



Corporate minerals and community development dilemma in the Surat Resource Region, Australia: Implications for resource development planning



Michael Odei Erdiaw-Kwasie^{a,*}, Khorshed Alam^b

^a Institute for Resilient Regions, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia

^b School of Commerce, Faculty of Business, Education, Law & Arts, Australian Centre for Sustainable Business and Development, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

JEL classification:

M14
H7
L71

Keywords:

Community development
Corporate minerals
Mining industry
Resource development planning

ABSTRACT

While the idea that agricultural farmlands and natural resources exploration can co-exist is rhetorically sound, emerged and rising realities question this claim. Past studies, particularly ones taking a corporate–community relation stance, have largely explored these emerging realities. This paper contributes an alternate perspective to the debate by presenting a procedural viewpoint on the subject in the light of empirical highlights. The Surat Resource Region in Queensland, Australia, which is noted for its rich agricultural farmlands and natural resources endowment, is considered an appropriate case region for the study. Both quantitative and qualitative empirical findings show that empowerment, cultural adhocery, and value-led partnership are the missing procedural elements that need to be enforced and incorporated into resource development planning strategies. The study offers a strategy framework for integrative resource development planning research, whose policy and practical application are promising. Study findings aim to increase the robustness of resource development strategies through enhanced understanding of the planning and management processes.

1. Introduction

The veracity that natural resource development planning issues have been extensively covered in three interrelated literature genres – corporate social responsibility (CSR), partnership, and resource curse – is widely recognized (Ballard and Banks, 2003; Erdiaw-Kwasie et al., 2017a; Kemp et al., 2010). As the business terrain becomes increasingly flooded with stakeholder orientation issues (Erdiaw-Kwasie et al., 2017b; Owen and Kemp, 2013; Rees et al., 2012), the consensus is that integrating ecological, economic, and social considerations into decision making must reflect in resource development planning processes (Alam, 2013; Hedelin et al., 2017). Considerable attention has been given to relational and procedural problems with resource development planning processes (Erdiaw-Kwasie, 2016; Viveros, 2016), which have been found to be the most obstinate ones in the planning experience. For example, the relational issue of digital divide and its impact on resource development planning processes in resource regions and elsewhere, has been tested (Erdiaw-Kwasie and Alam, 2016; Townsend et al., 2013). However, the procedural context for the resource development planning process related to a sense of ongoing farmland–mineral tensions, has not been demonstrated empirically. This research addresses this gap by using the Surat Resource Region in

Queensland, Australia, as a case.

While traditional power hierarchies are being replaced by more complex and multi-relational power systems, corporations are now playing an active role in shaping socio-economic changes in host and surrounding communities (Barclay et al., 2012; Khan, 2015; Reich, 2007). It is evident that the old, adversarial model of business-NGO relations is being eroded; and corporations are learning to build constructive cross-sector partnerships to help gain competitive advantage in new markets, as well as make an active contribution to the development process (Erdiaw-Kwasie, 2016; Fleming and Measham, 2015). Kemp (2010) shared that as corporate operations are expected to provide benefits and opportunities for local and affected people, businesses in society have therefore become more willing to recognize their role as development actors. For example, a study by CSIRO (2012) in resource regions in regional Australia revealed that extractive industries are involved in addressing community needs, including irrigational projects with farmers, rehabilitation of roads and airports, educational scholarships, skills apprenticeship opportunities, affordable housing and environmental improvement initiatives, and sponsorship of community social events. However, in spite of the extensive development roles by corporations and recognized efforts towards managing agricultural farmlands and natural resources exploration tensions, the reality is that

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: Michael.Erdiaw-Kwasie@usq.edu.au, michaelodei2012@yahoo.com (M.O. Erdiaw-Kwasie), khorshed.alam@usq.edu.au (K. Alam).

studies on understanding community stakeholders' perceptions on how procedural factors shape resource development planning outcomes has been under-examined. Against this background, this article aims to:

- Explore procedural factors that influence resource development planning outcomes in the Surat Resource Region in Queensland, Australia.
- Offer a strategy framework to guide policy efforts aimed at enhancing the robustness and credibility of resource development process in social impact industries.

This paper first provides a background to the study. Section Two presents a literature review on a planning perspective on the community development–corporate mineral nexus. Section Three presents empirical evidence from four sampled regional towns within the Surat Resource Region in Australia: the first part of the section provides a description of the case study and methodology adopted, the second phase describes the findings of the study. Following that, section Four presents the discussion and implication of the paper's findings, and the fifth section concludes the paper.

2. The corporate minerals–community development nexus: a planning perspective

Traditionally, although comprehensive development planning efforts are aimed at improving the welfare of people and their communities by creating more convenient, equitable, healthy, efficient, and attractive places for present and future generations, the planning field is a collaborative one (Eversole, 2010; Kangas et al., 2015). Thus, in creating the kind of communities that enrich people's lives, planners work hand in hand with civic leaders, businesses, citizens, and other professionals. However, emerging trends have revealed that the planning process has become more complex than ever, given the diverse evolving actors and the dynamic nature of its challenges (Basson, 2011; Hummelbrunner and Jones, 2013; Vacik et al., 2014). Additionally, there is increasing concern among community groups and scholars about the current resource sector and community development process, particularly in developed countries like Australia, where the system is dominated by politicians and large corporations that are principally concerned with predetermined standards and economic imperatives (Taylor and Plummer, 2011; Plummer et al., 2014). Complicating matters further, it is clearly obvious that in most towns in resource regions, large extractive industries have embraced new roles as development actors in host regions, besides their quest for profits and survival (CSIRO, 2012; Erdiaw-Kwasie et al., 2014).

Historically, the orthodox neoclassical economics viewpoint of community development has dominated the literature, where economic concerns such as growth, income, and employment are the defining elements (Beer et al., 2003; Engel, 2010). Storper (2005) argued that community prosperity and wellbeing depends upon sustained increases in employment, income, and productivity integral to economic development. However, the imbalance in living standards and wellbeing between places even with equal or comparable income levels, has fueled dissatisfaction with conventional economic indicators of development. Following these growing concerns about the character, quality, and sustainability of community progress, socially oriented approaches that aim to redress the gaps identified in the earlier neoclassical ideology of development, have emerged (Burnell, 2013; Dawkins, 2003; Fernando and Cooley, 2016). Thus, in recent times, the primary focus of community development has now broadened to include addressing social, ecological, political, and cultural concerns (Armstrong and Banks, 2017; Chapman et al., 2015; Honkalaskar et al., 2017). In spite of this change in thinking, issues surrounding the economic, social, and environmental impacts of resource developments in host communities remain a key concern in most Australian territories (Lockie et al., 2009; Petkova-Timmer et al., 2009). It is therefore evident that there is an

increasing number of scholarships devoted to the study of effective ways of ensuring that community development and resource sector growth both occur in a more sustainable and mutual manner.

Today, corporate survival is very much intertwined with its social and environmental roles in society through its CSR goals (Idemudia, 2014; Kamlongera, 2013). In executing their social commitments toward generating direct benefits to local communities, many corporations have restructured their policies and practices to reduce conflict and secure a social license to operate (Moffat and Zhang, 2014; Viveros, 2016). To Davis and Franks (2014), social intervention programs and policies in society are one way that extractive industry corporations have sought to avoid or offset costly social, environmental, and political conflicts surrounding their exploration. For example, Windle and Rolfe (2014) observed and suggested that, following the considerable risks such as loss of fertile farmlands and an increase in community instability associated with resource-led growth in many regional communities, realizing social goals at the community level requires diligent management of the interests of both local communities and operating firms in the implementation process.

From a planning perspective, the golden thread that lies within the community development and corporate survival debate is sustaining a desirable environment; having a vital social system that fosters collaboration, equity, and freedom; and a vital economy that is diverse, competitive, and accessible. With the increased awareness of the potential for more inclusive approaches to addressing gaps that characterize the implementation of corporate social programs, environmental strategies, and community development initiatives, existing processes have seen countless changes (Barbosa et al., 2016; Connelly, 2006; Eversole, 2010). Here, approaches that saw local communities primarily as passive recipients of development initiatives have given way to ones that view them as active participants (Cornwall et al., 2000; Fraser, 2005; Kenny, 2016). That is, rather than being viewed as passive recipients, local communities have in many contexts been anticipated to become active makers and shapers of decisions that affect their own livelihoods (Conway et al., 2011; Lowe and Ward, 1998; Ismail, 2009).

3. Empirical evidence from resource communities in Australia

3.1. Methodology

3.1.1. Case study

The case study region analyzed here presents empirical evidence for two key issues relevant to the objective of this paper: (i) situational analysis of procedural factors influencing resource development planning processes and outcomes, and (ii) a strategy framework for resource development planning research. In achieving these research objectives, four designated locations within the Surat Resource Region in Australia were identified as appropriate subjects for consideration (see Fig. 1). The Surat Resource Region comprises six statistical area level 2s (SA2s) (Queensland Treasury and Trade, 2014). Out of these six SA2s, four towns including Chinchilla, Miles-Wandoan, Roma, and Wambo were sampled for this study. Despite high levels of agricultural activity, these towns are known to experience mining operations with functioning corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs (Queensland Government, 2010), which usually justifies why corporations form partnerships with local community groups to enhance outcomes.

3.1.2. Data collection and analysis

A mixed-method sampling strategy was used. This investigation adopted the 'instrument development model' of exploratory sequence design to guide the research goal of the paper. According to Creswell and Clark (2007), an exploratory design is appropriate when instruments are not available, variables are unknown, and/or there is no guiding framework or theory, as was in the case of this study. The instrument-development exploratory sequence design usually contains

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات