

A Systematic Review of Environmental Governance and Regulatory Compliance in the Zambian Mining Sector,: An African Ethnoecological Perspective

N, c, h, i, m, u, n, y, a, M, w, e, e, t, w, a, ,, C, h, a, n, d, a, B, w, a, l, y, a, ,,

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| Abstract

The Zambian mining sector is a critical economic driver but poses significant environmental risks. Effective environmental governance and regulatory compliance are essential to mitigate these impacts. An ethnoecological perspective, which integrates local ecological knowledge and social contexts, is required for a holistic understanding of governance outcomes. This systematic review synthesises literature on environmental governance and regulatory compliance in the Zambian mining sector. It analyses dominant themes, identifies key barriers and enablers of compliance, and evaluates the integration of local community perspectives and ecological knowledge into governance frameworks. A systematic literature review was conducted following established guidelines. Peer-reviewed articles, reports, and theses were identified from multiple academic databases using predefined search strings. Studies were screened against inclusion criteria, with data extracted and thematically analysed. The review identified a predominant focus on formal regulatory institutions, with a notable gap in research incorporating local community voices and indigenous knowledge systems. A recurring theme was the influence of economic pressures and political interests in undermining regulatory enforcement. A substantial proportion of the literature highlighted persistent challenges in the monitoring and enforcement capacity of regulatory bodies. Environmental governance in the sector was

characterised by a disconnect between formal regulatory frameworks and the socio-ecological realities of mining-affected communities. An over-reliance on top-down approaches limited the effectiveness and legitimacy of compliance mechanisms. Future governance frameworks should prioritise the meaningful integration of local ethnoecological knowledge. Strengthening participatory monitoring and community-based oversight is recommended. Further research should employ participatory methodologies to centre community perspectives. Environmental governance, regulatory compliance, mining, Zambia, ethnoecology, systematic review This review consolidates knowledge on a critical policy area and explicitly identifies the neglect of local ethnoecological perspectives within the dominant literature on Zambian mining governance, providing a foundation for more inclusive research and practice.
