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RESOURCE CONFLICTS, POWER, AND DISPOSSESSION: AN ASSESSMENT OF COAL MINING IN ANKPA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
This study examines the relationships in power and the conflicts over resources within the mining communities in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. It specifically aims to investigate the nature of the power relations in these mining communities and the extent to which these power relations lead to conflicts and dispossession. To access the realities of the coal mining operations, the study used a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. Primary data consisted of interviews and structured questionnaires targeting mining stakeholders, residents, community leaders, and secondary resources comprised scholarly articles, governmental documents, and press coverage. It purposively sampled participants for the interviews and questionnaires administered. It adopts the conflict theory as the theoretical framework. The study's major finding points out the existence of a control system in coal mining operations in Ankpa whereby state and corporate players monopolise virtually all the power and control to the disadvantage of local players who lose control over the benefits of their efforts. The study concludes that only inclusive governance frameworks that integrate community participation in mining decisions and equitable distribution of benefits can result in sustainable peace and the equitable management of resources.

Keywords: Power Relation, Dispossession, Resource Conflict, Resource governance and Mining Communities

1. Introduction

In many developing situations, having too many resources leads to underdevelopment and conflict. Stagnation of growth is another consequence of conflict. Coal mining in Ankpa, Nigeria illustrates this point. Exploited and degraded, what coal mining resources remain have marginalization and dispossession consequences. Once useful for national development, coal is now a symbol of value extraction, especially when local ecosystems suffer while state and corporate elites extract national resources. This is what the 'resource curse' or 'paradox of plenty' describes. Countries with abundant natural resources suffer from underdevelopment, especially corruption and conflict, as the elite cartel captures state power and weak governance that marginalizes communities that depend on resources (Auty, 1993; Ross, 2015; DeSola, 2025).

Ankpa coal mining vividly portrays the Nigerian resource curse as large mineral wealth translates to deep-seated poverty, environmental deterioration, and sociopolitical crises. Even with the considerable sized coal deposits, Ankpa communities continue to experience deprivation, aided by governmental and corporate policies that aggravate local landholders' dispossession, sideline traditional authorities, and mismanage environmental impacts unsustainably (Borras et al. 2022; Obi 2020). This trend mirrors the experiences of other resource-rich Nigerian regions, including the oil-rich Niger Delta, where inequitable resource benefit capture precipitates elite conflict and captures resource wealth, leading to environmental destruction, forced displacement of communities, and violent conflict (Yusuf 2020; Adebanwi 2020).

In Ankpa's coal mining sector, the governance framework is heavily constrained, and the influence of control and capture of the resource in governance is amplified by state and elite actors. Without attention to the equity dimension of governance, elite capture and control of the resource will continue to dominate, resulting in local social injustice. Host communities are similarly underserved, and their interests are ignored by the opaque award of contracts, weak regulatory capture and enforcement, inadequate compensation, and land dispossession, and dispossession of communities via the environment (Orogun, 2021; Borras & Franco, 2010). Alienation of local communities will continue unchecked, social grievances and resource conflicts will worsen, and social cohesion will fracture over land and water (Yakub, 2023; International Rescue Committee, 2023).

The questions about governance and justice regarding the coal mining activities in Ankpa center on the issue of local agency and local empowerment. In spite of the fact that coal mining is a primary contributor to the achievement of the national goals in the energy sector and the economy in general, the little and ephemeral community level returns will inevitably sustain the community level obtainment conflicts in terms of sovereignty, land ownership, and development. Poor positioning of informal local governance structures and the absence of inclusive local governance systems provide fertile ground for alienation and resistance in the form of protests, litigation, and violence (Adeyanju, 2023; Malone, 2023). Thus, the Ankpa case is a testament to the socio-political and environmental consequences of resource extraction, and to the inadequacies of postcolonial formal governance in socially fractured and resource abundant societies.

The need to build on the intersections of the issues is justified because of the inequities in resource governance, community-displaced, environmental injustices, and the inadequately restored community rights. The power relation reconfigurations that deal with the resource curse in Ankpa will have to contend with extraction industry opaque governance and the escaped accountability and governance that highly excludes the local populations (Borras et al., 2022; Ross, 2015). In addition, any analysis that works in mining communities will need to include gender and other intersectional social categories, so that the unique and disproportionate hardships and social risks that mining communities bear will be fully understood.

Ankpa's coal mining activities exhibit yet another paradox of development. Natural resources are available, yet unsustainable development is partly a result of the capture of elites, unsustainable development, unsustainable environmental governance, and community exclusion. There are unresolved dispossession and relationships of marginalization of landholders and community institutions that give rise to multidimensional conflict over resources, land, and compensation. This paradox raises questions concerning the politics of governance and conflict in the coal mining region of Nigeria.

This study generally assessed power relations among stakeholders and resource conflict in mining communities in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study are to:

i. Examine the nature of power relations among key stakeholders in the mining communities of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State
ii. Assess how power imbalances among mining stakeholders contribute to resource conflict in area

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Power Relations

Before we discuss what power relations mean, we need to understand what power is. The concept of power, in its basic sense, can be defined as "achieving the desired outcome of an event by doing whatever is necessary" (Morgenthau, 2005). In other words, power is the ability of "A" to influence "B" to do something that "B" would not do without that influence from "A" (Karim, 2023). For ATLAS (2024), power dynamics refers to the distribution and the means of exercising power among individuals, groups, or countries, and the consequent shaping of relations and conflicts. Power relations define the structures and influence of power between people and groups within a particular context. This concept involves more than just control; power relations incorporate influence, dominance, privilege, and the many different ways people communicate with one another. However, power relations as it pertain to coal mining or mining in general sense refers to the distribution of power among mining stakeholders that include, the government, corporate bodies and local communities. This distribution of power is often lopsided as it tend to be obviously uneven and imbalance. The inequality created by this distribution often more than none result to marginalization and subsequently conflict (ATLAS, 2024).

Resource Conflicts

Conflict is inevitable as it can originate in individual or group reactions to situations of scarce resources, division of functions and roles, differentiation of power, as well as competition for limited supplies of resources, valued roles, and power (Oluwole, 2021). Thus, Owoyemi, (2025) sees conflict as disharmony, antagonism, and hostility in relation, which could arise due to the incompatibility of the objectives pursued or the incongruity of the ways and means adopted in pursuing the preferred objectives. Resource-based conflict, otherwise known as "natural resource conflict," entails disagreements or disputes over access to, control over, and use of natural resources. This kind of conflict often emerges because of divergence in human needs for resources such as forest, water, pasture, and land or the desire to manage them in different ways (Omede, 2019).

Resource Governance

Natural resource governance has become one of the development questions in developing countries (Uhembe & Okoli, 2015). Natural resource governance has been defined in Roba et al (2013:1) as follows: "The rules and regulations that govern and the use of natural resources and how these are created and enforced. It is the relationships and the power to make and enforce the rules, and the responsibility to do so." Natural resource governance, in more simple terms, is the setting of the standards and value systems of governance for the exploitation and use of natural resources by the stakeholders involved. The governance of natural resources holds that such resources are harnessed optimally, equitably, efficiently, and sustainably when there are systems of control and regulation in place (Manisalidis, 2020). Nigeria is an example of a natural resources-rich country, parading over forty (40) commercially viable and globally competitive natural resources (RMRDC, 2022). Nigeria's natural resources are abundant and diverse including liquid and solid minerals. Kogi state which have been considered a miniature Nigeria is equally blessed with several natural resources including limestone, gold, clay, oil and of course coal. In the case where natural resources are managed properly and governance is efficient, the outcome is vibrancy and prosperity. However, when resources are mismanaged and the exploitation is abusive and unregulated, the consequences are the paradox of 'resource curse' or 'unfortunate fortune '(Okoli & Uhembe, 2015)

Dispossession

Dispossession is a term that describes a coercive, and usually large-scale, appropriation of resources (property, in most cases, and of a large size) that violate more than single unit and usually private ownership; it refers in large part to actions taken by state agents. The concepts of expropriation and eminent domain (Borras et al. 2022) come close to describing state dispossession. A powerful definition is the loss of "land, their citizenship, their means of livelihood and in most troubling instances, their identities (Frances, 2024)." Many critical scholars have argued differently, viewing dispossession as linked to capitalism and the development of capitalism as well. This line of scholarship is greatly influenced by Marx and Harvey, especially with respect to accumulation and dispossession, and the political economy of land. That said, the narrow focus on these concepts led to overemphasis on certain linkages between land grabbing and capitalism (Frances, 2024).

Coal Mining

Coal mining is the process of extracting coal from the ground or from a mine. Coal is valued for its energy content and since the 1880s has been widely used to generate electricity. The Steel industry uses coal as a fuel for extraction of iron from iron ore and the cement industry for cement production. In the United Kingdom and South Africa, a coal mine and its structures are a colliery, a coal mine is called a "pit", and above-ground mining structures are referred to as a "pit head". In Australia, "colliery" generally refers to an underground coal mine.

Coal mining has had many developments in recent years, from the early days of tunnelling, digging, and manually extracting the coal on carts to large open-cut and long-wall mines. The coal mining industry has a long history of significant negative environmental impact on local ecosystems, health impacts on local communities and workers, and contributes heavily to the global environmental crises, such as poor air quality and climate change Coal is also mined today on a large scale by open pit methods wherever the coal strata strike the surface or are relatively shallow. This method of open pit mining is the method currently in use in Ankpa mining communities such as Enjema, Okobo, Odokpono, Odoagbo respectively. This method is crude and constitute a major threat to the environment.

2.2 Empirical Review

Nature of power relations among key stakeholders in the mining communities in Nigeria

Hussain and Olawale (2024) discusses the politics of resource control in Nigeria and its corresponding implications for peace-building, with a particular focus on artisanal mining. This study provides a critical analysis of the complex interplay between state actors, local communities, and other stakeholders involved in artisanal mining. This study utilised a quantitative research method which employed a survey research design for its data collection. The study found that the Nigerian Government's failure to manage the sector effectively has contributed significantly to the uncountable violent conflicts that have plagued the country. The paper further explores the role of natural resources in fuelling violent conflicts and how this has impacted peace building efforts in Nigeria. It highlights the need for a more holistic approach to resource management that takes into account the interests of all stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, and private investors.

Anthony et al. (2023) took an extensive look at the politics of natural resource governance in Nigeria and explored broadly the themes through which the causative link between natural resources and conflicts can be distinguished. The study further explores the role of good governance of natural resources in promoting socio-economic and people-centred development in Nigeria. The study relied solely on secondary sources of data, focusing on the three main variables: conflict, politics and power. Findings from the study revealed among others that the political economy of natural resources as embedded within the broader global power relations has not been properly explored by the Nigerian government. Conclusion:

Alade (2019) examined the conflict between miners and host communities in Ijesaland. Data were collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), In-Depth Interviews (IDI) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Three KIIs were conducted with selected individuals who were conversant with the subject matter. Data were content analysed. Land degradation, water pollution and air pollution were the major causes of conflicts between the two parties. Other causes identified were compensation issues, land encroachment, multiple extortion, health and socio-economic impacts. All these have affected every other facets of the members of the communities' lives such as personal, social and communal, among others. Although mining activities in the communities have boosted their economy through land leasers getting more money and traders making more sales, it has however caused inflation in the communities. It has also caused fresh conflict because of degradation of the communities' environment, desecration of their customs and traditions and loss of family/communal values, such as trust, unity and integrity, which were paramount to them before the commencement of the mining activities. The nature and pattern of the conflicts were non-violent (low intensity conflict). Mechanisms like traditional rulers' intervention, community vigilante intervention and confrontation avoidance with the miners were used to manage the conflict. Collaboration among all stakeholders is essential in the prevention and management of conflict in the host communities.

Contribution of Power imbalances among mining stakeholders to resource conflict in the Mining communities in Nigeria

More so, Jeyaraj (2024) carried out a case study on "Killing a Tribal Movement Against Corporate Mining in India", using in-depth interviews with activists, analysis of court records, and media archives to trace the removal of a tribal movement opposing a major mine. The case study explains how they organized and mobilized into a strong movement. It also describes what happens to the poor indigenous when a company disrespects an agreement. The study raises some fundamental ethical questions for the future of people's movements, mining companies, national governments, and the survival of our earth. The study revealed that coal mining and coal use have been the most significant cause of global warming. It damages the environment and affects the lives, livelihood and culture of the indigenous people who live in a coal mining area. Resistance and rejection have been strong among those people

Anthony and Osimen (2022) investigates the governance of natural resources to promote socio-economic and people-centred development in Nigeria. The study relied on secondary sources of data, focusing on the three main variables: conflict, politics and power. Nigeria is endowed with abundant natural resources, which accounts for about 65% of total tax revenue, driven mostly by an increase in export earnings from the oil and gas sector. Most resource-related conflicts are implicated by the inequitable distribution of benefits accruing to resources. The State and elite, in alliance with foreign corporations, enjoy the benefits of the exploited resource. Host communities face the debilitating negative environmental impacts and the discrepancy between indigenous traditional laws and state laws that define ownership of natural resources in a federal but unitary state has led to controversial relations among states in Nigeria. The paper took an extensive look at the politics of natural resource extraction and governance in Nigeria and explored the themes through which the causative relationship between natural resources and conflicts can be differentiated. It noticed the political economy of natural resources as embedded within the broader global power relations. The study concludes that regulation must be anchored to elements of good governance, especially democracy, rule of law, transparency and accountability, as well as efficient and equitable management of resource revenues.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Conflict Theory. The theory was originally conceptualized by Marx and Engels (1848) and further developed by Coser (1956) and extended by Dahrendorf (1959).

The theory views society as consisting of different groups with different, sometimes conflicting, interests, which compete over resources that are economic, political, and social. It assumes the resources are, and will remain, available in limited quantities and will be inequitably distributed. Coercion and domination, rather than voluntary consensus, are the primary means for social order. That means inequalities are institutionalized and maintained through policies and frameworks of governance. Furthermore, Conflict Theory views social systems as having inherent and unavoidable disorder, particularly those of unequal social order. These systems also assume social change primarily occurs through the actions of those on the social and political margins, who tend to be the most oppressed in the system. These groups tend to be those who are contending for access to resources, decision-making power, and equity in relationships.

Conflict Theory is relevant in understanding this subject for numerous reasons. First of all, it is useful to consider theory because it shifts attention away from the actions of individuals to the broader structural and systemic drivers of conflict. It explains how disproportionate and asymmetric power relations create, fuel, and maintain discord and conflict while opening pathways for oppressed and subordinate conflict actors to take action against, and claim equity from, dominant ones. It is also versatile and covers a wider social spectrum, including the management of natural resources, and even mining communities, pulling even more perspectives into the analysis. It does, however, have its drawbacks, such as its disproportionate focus on the conflict side while neglecting cooperation, diplomacy, and consensus. It also seems to argue solely from the macro perspective, as if social networks and micro relationships disappear, and could be overly deterministic, suggesting that conflict is a necessary result of lack of inequality, as if there was no culture or situation to mitigate it.

Application of the Theory

In applying the theory to this research, Conflict Theory allows the study of unequal power relations within Ankpa Local Government Area stakeholders concerning resource conflicts. It illustrates the ways dominants within the economic, political, and legal strata, like mining companies and their government and traditional leader associates, control the decision frameworks and exclude marginal host communities and the resultant conflicts. Such conflicts within the host communities around land and environmental control, compensation, and benefits distribution arise and escalate. The theory also serves to recommend more inclusive and collaborative governance, equitable resource distribution, and active engagement as ways to mitigate power inequities toward social equity.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate power relations among stakeholders and resource conflict in mining communities in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised the entire population of the local government area while the study area is limited to three purposively selected mining communities within Ankpa Local Government of Kogi State which include, Okobo, Odoagbo and Odokpono where the actual mining activities are been carried out and the direct beneficiary or victims of mining.

Ankpa has an area of 1,200 km2 and a population of 267,353 at the 2006 census. By 2016, the population had swelled to 359,300. The inhabitants are mainly traders and farmers. Ankpa Local Government Area has its administrative headquarters in Ankpa and the area is made of many towns, wards and villages such as Enjema, Ojoku, Abache, Abo, Acherane, Adde, Aguma, Aka, Akwu, Ankpa, Atuma, Biraidu, Ebakpoti, Ede, Efiwo, and others.

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through interviews and structured questionnaires administered to respondents, while secondary data were sourced from academic publications, official reports and media articles. Given the nature of the study, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select informants with relevant knowledge and experience of coal mining activities for the interview, while simple random technique was used for the administration of the questionnaires.

The study integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject. This mixed-methods approach enabled the researcher to analyze the extent of coal mining activities and its implications for the host communities.

The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula and was calculated as 400 respondents from the identified population. Using Taro Yamane's formula, the sample size is determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size

N = Population of the study

1 = constant

e = error margin (0.05)

Therefore, the sample size is determine thus, n = 358,800
1 + 358,800 (0.05)2

n = 358,800

1 + 358,800 (0.0025)

n = 358,800 1 + 897

n = 322,585 ÷898. Therefore, n = **400**

4. Results and Discussion

Data presentation and analysis focused on examining power relations among stakeholders and resource conflict in mining communities in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. Responses from questionnaires and interviews were systematically organized using tables for clarity. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were interpreted thematically. A total of four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered and only one (1) was missing representing 99.75 percent retriever rate. Key findings revealed

Objective one: Nature of power relations among key stakeholders in the mining communities of Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Table 1: The government in the state prioritizes the interests of corporations instead of the local community within Ankpa, which leads to dispossession of land, and the resultant marginalization.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	162	40.6%
Agree	138	34.6%
Undecided	42	10.5%
Strongly Disagree	23	5.8%
Disagree	34	8.5%
Total	399	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2025

The data in Table 1 above indicates that majority of respondents perceive strong bias in favour of corporate actors over local communities. Specifically, 300 respondents (75.2%) either strongly agreed or agreed that the state government prioritizes corporate interests, while 42 respondents (10.5%) were undecided and only 57 respondents (14.3%) disagreed.

Table 2: Ankpa Local Authorities have little control over issues relating to land tenure and use and appropriation of resources.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	151	40.6%
Agree	134	33.6%
Undecided	48	12.0%
Strongly Disagree	27	6.8%
Disagree	39	9.8%
Total	399	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2025

In the table 2 above, 285 respondents (71.4%) agreed that local authorities in Ankpa have limited influence over land governance, compared to 48 respondents (12.0%) undecided and 66 respondents (16.5%) who disagreed.

Objective Two: Power imbalances among mining stakeholders contribute to resource conflict in mining areas

Table 3: Power imbalances between the state, corporate actors, and communities contribute to marginalization of local people thereby generating tension and conflict.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SA	165	41.4%
A	132	33.1%
U	44	11.0%
SD	23	5.8%
D	35	8.8%
Total	399	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2025

The findings in table 3 above indicate that a large majority of respondents, totaling 297 individuals or 74.5%, strongly/agreed that power imbalances between the state, corporate actors, and communities contribute to the marginalization of local people. A smaller group of 58 respondents, representing 14.6% disagreed/strongly disagreed with this view, while 44 respondents or 11% were undecided. This shows that most people perceive power imbalances as a significant factor in local marginalization and therefore in the bid to fighting for their rights, conflict becomes inevitable.

Table 4: Policies and actions by the government legitimize the dispossession of local communities in coal mining areas.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
SA	149	37.3%
A	132	33.3%
U	44	11.0%
SD	23	5.8%
D	35	8.8%
Total	399	100

Sources: Field Survey, 2025

From the table 4 above, regarding government policies and actions in coal mining areas, 281 respondents, accounting for 70.6%, agreed/strongly agreed that these policies legitimize the dispossession of local communities. Meanwhile, 58 respondents (14.6%) disagreed/strongly disagreed while 44 respondents (11%) were undecided. Overall, the results suggest that the majority of respondents recognize both the influence of power imbalances and government-sanctioned policies in the marginalization and dispossession of local communities.

Discussion of Findings

From the objective one of this study, findings reveal a clear perception among respondents that the state government prioritizes corporate interests over the welfare of local communities. Specifically, 300 respondents representing 75.2% of the sample strongly agreed or agreed that the government favours corporations leading to land dispossession and community marginalization. This suggests a strong consensus that corporate interests are prioritized over local needs and that power distribution structurally put the local people at a disadvantaged position. Similarly, the revelation of the study regarding local authorities' influence over land governance, where majority of respondents (285 individuals or 71.4%) agreed that Ankpa local authorities have limited control over land tenure, resource use and appropriation issues. These findings indicate that both state-level and local governance structures are perceived as skewed in favour of corporate actors, leaving local communities with little power over their resources. This according to Hussain and Olawale (2024) and Anthony et al. (2023), fuel tension and breed conflict if not properly managed.

The interview data further support the findings. According to the participants, globally resource extraction involve some high level of politicking and power-play, this has to do with the authoritative allocation of values as David Easton rightly put it. In Kogi state, the mining of coal is still largely controlled by the Federal and state government who provide the licensing and regulatory framework for mining. In other words, the government hold and wield the most power to determine "who get what, when and how? Leaving the local authority with limited influence and participation.

When asked who holds the most power between the stakeholder which include; the government, the local authorities and corporate bodies, the Private Personal Secretary of the Ejeh of Ankpa, assertively said "*the government of course*". He continued by saying:

> *"Do you want to wrestle with the government? When these companies or individuals come and show you their licenses, you have no option but to allow them assess. This is the first cause of conflict as the people tries to enforce their natural rights of ownership of these land, they are greeted with a conflictual reality of "all lands belong to the government. After the government comes the mining bodies, companies, they are the one with the means, the funds, the resources now in their hands and the people are at best left to their mercy."*

This view not only captured the structure of power dynamics but equally revealed the perception of injustice and marginalization, a desperate attempt to hijack local possession and state capture felt by the local host communities. This points to a situation of mutual suspicion and distrust, two basic ingredients for violence and conflict. In objective two, the data also shows that power imbalances among mining stakeholders are seen as a significant factor in community marginalization. A combined total of 297 respondents (74.5%) strongly agreed or agreed that the unequal distribution of power between the state corporate actors and local communities contributes to marginalization. Only 58 respondents (14.6%) disagreed while 44 respondents (11%) were undecided.

In addition, government policies and actions are viewed as legitimizing the dispossession of local communities in coal mining areas. Here, 281 respondents (70.6%) agreed. These findings collectively suggest that both structural power imbalances and state-sanctioned policies are widely recognized by community members as drivers of marginalization and potential sources of conflict in mining areas. Findings from the interview guide also support this assertion. According to one of the informants and shared by the majority of the interviewed, "*the government stole our lands and gave it to outsiders to exploit and leave us with nothing other than miseries and pains*." This view is indicative of the people's perception in response to the inequality and pain caused by the damaging effects of mining. The study also revealed that coal mining in Ankpa local government has attracted different dimensions of conflict, while some were mild, others have metamorphosed into serious violence, leading to the destruction of lives and properties.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Coal mining activities in Ankpa Local Government Area have had significant environmental consequences, undermined livelihoods, dispossessed local people and ultimately altered the peace and harmony of host communities, resulting in different dimensions of conflict. Instead of development, coal mining in the area has fostered unfriendly developments in the form of conflicts, exacerbated inequalities with deepening mistrust between the people, state, and private corporations. The grievances of host mining communities in Ankpa local government area, such as you have in Okobo, Odoagbo and Odokpono communities, are symptomatic of the larger problem of geo-governance in the Nigerian resource sector, where the pursuit of profit neglects the socio-economic interests of the affected population.

In view of the research findings and arguments of the existing literature, this research firmly concludes as follows:

The lopsided power relations within the coal industry in Ankpa Local Government Area favour state and corporate stakeholders to the detriment of local communities, leading to exclusion and marginalization. The study holds that this power imbalance directly threatens the actualization of the United Nations SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) and indirectly affects SDG 8 (Decent work and Economic growth). As long as the inequity of power dynamics are relative to the government and the mining companies, the issues of deprivation, marginalization, and conflict will remain. Thereby putting the realization of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) on hold or put mildly, slowed it actualization. Coal mining in Ankpa has been diagnosed as having power relations bias and relates to the influence of state institutions and the corporate world. Local community actors are excluded from decision-making, and this has deepened dispossession to the point of local protests and violent conflicts. This study holds that coal mining is a primary cause of loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, which is another setback for SDGs 1 (No Poverty) and 2 (Zero Hunger), and a deteriorating environment in Ankpa. Displacing farmers, eliminating vital ecosystems, and increasing the environment's agricultural production degradation tends to deepen rural poverty. Lastly, we conclude that only inclusive resource governance frameworks that integrate community participation in mining decisions and equitable distribution of benefits can result in sustainable peace and the equitable management of resources.

In view of the above, the study recommends as follows:

1. A well-balanced legal framework is vital to stopping corporations and politicians from abusing locals. This can be achieved by devising legally binding and enforceable contracts, supervision and monitoring, and embedding resource-rich communities with the power to make decisions regarding land and resources.
2. To prevent the escalation of conflicts arising from the existing power differentials and inequities, local peace-building structures, supplemented by the local police, should take the initiative to work on the unresolved issues of mining activities. This committee can be constituted in diversified ways by blending different interest groups, traditional authorities, family chiefs, mining companies, youth and women, churches, the legal profession, etc.
3. It recommend that, in order to foster local self-governance, local councils be empowered by the government, which will be followed by community participation in negotiations of the subsidised coal for mining.

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