sekondi-Takoradi	December 5, 2022
65.		Ghana Gas Company	Accra	December 7, 2022
66.		Local Company #1	Online	December 9, 2022
67.		Local Company #2	Sekondi-Takoradi	September 2, 2023
68.		Local Company #3	Sekondi-Takoradi	September 3, 2023
69.		Local Company #4	Sekondi-Takoradi	September 3, 2023
70.		Local Company #5	Sekondi-Takoradi	September 4, 2023
71.		Local Company #6	Sekondi-Takoradi	September 5, 2023
Public Interest and Accountability Committee Members (5)				
72.		PIAC member (#1)	Accra	January 5, 2023
73.		PIAC member (#2)	Accra	January 7, 2023
74.		PIAC member (#3)	Accra	January 20, 2023
75.		PIAC member (#4)	Accra	February 3, 2023
76.		PIAC member (#5)	Accra	February 5, 2023
Key Informant Interview from the 6 Oil Districts (18)				
77.		Ahanta West Municipal Assembly Member	Upper Dixcove (Ahanta West)	July 16, 2023
78.		Queen Mother of all Fishmongers	Upper Dixcove (Ahanta West)	July 17, 2023
79.		Chief Fisherman	Upper Dixcove (Ahanta West)	July 18, 2023
80.		Member of Council of Elders of New Takoradi Chief Fisherman	New Takoradi (STMA)	July 20, 2023

81.		Sekondi – Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly Member	New Takoradi (STMA)	July 21, 2023
82.		Sekondi – Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly Member	Sekondi–Takoradi (STMA)	July 22, 2023
83.		Assembly Member, Kokoado Electoral Area	Axim (Nzema East)	July 23, 2023
84.		Assembly Member, Kokoado Electoral Area	Axim (Nzema East)	July 23, 2023
85.		Ghana National Chambers of Commerce	Axim (Nzema East)	July 24, 2023
86.		Ellembelle District Assembly Member	Nkroful (Ellembelle)	August 4, 2023
87.		Chief Fisherman	Ellembelle	August 4, 2023
88.		Ellembelle District Assembly Member	Ellembelle	August 5, 2023
89.		Jomoro Municipal District Assembly Member	Half Assini (Jomoro)	August 6, 2023
90.		Jomoro Chief	New Town (Jomoro)	August 7, 2023
91.		Jomoro Municipal District Assembly Member	Half Assini (Jomoro)	August 7, 2023
92.		Queen Mother	Shama Apo (Shama)	August 8, 2023
93.		Assembly Member/Fisherman	Shama Bentsir (Shama)	August 9, 2023
94.		Shama Business Resource Centre	Shama Bentsir (Shama)	August 9, 2023

Appendix 9: FGD Date and Location

FGD Date	Districts /Location
July 16, 2023	Ahanta West Municipal Assembly
July 18, 2023	Ahanta West Municipal Assembly
July 20, 2023	STMA
July 22, 2023	STMA
July 23, 2023	Nzema East
July 24, 2023	Nzema East
August 4, 2023	Ellembelle
August 5, 2023	Ellembelle
August 6, 2023	Jomoro Municipal District Assembly
August 7, 2023	Jomoro Municipal District Assembly
August 8, 2023	Shama District
August 10, 2023	Shama District

Appendix 10: Policy Recommendations

The dissertation has outlined many challenges. Below I propose some possible solutions to some of the issues raised in the empirical chapters. First, there is the need to strengthen legal and institutional frameworks in the oil and gas sector. This requires not only amending and updating existing laws and policies but also adequately resourcing key regulatory bodies such as PC, PIAC and GNPC. These institutions need to operate independently without political interference. The necessary revisions to existing legal frameworks should establish protective measures for merit-based appointments and tenure security in order to shield institutional leadership and staff from partisan political influences. The LCP needs government prioritisation of sustained investments in technical training programs along with vocational education and skills development initiatives. Enhancing Ghanaian firms and workers' capacity will decrease reliance on international expertise while boosting local involvement in the oil and gas industry. The PC requires enhanced autonomy along with sufficient resources to develop strong monitoring and record-keeping systems for enforcing local content provisions transparently.

Second, oil revenue management needs major improvement by strictly following the PIAC's recommendations. PIAC's recommendations will become effective for government adherence only when they receive legal binding status within the existing legal framework. The state must face legal obligations to dedicate a larger share of oil revenues to projects that support long-term development. Ghana needs to transform its national development strategy by taking cues from the visionary development plans established during Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's leadership. The establishment of a national development plan that is both coherent and enforceable stands as an essential requirement. The state needs to increase its revenue by revisiting and renegotiating outdated contracts with IOCs so Ghana can obtain better oil rents and fairer royalties while

improving tax structures. The continuous policy of providing tax exemptions to IOCs requires a thorough review for potential reduction. The PRMA contains legal loopholes which allow the Minister of Finance excessive discretionary power for priority spending decisions that require legislative reform to fix. Sovereign Wealth Funds designated for the Stabilisation and Heritage Funds require strict protection and transparent management to ensure they serve their declared goals and meet specific national demands.

Third, the state needs to bolster local participation in the oil and gas industry through the establishment of a stricter and enforceable framework. The policy requires a gradual increase in Ghanaian workforce representation throughout all industry levels with a focus on technical and managerial positions. The state needs to establish a legal requirement for technology transfer from IOCs to Ghanaian SMEs within all contractual agreements. Oil-producing region communities need to participate actively in decisions concerning LCP implementation and development. A defined number of local content job positions should be legally allocated to members of these host communities to mitigate local exclusion and facilitate fair distribution of oil industry benefits. All contracts signed with oil companies require explicit integration of local content requirements. Systematic monitoring and evaluation paired with enforcement mechanisms should enforce full compliance with regulations on these contracts to prevent symbolic implementation.

Fourth, the fight against neopatrimonialism and systemic corruption in Ghana's oil and gas sector demands institutional reforms that target the reduction of political patronage. The existing system of appointing politically connected persons to critical roles within regulatory organisations such as the PC and GNPC requires legislative changes to stop these practices. Legislative reforms must implement transparent and merit-based appointment procedures to protect institutions from political influence and maintain professional independence. The Commission on Human Rights

and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Office of the Special Prosecutor need sufficient resources and authority to conduct investigations and prosecutions against financial and administrative wrongdoing in the oil and gas industry. Improving their ability to audit intricate oil agreements and ensure regulatory compliance would greatly boost transparency and accountability while strengthening public confidence in how petroleum revenues and institutional decisions are managed.

Fifth, the state needs to focus on sustainable development that includes long-term planning and inclusive approaches when managing oil revenue governance. The state needs to direct investments strategically toward public infrastructure and social services mainly in oil-producing areas like the Western Region to tackle local discontent and development disparities. Allocations must focus first on essential areas like healthcare education transportation and sanitation to develop human resources and uplift living standards in impacted areas. The revenue generated from oil should support strategies for diversifying the economy beyond extraction-based activities. The plan focuses on renewing agriculture while industrialisation receives backing and value-added supply chains evolve to create jobs and decrease oil reliance. Strengthened application of environmental rules is vital to safeguard the ecosystems and community livelihoods threatened by oil extraction operations. Resource exploitation creates social and ecological risks that require sustainable development to be both a policy priority and a necessary condition for mitigation in this setting.

Six, enhancing cooperation among different stakeholders as well as civil society involvement serves as a fundamental requirement for maintaining transparency and accountability while promoting inclusive governance within Ghana's oil and gas sector. CSOs require legal recognition along with information access and continuous financial support to fulfil their watchdog

and advocacy functions effectively. When citizens monitor oil revenue allocation alongside environmental compliance and local content implementation it validates sector governance and protects public interests from exclusion. CSOs will increase their effectiveness when they build stronger partnerships with international organisations to share expertise and implement best practices while developing technical skills in extractive sector monitoring. Enhanced capacity of CSOs enables them to monitor state and IOC actions while pushing for national development-focused policies beyond immediate elite gains.

Seven, the oil and gas sector must undergo strategic integration with the wider Ghanaian economy to overcome its enclave nature. The integration of the oil and gas sector with other parts of the economy requires coherent economic and industrial policies that connect the oil and gas value chain to manufacturing, agriculture, infrastructure, and service sectors. The state should focus on regional integration by connecting Western Region oil-related infrastructure projects to national development plans and transportation networks throughout the country. Strengthening connections between the petroleum sector and local industries will boost domestic entrepreneurship while creating sustainable employment opportunities and fostering inclusive economic growth. The integrated approach will stop the reappearance of the extractive enclave economy which has been a long-standing problem in Ghana's resource management systems.

Eighth, promote social justice and community engagement in oil-producing areas. To mitigate the adverse impacts of petroleum extraction and foster inclusive development, the government must adopt a comprehensive and participatory strategy for community engagement. This strategy should ensure meaningful input from a broad range of local stakeholders including traditional authorities, civil society, youth, and marginalised groups on all matters related to oil and gas activities. Moreover, the environmental and social consequences of petroleum production

must be addressed with urgency and accountability. The state, in collaboration with stakeholders from oil-producing communities, should enforce strict compliance with environmental regulations by IOCs. Legal provisions must include enforceable penalties for violations and adequate compensation mechanisms for communities affected by the externalities of oil operations. Such measures will advance environmental justice and reinforce state legitimacy in these regions.

Ninth, all stakeholders should ensure that external influences in the oil and gas sectors are mitigated. The state needs to build a stronger regulatory framework to diminish the lasting control of IOCs and outside actors within Ghana's oil and gas industry. The government needs to create clear operational rules for IOCs that enforce penalties like hefty fines when these companies engage in discriminatory practices against domestic businesses. Effective enforcement measures must be in place to guarantee that IOCs follow local content obligations while honouring Ghanaian economic sovereignty. Ghana needs to enhance its partnership with African oil-producing nations through frameworks such as African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to establish industrial and supply chain connections across the continent. Through such partnerships Ghana alongside Africa can move beyond unequal trading dynamics with the Global North towards developing independent and reciprocal regional growth strategies.

Tenth, the state must invest in building epistemic and ideological autonomy by empowering local knowledge production systems. Ghanaian research institutions, universities, and policy think tanks should be adequately resourced to generate independent and context-sensitive frameworks for oil governance. This would reduce overreliance on externally driven policy models promoted by IFIs and development agencies, which often reinforce structural dependency. Locally grounded knowledge systems will enable the development of alternatives that align with national

interests and socio-economic realities while strengthening the country's capacity for sovereign decision-making in the oil and gas sector.

Eleventh, institutionalise inclusive and counter-hegemonic participation by creating permanent multi-stakeholder governance platforms. These should include civil society organisations, oil-producing communities, SMEs, traditional leaders, and labour unions with formal advisory and monitoring roles in oil sector policy and implementation. Embedding such bodies within existing governance structures will help democratise decision-making, challenge elite capture, and ensure that oil governance reflects broader societal interests rather than serving only technocratic or corporate actors.

Twelfth, the state should rethink its energy strategy by diversifying beyond fossil fuels through a localised and just energy transition. Rather than replicating dependency in a new “green” form, Ghana should promote decentralised, community-owned renewable energy projects particularly in off-grid and oil-affected regions. Policy frameworks need to establish systems that enable local communities to gain from job opportunities and skill enhancements while having ownership rights in energy resources. This strategy will reduce environmental threats while enabling Ghana's renewable energy shift to empower communities locally and prevent new external dependencies while minimising inequality.