FAIRTRADE GOLD: A NEW WAY OF GOVERNING ARTISANAL AND SMALL-SCALE MINING IN TANZANIA?

A Thesis Submitted to the University of Manchester for the Degree of PhD in the Faculty of Humanities

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Abstract

Fairtrade Gold: A New Way of Governing Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Tanzania?

Alongside exponential rises in global prices for gold, there has been a concurrent rise in the geographical scope of the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector. This poverty-driven activity has been associated with elevated levels of environmental degradation, a high degree of informality, poor health and safety practices and below market prices for their gold. Despite these putatively conceived problems, there has been a historical and widespread failure by policy makers to significantly improve the socio-economic and environmental conditions facing ASM’s operators.

Recently, however, there has been a noticeable shift in the ways in which the governance of the sector is enacted. This thesis critically analyses the emergence of one such example, namely the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation and the Alliance for Responsible Mining’s dual launch of ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’ (FT/FM) certified gold. Inspired by the past successes for the movement in a range of agrifood products and grounded in the discourse of ‘fairness’, its application to ASM promises better prices in exchange for the fulfilment of standards relating to environmental stewardship, a commitment to democratic structures and responsible mining practices.

Following the experiences of Fairtrade gold in nine pilot projects in Latin America, its expansion into gold producing countries in sub-Saharan African countries seems inevitable. However, there has been a lack of academic research into its efficacy, a gap that this thesis fills by examining the potential of both the discursive and material ways that Fairtrade and Fairmined gold may operate in Tanzania. It is revealed that ASM operators are negatively represented by conventional thinking as variously criminal, irresponsible and irrational. Against this background, it is argued that the intervention of FT/FM gold can be read through an environmental and social justice framework, one that presents a counter-narrative of ASM as a valued livelihood strategy marked by environmental responsibility. The struggles for greater recognition and more equitable distribution for ASM operators are premised, most critically on a move towards a new, ‘fair’ way of mining.

Building upon a critical examination of the politics of these discursive constructs, the thesis presents a critical examination of ‘fairness’ in practice through a case study. Indeed, a private company, African Precious Metals (APM), has constructed four ‘Fair Trade Gold Centres’ that offer ASM operators in the Mwanza and Shinyanga regions of Tanzania a new means of selling gold. Ideologically separate to the FT/FM model outlined above, their presence in local marketing arrangements for ASM gold has served to obscure the way that ‘fairness’ is conceptualised by ASM operators in the area. Moreover, their substantive failure in policy terms, allied to their close rhetorical association with FT/FM, has served to damage the moral ballast of ‘fairness’ found in the ‘Fairtrade’ gold discourse.

Through the critical analysis of life histories narrated by ASM operators in Tanzania, this thesis reveals that there is a substantive gap between the ways in which ‘fairness’ in discursively conceptualised and how it is practically realised. Notable findings that compromise FT/FM’s potential efficacy include the fact that the ‘Fair Trade’ price is significantly lower than local market conditions and that, in the light of their historical failure, there is a deeply-rooted mistrust of development intervention more broadly. In struggling for a ‘fair’ future for ASM’s operators, the Fairtrade movement must also remain careful to avoid the paternalism that has defined erstwhile ASM policy that has promoted partnership.

John Childs, The University of Manchester, PhD, 20th September 2011
DECLARATION

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Elements of this thesis have helped form the following publications:


* Sections of chapter 2 were extracted and reproduced in this article.
**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>Alternative Livelihoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APM</td>
<td>African Precious Metals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARM</td>
<td>Alliance for Responsible Mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASM</td>
<td>Artisanal and Small-scale Mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMO</td>
<td>Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATO</td>
<td>Alternative Trade Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EITI</td>
<td>Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBME</td>
<td>Federal Bank of the Middle East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI</td>
<td>Foreign Direct Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLO</td>
<td>Fairtrade Labelling Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FT/FM</td>
<td>‘Fairtrade’/‘Fairmined’ (Dual Certification for Gold)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTGC</td>
<td>Fair Trade Gold Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSF</td>
<td>Global Support Facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICMM</td>
<td>International Council on Mining and Metals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEM</td>
<td>Ministry of Energy and Minerals (Tanzania)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNC</td>
<td>Multinational Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML</td>
<td>Primary Mining License (Tanzania)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ReMA</td>
<td>Regional Mining Association (e.g. MwaReMA – Mwanza Regional Mining Association)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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1.1 A New Gold Standard

On Valentine’s Day 2011, the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO) and the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) launched Fairtrade and Fairmined certified (FT/FM) gold ‘in a groundbreaking effort to secure a fair deal for gold miners and their communities’ (FLO 2011a). This enterprise has emerged as a response to the specific challenges presented by artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), a sector that has been associated with a range of environmental and social problems, but which nonetheless provides a livelihood for an estimated thirteen million people worldwide (ILO 1999). Additionally, the sector’s participants have been negatively represented as irresponsible in a discourse of criminality, a social construction that the Fairtrade movement has sought to counter through a framework of social and environmental justice. In this way Fairtrade has promoted itself as a new means of governing ASM and engages with minerals markets for the first time in its history, a contention that this thesis critically assesses.

Perhaps owing its contemporary nature, there has been little critical enquiry into the developmental impact of the FT/FM initiative. It is against this analytical lacuna that this thesis seeks to not only map the ways in which ASM has been discursively reconfigured, but also to examine the modes in which the shift in discourse has been enacted in substantive terms in Tanzania. Currently there are nine FT/FM certified artisanal and small-scale mining organisations (ASMOs), but all of these are located in South America. FT/FM gold is scheduled, according to the secretary of ARM, to be implemented in Tanzania ‘in 2012’ (Key Informant 1), and it is precisely the implications of such a project that form the focus of this research.

1 The choice of date was significant as gold has historically been discursively constructed a symbol of love, an example of the way in which meanings are ‘inscribed in the forms and uses of goods’ (Dolan 2008: 274; cf. Appadurai 1986: 5).

2 In this thesis, careful attention is forwarded to the ways in which ‘Fairtrade gold’ is articulated. Where it refers to the broader movement, ‘Fairtrade’ is used. ‘FT/FM’ gold is deployed when it refers specifically to the dually certified labels of ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’ gold. Finally, ‘Fair Trade’ is written where it refers to the APM version described in this chapter.

3 In order to grant anonymity to the key informants interviewed during this research, key informants are referenced with the participants names removed. A full discussion of the
FT/FM’s potential implementation in Tanzania has been obscured by the establishment, since 2007, of four ‘Fair Trade Gold Buying Centres’ (FTGCs) in the Mwanza and Shinyanga regions of Northern Tanzania. These have been constructed by a privately owned company called African Precious Metals Gold Ltd. (APM), a member of ARM’s ‘stakeholder alliance’ (ARM 2009) and subsidiary of the Federal Bank of the Middle East. Operating exclusively in Tanzania, it is listed as a company that ‘buys and sells gold in a formal, fair trading scheme where business is transacted in a transparent setting’ and is committed ‘to the mission, values and objectives’ of ARM (ARM 2009). Their establishment has served to obfuscate not only the ways that the conceptual notion of ‘fairness’ is understood by ASM operators in the area, but also places demands upon academic enquiry to reveal the realities that this generates for those stakeholders affected by its intervention.

As will be reviewed critically in chapter 2, there is a wide range of literature that relates to the separate topics of ASM and Fairtrade. Yet beyond a few formative analyses of Fairtrade gold (Hilson 2008; Childs 2008, 2010), little has been done to synthesize ASM and Fairtrade into a discrete study. Engaging with this analytical lacuna, this research aims therefore to contribute empirically through a study of Fairtrade in practice and theoretically through a discursive examination of the divergent ways in which ‘fairness’ is conceptualized by Fairtrade officials and its producers.

To this end, this study is framed by three distinct research aims and five related research questions. These are presented below in table 1.1 complete with the corresponding chapters in which they are approached.

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4 Owing to the complexity of the division of labour at mine sites, the term ‘ASM Operator’ is employed to indicate any worker involved in the processing of gold mined on an artisanal and small-scale. This is consistently applied throughout this thesis.
### Table 1.1: Research Aims and Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Aims</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Chapter of Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To assess the politics of representing ASM operators in Tanzania.</td>
<td>1. How have ASM operators been represented by Tanzanian media and policy makers?</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How does the Fairtrade movement recast the identity of ASM operators?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To analyse critically ‘Fair Trade’ in practice.</td>
<td>1. How is APM’s version of ‘fairness’ substantively enacted?</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How does the rhetoric of APM’s ‘Fair Trade’ differ from the realities understood by ASM operators in the Mwanza region?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To analyse critically the prospects and challenges for ‘Fairtrade’ gold in Tanzania.</td>
<td>1. What are the prospects and challenges for Fairtrade and Fairmined gold in Tanzania?</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though the ways in which the above aims and questions are structured are outlined below in section 1.3 and the research methodology employed is presented in chapter 3, it is necessary to first place the choice of research topic in context, explaining the salience of the approach taken.

#### 1.2 The Thesis in Context

There are particular reasons behind the importance of a study of the intersections between ‘fairness’ and ASM. These are demarcated in what follows, along with the rationale behind choosing APM as a case study through which to examine the research problem.
1.2.1 ASM in Tanzania: A Poverty-Driven Sector

The dominant understanding of the mechanics of ASM perceives the sector as a poverty-driven activity that is self-perpetuating. This conceptualization has been predicated on a particular reading of the sector’s participants and their chronic struggle against a pervasive poverty trap that is not being broken by the development interventions of ASM policy reform initiatives (Noetstaller 1996). The dominant conceptualization of this trap shows how ‘large numbers of miners chasing limited resources’ are limited by ‘low incomes and a lack of investment opportunities’ (Gilman 1999). This, in turn, has led to a characterization of the sector as suffering from ‘inadequate technology’, causing human and environmental harm, and affected by poor levels of productivity (ibid).

The framework for such a cycle can, however, be traced in the discourses of myriad ‘development’ practices and resonates with the most contemporary of poverty trap analyses. For example, the Chronic Poverty Research Centre has identified five major ‘traps that underpin poverty’ (CPRC 2009: 1). Significantly, for the analysis of ASM, it finds that the chronically poor are characterized by ‘insecurity’, ‘limited citizenship’, experience both ‘spatial disadvantage’ and ‘social disadvantage’, and have ‘poor work opportunities’ (CPRC 2009:1). In terms of ASM research, the vast of attention has been focused on analyses of the ‘spatial disadvantage’ of ASM operators where miners work in remote areas, are disconnected from economic and social support with ‘poor work opportunities’ such that ASM is the only viable livelihood strategy.

While cognisant of these foci, this thesis pays most attention to the critical analysis of the ‘limited citizenship’ ascribed to ASM operators and the ‘social discrimination’ that they undergo, which is both manifest (in local power relations) and latent (in the political consequences of particular representations of miners engaged in ASM). An investigation into how miners ‘lack effective political voice and lack effective political representation’ is the starting point for this analysis, and resonates strongly with its theoretical framework of social and environmental justice (CPRC 2009:1). In this way, the first research aim is to investigate critically the ways in which discourses and discursive constructions of ASM influence the formulation of both extant ASM policies and Fairtrade’s contemporary policy and practice in Tanzania.
In addition to previous experience in the south of the country,\(^5\) the rationale behind the focus on Tanzania as the area of study was based on its burgeoning mineral output and the decision by ARM to shortlist it, along with Ghana and Mozambique, ‘as a potential pilot project in Africa’ (Key Informant 1). Though estimates vary, there are between an estimated 300,000 and 550,000 people engaging in ASM in Tanzania (Jonsson 2009: World Bank 1996). Its large gold reserves have long attracted interest from foreign direct investment (FDI). As Bridge (2004) has mapped, ‘investments by Australian and Canadian gold mining concerns in the late 1990s represented over 60% of total FDI inflows to Tanzania’ (p. 407). Moreover, the growth in Tanzania’s mineral sector has rendered it the third largest producer of gold after South Africa and Ghana (Kitula 2006). Finally, gold in Tanzania is estimated to contribute 44% of total exports, delineating its significance in terms of foreign exchange (EITI 2011).

1.2.2 Why Fairtrade?

The emergence of Fairtrade gold is part of a marked shift towards ‘new’ forms of governance from the corporate sector and civil society acting as regulators and respondents to the challenges ASM’s challenges. For example, the ‘strategic philanthropy’ of large gold mining multinational corporations (MNCs) (Barnes 2005) is well-established, replete with their associated social development provisions, which fall under the rubric of increasingly advanced corporate social responsibility (CSR) packages. The concurrent FT/FM gold initiative aims instead to make ASM ‘a formalized, organized and profitable activity, that is technologically efficient [and is] socially and environmentally responsible’ (ARM 2010: 4) and is typical of an increasingly transnational mode of governance (Ferguson 2006). Although ARM is only one of a myriad of organizations developing ‘ethical’ models in the minerals sector (detailed in chapter two), the specific focus of this project is on ASM rather than large-scale mining (LSM). It will analyse the move towards business being conducted along more ‘ethical’ lines and will ask whether or not the shift in emphasis towards ‘fairer’ conditions goes beyond rhetoric and towards substantive changes for ASM’s operators and dependents.

\(^5\) The researcher was involved in the set up of a small NGO in Mtwara Region of Tanzania prior to the commencement of this thesis.
Recent policy efforts aimed at reforming ASM have, for the most part, failed to ameliorate the poverty-driven issues raised by the sector. Although the sector has attracted significant funds from a long list of donors including the World Bank, DfID and the UN, as well as host country governments, multinational mining companies (MNCs) and NGOs, ASM is still viewed, according to the Geita district mining officer, as ‘a broken industry’ (Key Informant 7). FT/FM emerges as a counterpoint to this claim, positing that ASM is an essential means of livelihood for ASM operators worldwide and the challenge for reform begins with claims for recognition. This is, in turn, supported by a legally binding set of standards, developed by ARM and ratified by FLO, to serve as the blueprint for a global Fairtrade gold standards protocol (ARM 2010).

1.2.3 Choosing APM as a Case Study

The research of the four APM FTGCs takes place in Mwanza region, Tanzania. Though justified with more perspicuity in section 3.1, its salience is not confined to its unique status as the only example of an ASM initiative marketing ‘Fair Trade gold’ in sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, it is within the context of a complex system of ASM governance from multifarious origins that the case study is of most interest. Within ARM, for example, a disparate range of actors participate in the ‘stakeholder alliance’, including members of both civil society and the corporate sector (ARM 2009). However, alongside the proliferation of NGOs and ‘not-for-profit’ organizations, private sector interests intersect with Fairtrade in complex and surprising ways. APM is a paragon of this ambiguity. Despite its being a subsidiary of a transnational bank (FBME), it offers ASM operators in the Mwanza region the opportunity to sell their gold at their four FTGCs, which are decorated with large lettering emphasizing their marketing of ‘Fair Trade Gold’. Coupled with their association with the official ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’ labels, which are produced by ARM and FLO through their involvement in the ‘stakeholder alliance’, this has ensured that it is difficult for ASM operators to determine the quite different ethical perspectives and modus operandi of the two approaches. Its effects are analysed in detail in chapter five.

That a subsidiary of a transnational bank is underwriting a development intervention trading under the terms of ‘Fair Trade’ is just one way in which the boundaries between the private sector and civil society have become more fluid in
governing the ASM sector in Tanzania. Just as business talks in the discourse of ‘sustainable development’, ‘partnership’ and ‘fairness’, so too do the traditionally conceived interests of civil society promote the need to focus on the profit making imperatives in alternative forms of governance. It is argued in this thesis that the rhetorical pillars of contemporary environment and development interventions are simultaneous revealed and obfuscated through the example of APM, a phenomenon that can help to advance understanding into the complexities of applying the Fairtrade model to the minerals sector. It is precisely at the interstices of civil society–corporate sector–public sector relations in tackling the poverty and development challenges (A, B and C in figure 1.1) that the APM example is situated.

Figure 1.1: Conceptualizing the Governance of ASM

Just as the arenas of state, business and civil society intervene with policy interventions, they are also in dialogue with one another, producing particular discourses of reform. Though the individual components of state and, to a lesser extent, business have been well studied in relation to alleviating poverty in ASM, the same cannot be said for the
analysis of Fairtrade gold as an effective motor of governance. Moreover, the extent to which the three aforementioned conceptual arenas not only relate to one another, but also include the ASM communities themselves in policy formulation have yet to be researched. In this way, the focus on APM as a Fair Trade initiative that can be located simultaneously (and unconvincingly) in both the arenas of civil society and business provides a fertile ground from which to approach the question of Fairtrade’s efficacy as a new mode of environmental governance.

1.3 The Structure of the Thesis

At its core, this is a thesis that seeks to reveal how ‘Fairtrade’ is enacted in the ASM sector, while at all times evaluating critically the divergences and commonalities between the discursive construction of ‘fairness’ and its effect in terms of the substantive realities felt by ASM operators. Having outlined in this chapter the rationale behind the examination of this research problem, as well as the overarching aims and the questions that it attempts to answer, the second chapter presents a critical literature review in order ‘to indicate what the state of knowledge is with respect to each research question’ (Blaikie 2000: 71).

As such, this chapter is framed by the overall aim to identify the three most significant and divergent contemporary reformatory approaches to gold mining policy in Africa from the perspectives of state and multilateral institutions, business and civil society. This approach is premised on the notion that ‘social sciences can no longer […] treat only one level of analysis or one type of actor’ and that there is a need instead ‘to go beyond formal government to more informal and fluid governance’ (Shaw 2000: 2). In this way, it considers first the response of the public sector as regulator of the poverty challenges of ASM. Secondly, it presents a critical review of the literature on the ‘strategic philanthropy’ of LSM corporations (Barnes 2005) and their associated social development provisions under the rubric of increasingly advanced ‘corporate social responsibility’ packages. Thirdly and finally, it delineates the emergence of the Fairtrade network’s erstwhile efforts in governing ASM in South America, yet places this within the broader trajectory of Fairtrade expansion across different sectors and product ranges.
The third chapter presents a detailed explanation of the research methods and methodology employed. It includes a reflexive understanding of the limitations and challenges presented by an approach that was entirely qualitative in nature, but emphasizes its strengths and relevance for analysing the relationship of FT/FM gold with ASM in Tanzania. It also includes a full description of the research sites encountered, their geographic setting and an explanation of how each site was qualitatively unique.

The core analysis is then divided over the following three chapters, each one addressing the respective research questions sketched out in table 1.1. The fourth chapter seeks to illustrate how a critical understanding of the ways in which the figure of the ASM operator is constructed discursively can help to reveal their marginalization in ASM policy in Tanzania. By analysing the texts (both oral and written) of the Tanzanian media and ASM policy makers, it argues initially that the artisanal miner can be considered as a trope in so far as it has become, figuratively speaking, imbued with a number of pervasive images that have formed its mediatised, public image. The figure that emerges in this construction is one marked by a pejorative suite of traits that include criminality, irrationality, mercenariness and irresponsibility. Conversely, the second half of chapter four articulates the Fairtrade response, arguing that the recasting of ASM as a positive tool for livelihood security and its counter-discourses of professionalism and responsibility can be read through a framework of social and environmental justice.

Chapter five assesses critically the extent to which the discursive shift in small-scale mining policy towards fairness and responsibility is felt by miners who are operative in Tanzania. In order to do this, it presents a critical analysis of the case study of APM and how ‘fairness’ is enacted as a consequence of its newly constructed FTGCs in the Mwanza region. It begins by constructing a historical narrative of ASM market opportunity in the Mwanza region through the life histories of ASM operators encountered during this research. Following this, it constructs two supply chains of ASM gold in the Mwanza region both before and after the intervention of APM. The majority of the chapter is concerned, however, with a critical analysis of the problems raised by APM’s intervention and argues that its version of ‘fairness’ communicated through its FTGCs fails to converge with ‘fairness’ as conceptualized by ASM operators. This has led to its putatively conceived policy failure.
Chapter six engages directly with the final research question that asks, ‘What are the prospects and challenges for Fairtrade and Fairmined gold in Tanzania?’ It offers critical insight into the possible effects of the adoption of the more comprehensive and official FT/FM-certified gold programme into the extant governance arrangements in the Mwanza region of Tanzania. It begins by updating the supply chains initially drawn in chapter five to include FT/FM as a key actor in a new Fairtrade and Fairmined gold chain of custody. Subsequently, it analyses the key barriers faced by ARM/FLO collaborative intervention. These include, though are not limited to, a culturally grounded suspicion of all development intervention from outside, the ideological issues at large with a reliance on standard setting, problems in reaching the most vulnerable members of the ASM community and the problems of acquiring legalized land rights for ASM operators. It concludes by imagining how these issues may intersect with two ASMOs in the Mwanza region that have been identified by a Fairtrade researcher, employed by ARM, as ‘potential pilot projects’ (Key Informant 3).

Finally, chapter seven presents an open-ended conclusion to the thesis by drawing upon the findings of chapters four, five and six in order to suggest possible future directions for FT/FM gold in Tanzania. It argues that its efficacy depends upon the successful engagement with the ideological barriers presented by the competing conceptions of ‘fairness’ amongst ASM operators. It must also overcome the damage done to its meaning by APM’s failed intervention, which has resulted in ‘Fair Trade’ becoming synonymous with broken promises and corruption. Moreover, in suggesting areas for future research, beyond the obvious need for empirical studies once FT/FM gold is enacted in Tanzania and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, a call for a nuanced understanding of illegal gold buying networks is made in order to better understand the prevailing market conditions found in the Mwanza region.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an interdisciplinary and myriad range of literature is analysed and consolidated so that the research questions stipulated in chapter 1 can be contextualized and can provide a ‘bridge between the project and current state of knowledge on the topic’ (Blaikie 2000: 71). In this light, the research aims are outlined again so as to provide a reference point for the subsequent review. To recapitulate, these aims are as follows:

1. To assess the politics of representing ASM operators in Tanzania.
2. To analyse critically ‘Fair Trade’ in practice.
3. To analyse critically the prospects and challenges for ‘Fairtrade’ gold in Tanzania.

The structure of this critical review is divided into three interrelated sections. First, it provides an extensive background to ASM, locating it firmly as a poverty-driven exercise. It considers the historical trajectories of the political economy of development in mineral-rich countries in Africa by examining the relationship between their mineral abundance and their ‘development performance’. It then analyses the influx of foreign direct investment in mining enterprises (FDI) as a direct correlate of the much-discussed ‘Structural Adjustment Programme’ (SAP) reforms and its impact on the proliferation of ASM activity across sub-Saharan Africa. Concluding this first section is a review of literature that aims to improve understanding of the ways in which poverty has affected sustainable livelihoods in ASM communities.

The second section amalgamates the salient critiques of small-scale mining reform. First, it considers the failure of the normatively conceived ‘public sector’ (host country governments, multilateral institutions etc.) in tackling the various development challenges associated with ASM. According to the literature detailed below, this has been largely because emphasis has been placed on technical interventions, whilst ASM operators have been concurrently marginalized from policy design.

Secondly, responding to pressures from civil society, mining companies (often deterministically referred to as ‘industry’) have emerged as regulators by enacting an
increasing number of voluntary initiatives, rhetorically supported by commitments to CSR and social development provisions. Most notably, these efforts towards ‘socially responsible’ forms of mineral certification have seen a focus on providing reassurance and more favourable conditions for potential investors. The final part of this section highlights the emergence of an increasingly transnational civil society as an effective motor of governance for gold mining. This includes a number of initiatives that have focused on mitigating the negative impacts of both large-scale and, now increasingly, artisanal and small-scale mining. The latter focus is then analysed through the designs of the Fairtrade network that have enabled ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’ certifiable gold, made unique by its focus on small-scale producers. It reviews critically the formative literature from the Fairtrade network itself, including a now operationalized protocol and the associated required standards for potential ASM gold producers. Being a contemporaneous movement, there is a distinct lack of academic research on the specifics of the movement’s reform prescriptions, and so areas for future research (taken up initially by this thesis) are elucidated.

The third section of this chapter emphasizes, as its starting point, the complex arrangement of the reform attempts, while foregrounding the myriad origins and potential future trajectories of Fairtrade as being representative of the ‘newest’ form of governance in the mining sector in Africa. By consolidating the existing literature, it analyses the extent to which Fairtrade can be considered an alternative economic model opposed to the dominant narrative and political reality of neoliberalism. Evaluating competing narratives that have seen Fairtrade vacillate between being internal and external to the market, it reviews the successes of Fairtrade with respect to agricultural commodities before the subsequent analysis of its limitations and future challenges that it faces. It is concluded that the increasingly transnational dynamism of Fairtrade’s networks should be considered not only a challenge to states that have seen many of their traditional development functions being eroded — becoming, in effect, ‘nongovernmental’ (Ferguson 2006: 39) — but also to current and future research enquiries into the study of governance of mineral resources in Africa. Indeed, the complex triptych of state, business and civil society that determines the current understanding of mineral governance is an ever more fluid one. Consequently, boundaries between these three actors are progressively becoming more blurred both internally and at the boundaries of their interaction. An understanding of the background for this project and for future research in this area are of crucial importance
in determining the assessment of ‘success’ and ‘failure’ in the alleviation of poverty in ASM.

2.2 Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Sub-Saharan Africa

2.2.1 Gold Mining in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Resource Curse?

In order to contextualize appropriately the ASM sector, it is important to understand the theoretical debates that frame the socio-economic machinations of the broader practice of mineral extraction. To this end, a useful starting point is to examine the ‘resource curse’. There is a multifarious and widely researched literature that examines the positive correlative relationship between high levels of mineral endowment on the one hand, and sustained positive levels of economic growth on the other. Davis and Tilton’s (2005) dichotomy that splits the two schools of thought regarding mineral endowment into the ‘conventional’ and ‘alternative’ views is instructive for framing the debate. They characterize the normative view in terms of the neo-classical economic imperative that imagines the conversion of ‘mineral resources into an output that can be directly consumed or converted into another form of capital that raises future output in other sectors’ (Davis and Tilton 2005: 235). Proponents of this ‘conventional’ standpoint (e.g. Wright and Czelusta 2004) assert the sovereignty of market forces when economic growth is disappointing and rather blame failure on the inadequacy of governance systems in host country governments. This view is also supported by the World Bank, which contends that countries in Africa that are rich in natural resources can, with the appropriate political infrastructure, ensure economic growth (de Ferranti et al. 2002).

However, the benefits accrued from gold mining in the region have often failed to translate into improved livelihoods for all stakeholders affected by its presence. While record profits continue to be recorded by LSM companies, certain critics, characterized as representing ‘the alternative view’, state that mining ‘should be discouraged’ (Davis and Tilton 2005: 233) owing to the noticeably slow rates of growth. These critics suggest that the greater the dependence on minerals for economic development, the slower the growth rate (Sachs and Warner 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001).

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6 Anglogold Ashanti’s profits in 2009 were recorded at over $3.9 billion (Anglo American 2009) and BHP Billiton’s rose to $10.5 billion in 2006 (War on Want 2006: 3).
For example, in the cases of both Tanzania and Ghana, despite elevated levels of investment and production in gold mining, many of the contributions to the domestic economies are comparatively poor. In the former, gold contributes a mere 2.7% of GDP, whereas recent calculations suggested an average of 5% in the latter (JMT 2008: 83), a situation that is largely due to the profit repatriation of foreign companies operating in the host countries, which accounts for most of the production. Indeed, the figures presented below in table 2.1 reveal a disappointing level of GDP, figures that perhaps owe most to the rising price of gold.

Table 2.1 Contribution of the Minerals Sector to GDP in Tanzania

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<th>2004</th>
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<td>Contribution of the</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<td>mining sector to GDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>(based on 2001 prices)</td>
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<td>(%)</td>
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<td>Price of exported</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>887</td>
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<td>minerals (US$) (per</td>
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In addition to weak GDP contributions, local communities (and usually the poorest parts of those communities) are the most detrimentally affected and face a number of related problems, which are collectively suggestive of a ‘resource curse’.

However, it should be pointed out at this juncture that the experiences of certain mineral-producing countries in Africa, most notably Botswana, ‘clearly indicate that mineral-dependent development and sustained economic growth are not incompatible’ (Pegg 2006: 377). Further, and more surprisingly, this trend was replicated in certain countries with persistent domestic security problems. For example, Sudan (an enduring bête noire of World Bank policy makers) recorded an 8.1% positive growth rate during the 1990s despite the spectre of an enduringly wretched civil war hanging over its economic performance (Ferguson 2006). The reasons for this are various and complex and will be discussed in more detail in the section below that deals with the experiences of mineral-endowed countries of FDI. Yet, it is still possible to highlight at this point

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7 The comparison made here between Tanzania and Ghana is made in light of both their respective positions as the second and third largest gold producers in sub-Saharan Africa, and the formalized state of their ASM laws.
that the anomalies in the economic growth figures are largely to do with a reconfiguring of political economy in these countries, one where economic spaces are being continually redefined. For example, the emergence of ‘enclave’ style capitalism where mineral deposits are protected by variously private- or state hired armies and profits secured not only participates ‘in the destruction of national economic spaces but also in the construction of ‘global’ ones’ (Ferguson 2006: 13). The overall argument to extract from this changing political economic landscape is that the relationship between the conceptual stalwarts of state, business and civil society are in constant dialogue with one another, working either together or against each other, but always fluid. This renders the determination of economic (and social) performance in mineral-rich countries a complex task, but it is one with which this thesis will in part engage.

There remain further caveats to the acceptance of these results as evidence of a ‘resource curse’. First, the relationship is not necessarily a causative one. Again, the dissonance between elevated levels of mineral endowments on the one hand, and stagnating levels of economic growth on the other has been termed the ‘resource curse’. Such a nomenclature is, however, overly deterministic since it focuses too heavily on the economic relationship. There exists a diverse and well-established literature on the different factors that determine a country’s various relationships with natural resources, one that considers — in addition to economic factors — the social, political and environmental impacts of mining (Stevens 2003).\(^8\) Evoking Stevens (2003), the resource curse is understood here as a means of ‘evaluating the nature of the [resource] impact’ rather than as an overly generalized explanation of relations between mineral producing countries and their rates of economic growth (p. 1).

The resource curse literature tends to focus on impacts at the macro-economic level, placing familiar (neoliberal) emphasis on the extent to which countries achieve economic growth and full employment. Other poverty indicators at the micro-level are often marginalized and this is of crucial importance when locating the dynamics of ASM in the broader picture. Indeed, while ASM provides employment (in one form or another) for around thirteen million people worldwide (Jennings 1999), as well as providing a valuable source of foreign exchange for host country governments (Hilson 2008), it also has significant and negative impacts on the environment (mercury

\(^8\) For an excellent and comprehensive literature review of resource impact, see Stevens (2003). The review presented here is necessarily brief in comparison and is focused more specifically upon the countries featured in the case studies, namely Ghana and Tanzania.
contamination and its associated effects), society (prevalence of drugs, prostitution and HIV/AIDS) and human health (mine site deaths and injury, conflict with large companies).

However, even by conceptualizing the impact of resources on factors other than economic relations alone, much of the literature tends to exclude and/or to oversimplify the political dynamics of mineral-endowed countries. This literature is based largely on empirical examples of company-owned enclaves that feature *inter alia* incidences of the hire of private armies, profit ‘repatriation’ to shareholders and investors of the company, and marginal gains being realized by the host governments themselves. The literature does not tend to engage sufficiently with its theoretical understanding of global political economy, one that is more complex than simple ‘flows’ of capital from state to private company. Rather, as Ferguson argues, resources are connected in a ‘point to point’ fashion, and while capital ‘spans the globe’ it does not ‘cover it’ (Ferguson 2006: 14). Resources, or rather the economic value derived from resources, bound over vast territories from point to point in vast transnational networks, rarely touching those who live in those same territories. The networks that connect these resources are multifarious and complex, constituted concurrently by various actors in the realms of state, private sector or civil society.

The politics that emerges to explain this more intricate dynamic is one that is ‘not captured in the old frameworks of nationalism and development’ (Ferguson 2006: 23). Rather, there is a need to include the politics of ‘international civil society’ or ‘claims of transnational moral accountability’ (such as those propounded by Fairtrade networks, or the social development prescriptions of mining companies) into future debates over governance of the mining sector (after Ferguson 2006: 23). It is not so much the continued marginalization of ‘Africa’ from global political economy, but rather a re-configuring of it, one where ‘the same processes that produce exclusion, marginalization, and abjection are also producing new forms of non-national economic spaces [e.g. enclaves] [and] new forms of government by NGO and transnational networks’ (Ferguson 2006: 14). In short, understanding the relationship between resources and ‘development’ must be underscored by this newly re-configured politics in order to move academic conceptions of poverty forward.

2.2.2 Structural Adjustment, Foreign Investment and the Proliferation of ASM
The trope of Africa as a target for investors and direct foreign investment (FDI) has traditionally been imbued with negative rhetoric marked by ‘weak’ or ‘poorly consolidated’ states (Ferguson 2006: 8). Such discursive turns, often given as the reasons behind poor economic performance in mineral-rich countries and found throughout the ‘resource curse’ literature, have also served to have political effects such that investors have been deterred from risking capital in ‘insecure’ or ‘corrupt’ countries. Following the now notorious Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s, the repeated urges from multilateral institutions for liberalized mineral sectors in Africa to attract FDI and revitalize stagnant economies have been predicated on the call for ‘strong governance’ and ‘lower corruption’, being the mirror of the normative discourse outlined above. Alongside an increase in economic efficiency, a large part of the World Bank’s rationale for the adoption of the SAPs (and indeed the subsequent PRSPs) rests on the elimination of ‘red tape and excess bureaucracy, and removing opportunities for corruption’ (Mining Watch 2001: 2).

The SAP reforms propounded by the World Bank are congruent with their core belief that ‘extractive industries can contribute to poverty reduction’ (Pegg 2006: 379). Designed to encourage the privatization of parastatal enterprises and the ‘opening up of markets to direct foreign investment [DFI] and decreasing controls over the actions of foreign capital’ (Haselip and Hilson 2005: 87), the subsequent transfer of mining property rights to the private sector would, so the Bank has argued, generate a ‘trickle down’ effect that would see the increased revenues reaching the poorest sections of affected communities. The International Financial Institutions persuaded the governments of developing countries that the development of mineral resources creates ‘innumerable socioeconomic benefits in the form of fees, employment, taxation and infrastructure’ (Haselip and Hilson 2005: 89). Currently, the encouraging stance of host country governments towards FDI stands in stark contrast to their attitudes in the 1970s and 1980s when ‘development of these non-renewable national assets by foreign companies was viewed by many third-world countries with suspicion’ (Morgan 2002: 165).

These prescriptions have, it should be noted, been successful in terms of creating a more favourable investment climate for foreign mining MNCs and when DFI ‘has come to Africa in recent years, it has been overwhelmingly in the area of mineral-resource extraction’ (Ferguson 2006: 35, emphasis in original). Indeed, the last two decades have witnessed a surge in global investment in mining described, not
hyperbolically, as a ‘bonanza’ (Bridge 2004). As part of this change, the large-scale mining sector in sub-Saharan Africa has seen the continuing emergence of foreign-owned gold mining companies that have sought to take advantage of the favourable investment climate.

On a continental scale, there has been a shift away from ‘traditional targets’ of mining investment (North America and Australasia) and towards South America and Africa, the latter of which increased its global share of mining investment from 12% in 1990 to 28% in 2001 (Bridge 2004: 411). As Bridge (2004) explains, although the FDI being directed at the traditional ‘developed’ county targets of North America and Australasia ‘may have declined in relative terms during the boom’ in the 1990s, ‘absolute flows to these regions remained flat’ when compared with those towards the newly liberalized economies of ‘developing’ countries such as Tanzania (p. 417). It is not so much that investment directed towards the historically robust (or ‘sticky’) targets is being replaced by new investment aimed at African countries; it is rather a reflection of how ‘new investment is preferentially targeted toward newly liberalizing economies during boom periods’ (Bridge 2004: 417). Figure 2.1 below shows that, although ‘global copper investment was split approximately 50:50 between the two classes at the beginning of the 1990s, its current distribution is closer to 75:25 in favor of developing economies’ (Bridge 2004: 417).
However, FDI in mineral-endowed countries has not taken place in a predictable manner, neither with regards to developmental results it has generated nor in terms of the geographical locations it has targeted. Indeed, Ferguson (2006) suggests an enduring historical dichotomy between two distinct modes of foreign direct investment: ‘socially thick’ and ‘socially thin’ (p. 36). ‘Socially thick’ investment is that which has a developmental presence for the surrounding communities in the area of operation. It is a type of investment that involves ‘not only extraction, but also a broader long-term social project’ (*ibid*). A paragon of this mode of FDI are the vast ‘company towns’ found in Zambia, where ‘nearly 100,000 workers’ lived with access to a gamut of social infrastructure such as ‘company-provided housing, schools, and hospitals [...] recreational amenities, and domestic-education programs’ (Ferguson 2005: 379). Despite this, such socially thick investments, exemplified by a ‘process of building infrastructure at sites’, are harbingers of disruption to ‘rural life, often to the detriment of an array of subsistence activities, including fishing, farming, forestry and artisanal mining’ (Haselip and Hilson 2005: 95).

The contrasting mode of FDI, ‘socially thin’ investment, is characterized by a far greater emphasis on technologically advanced physical capital (machinery) and less on human employment creation, and ‘ever less on wider societal investments’
It is this model that dominates the current landscape in the established era of privatized, capital-intensive mine investment in Africa. In Zambia, for example, despite a boom in both the production of copper by volume (an increase from 459,324 tonnes in 2005 to a projected 600,000 tonnes in 2007) and in contributions to GDP (up from 6.2% in 2000 to 11.8% in 2005), critics still maintain that economic gains benefit investors and members of the elite, not the affected communities. In short, this view holds that, in spite of the ‘new’ wave of ‘strategic philanthropy’ from mining corporations (Barnes 2005), increases in mining FDI are not translating into development success.

Related to the concept of ‘social thinness’, there have been necessarily flexible and oftentimes surprising new geographies of investment in mineral-endowed countries in Africa. Indeed, socially thin investment, with its limited concern for societal impacts, can operate under almost any geographical, economic or political conditions. For example, countries such as Angola, DRC and Equatorial Guinea that have the most dubious (in IFI terms) development records, with the least applauded ‘good governance’ records have been ‘among the most successful at attracting Foreign Capital Investment’ (Ferguson 2006: 196, emphasis in original). Citing examples from Angola, Ferguson argues that socially thin FDI has become increasingly oil-like as the military protected enclaves have come to resemble off-shore oil wells where constant surveillance protects the securing of profits that may never touch host country territories, while food and supplies are imported from overseas (Blakeley et al. 2003). These ‘new spatializations of order and disorder’ are, he continues, an increasingly reproduced means of FDI in a neoliberal Africa (Ferguson 2006: 196). The extent to which this holds true elsewhere in Africa in light of the rhetorical reversion of mining companies to socially ‘thicker’, community-focused CSR becomes, then, a fertile ground for future research.

Alongside the proliferation of new direct foreign investment, ASM has concurrently been associated with a variety of economic, social and environmental development challenges. Though practiced worldwide, it is estimated to be carried out by nine million people in sub-Saharan Africa (Hayes 2008) of which Tanzania has over 300,000 ASM operators operating either through formal or (more commonly) informal channels (Jonsson and Bryceson 2009), the proliferation is, to a large extent, a product of the investment climate itself whose facilitation was ‘supposed to open up new trade opportunities for developing countries’ (Giovannucci and Ponte 2005:285). Further, the increased presence of mining MNCs has led to increased levels of conflict over land
rights with ASM operators (Bebbington et al. 2008), while at the same time bringing into sharp relief the unique development challenges faced by artisanal and small-scale miners.

Multilateral institutions have approached the problems of ASM (reviewed below) largely as an afterthought to the initial marketization of the large-scale mining sector. The ASM-specific regulations set up to facilitate the requisite ‘simple, clear frameworks’ at the Bank’s behest were piecemeal and came largely after privatization measures had been imposed. Such an ad hoc regulatory process fails to take into account a more nuanced picture of the different dimensions associated with ASM. These measures, in reconfiguring national mining laws, have produced unintended consequences that have further embedded informal ASM practices into the realities of mineral-producing countries. For example, Ghana (whose Minerals and Mining Law PNDCL 153 (Law 153) was heralded as a model for other sub-Saharan African countries to follow), has created a more conducive investment climate for ‘[foreign owned] corporations to take control of resources without having to negotiate with the affected communities’ (Mining Watch 2001: 2). For example, Tanzania’s newly implemented mining act of 2010 attempted to address some of the issues found in its original 1997 act with regards to the delineation of ASM. However, as Lange (2011) has argued, ‘it remains to be seen whether the 2010 mining act will make a difference, or whether we will still find that people have legal rights but no justice in the rapidly expanding mining areas of Tanzania’ (Lange 2011: 252). Moreover, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), though required of mining MNCs prior to their being granted a mining concession, are conducted and evaluated by the company itself, rendering the derived results insufficiently transparent and accountable (ironically, one of the perceived problems that the SAPs sought to eliminate).

Much of the literature shows how it is the communities themselves that suffer as piecemeal ad hoc registration legislation is hurried through that may be inappropriate to local conditions (Hilson and Nyame 2006; Jonsson and Fold 2011). The international mining NGO Mining Watch sums up the problem:

The requirement for small-scale ‘galamsey’ miners in Ghana to register their properties has had the effect of excluding them, as many do not have the money or education to pursue registration, while others are forced to work for a middle-man who registers the concessions on their behalf. (Mining Watch 2001: 2)
These barriers to registration have led to the emergence of a largely informal ASM sector, an estimated 95–99% of whose participants operate illegally. In this way, the widespread illegality of ASM found across parts of Africa reinforces the poverty-related challenges associated with its activities. The specific problems that it faces are elucidated below.

2.2.3 ASM and its Challenges

Contradistinct to large-scale mining, ASM is a poverty-driven activity (Barry 1996). There is an estimated thirteen million people worldwide engaged in ASM and often operating illegally, receiving below market prices for their gold, using elevated levels of mercury to amalgamate their ores and working in dangerous conditions. The precise ways in which poverty is manifested through ASM activities are varied, and although the literature highlights this diversity, there is a putative conclusion that the responses from the international donors and policy makers ‘need to use funds more constructively’ in order to combat their prevalence (Hilson 2007: 238). To further the idea expressed in chapter one, across mineral-endowed countries in sub-Saharan Africa, ASM is perceived to be a poverty-driven activity that is self-perpetuating whose participants are trapped in a poverty cycle that is, in turn, being furthered by mining sector reforms (Noetstaller 1996). Gilman adapts Noetstaller’s (1996) ‘poverty cycle’ thesis and locates the debate within a sustainable livelihoods conceptual framework, positing how ‘large numbers of miners chasing limited resources’ are restrained by ‘low incomes and a lack of investment opportunities’ (Gilman 1999). He continues to assert that this leads to a resultant dependence on ‘inadequate technology’ that causes human and environmental health degradation, low productive output and, most significantly (in terms of the model), low levels of income (ibid).

Though the poverty cycle continues to be a widely cited and putative model for academics analysing the poverty dynamics of ASM, it does remain sufficiently broadly articulated for there to be a continuing need for more refined analyses. In this way the identification of more specific agents of poverty within this cycle remains a pressing engagement for researchers working in this area. The major exception to this analytical lacuna has been the rigorous attention forwarded to the understanding of mercury and to
a lesser extent to conflict between large and small-scale miners, and their part in ASM-related poverty.

2.2.3.1 Mercury

Separate to arsenic and other dangerous by-products of large-scale mining (Bech et al. 1997), ASM has an inextricable association with high levels of damaging mercury-emissions. The deleterious effects of mercury in general scientific discourses have long been recognized both with regards to human health and to the environmental biota, including soil composition and aquatic environments. For example, mercury has been shown to negatively impact on human and environmental health through myriad cases worldwide in its different forms, including (but not restricted to) Minamata disease, organic mercury poisoning, methylmercury (the most dangerous and relevant to discussions related to ASM) and dimethylmercury (Gochfield 2003).

Its widespread, largely unregulated, usage in ASM has serious, sometimes ‘invisible’ effects on miners that have led some observers to brand it a ‘chemical time bomb’ (Vieira 2006: 454). In mineral-endowed countries in sub-Saharan Africa, mercury-related problems are particularly pertinent in ASM gold communities extending its impacts to lithospheres, hydrospheres and atmospheres (Aryee et al. 2003: 135). Critics have shown how mercury used to process the gold ore in ASM practices has repeated consequences for miners and their communities. Indeed, high concentrations have been found in rivers, sediment and their associated wildlife, including fish (Ramirez Requelme et al. 2003). That fish are affected by mercury exposure is particularly significant as it forms an important part of diets for those in the surrounding areas (Gammons et al. 2006).

There remains a continuing problem with the handling and disposal of mercury used to amalgamate gold. Studies have shown that nearly all mercury (91%) is handled without gloves and that some miners have even reportedly been seen ‘sucking out additional mercury’ from the cloth they use to capture excess mercury during the amalgamation process (Tschakert and Singha 2007: 1308). The same analyses show how 98% of mercury amalgam is ‘typically heated in open air’ (Tschakert and Singha 2007: 1309).
2.2.3.2 Conflict

As FDI proliferates into sub-Saharan Africa, artisanal miners are increasingly operating on mining concessions granted to mining MNCs. This trend can be witnessed on a global scale. For example, Bebbington et al. (2008) have shown how, in the Andes, the competing territorial claims between the two factions have led to a ‘remarkable surge in social mobilization and conflict’ (p. 3). On the one hand, ‘in the eyes of many large mines, small-scale mining is synonymous with illegal mining’ while on the other, small-scale miners contend that they are being denied their ‘rightful access to mineral resources’ (ILO 1999:73). The existence of such significant informalized mining activity impacts upon MNC control of mineral markets in two related ways. First, there may be clashes on the concessions of MNCs, which are framed by their apologists as having ‘no respect for property rights’ (Sinding 2005:250). These clashes have led to a plethora of reports from international NGOs, such as ActionAid and War on Want, concerning human rights abuses that have ‘occurred where the army or police are contracted to protect mineral property’ (War on Want 2006: 9). Secondly, reports that show how ‘[mining] companies have exacerbated conflict in numerous countries around the world’ (War on Want 2006: 9) serve to discourage new FDI in those affected areas. For example, in Ruamgasa (one of the research sites of this thesis) it has been reported how a mining company IAMGOLD acquired control of land in 2006 and imposed a restriction upon exiting ASM operators that prevented the digging of the ground, ‘even latrines’ (Lange 2008). As Lange (2008) reported, the refusal to do this led ‘security guards [to] start filling in artisanal miners’ pits’ with ASM operators still in the mineshafts (p. 20). It is in response to these associations with conflict that companies associate themselves with the industry-wide voluntary initiatives that aim to mitigate the effects of negative press and protect their corporate reputation. These will be examined in more detail below.

2.3 Reforming ASM

This section considers the different policy responses to the multifarious development issues associated with ASM from three differing perspectives. First, it considers the failure of the ‘public sector’ (host country governments, multilateral institutions etc.) in
tackling the various development challenges associated with ASM. Secondly, it analyses the community development initiatives propounded by mining MNCs, including a commitment to CSR programmes. Thirdly, this section highlights the emergence of an increasingly international civil society as a regulator (in its own right) of gold mining. The analysis is manifested through the ARM and FLO network’s design that has enabled ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’ certifiable gold, made unique by its focus on ASM operators.

2.3.1 The Public Sector as Regulator: The Global Support Facility

The policy responses to poverty challenges in ASM from the donor groups, replete with their multifarious projects and rising levels of financial assistance, have failed in their dual aims to discourage ASM’s proliferation and to alleviate poverty in areas where it is considered inevitable. Adopting Hilson’s terminology to describe the myriad origins of donor assistance, the ‘Global Support Facility’ (GSF), composed of the major ‘bilateral agencies [and] multilateral organizations’ (Hilson 2007: 236), has historically been seen as the key motor of governance in responding to these targets. First, based on the assumption that ASM’s existence is inevitable, it has sought to ameliorate the environmental and socio-economic performance within the sector. Secondly, it has targeted resources towards the development of alternative livelihood (AL) strategies that discourage the continuation of ASM. The reformatory response to the attendant environmental, social and economic problems affecting ASM operators and their dependents has been overwhelmingly directed at a technical level, with the emphasis upon (western) expertise undertaken by consultants on short-term contracts. That the GSF has focused ‘most previous efforts to address the challenges confronting artisanal miners and their communities [...] on the technical rather than on the sociocultural poverty aspects of their situation’ (CASM 2005) is predicated on the belief that ‘a trend towards more sophisticated technologies’ (Mutemeri and Petersen 2002: 288) will at once reduce environmental and human health impacts and improve efficiency in the extraction process. As argued elsewhere, with a focus exercised upon the elimination of mercury amalgamation practice and the sustainable stewardship and disposal of tailings, the result has been a widely reported failure to educate, inculcate and facilitate changes to the ongoing working practices of ASM operators.
A common conclusion from the resultant analysis of this failure is that ‘no real solutions are possible unless artisanal miners are given full legal and transferable mining titles to their claims’ (Barry 1996: 1). In short, there needs to be greater levels of formalization across the sector. However, just as the argument that the informal aspects of artisanal mining have been invigorated by the privatization policies of the World Bank seems putatively agreed (Banchirigah 2006), formalization challenges appear destined to endure. Structural barriers exist for ASM operators, such as the high price of a licence, lengthy distances from their place of issue, the highly technical language of the required documents, the difficulty in securing small-scale land tenure in a system that privileges large-scale mining companies and the shortfall of reliable geological information available (Hilson and Maponga 2004; Sinding 2005). The policy failure to redress these issues points to the critique that the GSF has tended to ‘treat small-scale mining as a subset of large-scale, formal mining’ (ILO 1999:61). In ignoring the specificities of the activity, minimal progress has been made towards the meeting of the objectives of the GSF.

The transient nature of ASM operators, in conjunction with the insufficiently researched constitution of ASM communities themselves, compound the problems that the GSF has had in formalizing ASM. Indeed, critics have contended that ‘insufficient knowledge of artisanal mining populations […] and of areas suitable for ASM activities affects the ability of the government to regularize, as well as improve, the organization of this largely informal sector of industry’ (Hilson and Maponga 2004: 22). In short, the technical responses that have been proposed have not failed because of the ‘unavailability of finances for ASM research, support and policy but rather [because of] a need to use funds more constructively’ (Hilson 2007: 238). By way of an extended example, four technically focused initiatives are critically reviewed that have been undertaken in sub-Saharan Africa: a) centralized processing units, based on the ‘success’ of the Shamva unit in Zimbabwe; b) equipment leasing schemes; c) the introduction of mercury retorts to mitigate the effects of harmful mercury released during gold amalgamation; and d) alternative livelihoods programmes designed to deter miners from ASM altogether.9

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9 The following review of the four technical initiatives is based heavily on previously authored work (Childs 2008). This presents a more in depth analysis of the failure of the GSF’s technical reform initiatives.
2.3.1.1 Centralized processing units

Centralized processing units, which have emerged as a popular technical initiative across sub-Saharan Africa including in Tanzania, have been constructed to provide an alternative to illegal mining and a more efficient (and thus regulated) way of controlling mercury usage through access to more advanced and less environmentally-damaging technology. Such centres have been shaped discursively in positive ways by the GSF inspired by ‘successes’ at, for example, the Shamva centre in Zimbabwe, and have been replicated in ASM communities elsewhere. Heralded as a ‘best practice in small-scale mining’ by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA 2002), incomes of artisanal miners have shown reported increases of up to 30% (Hentschel et al. 2002).

However, a more critical analysis of central processing units such as that at Shamva site questions its efficacy and opens up a broader debate on the reliability of the research methods utilized in determining such initiatives. For example, it has been argued that despite being originally ‘constructed to service approximately 40 local gold miners’, actual demand for ore processing at the Shamva mining centre exceeds ‘500 small-scale operations’ (Hilson 2007: 242). This excess demand has, in turn, created lengthy waiting times of up to six weeks to process ore. This has precipitated a reversion back to mercury usage in the amalgamation process and the attendant environmental and human health costs. Hilson (2007) concludes that better initial research could have helped to determine community-specific needs (without assumptions that there was an a priori ‘demand for these services’) and to avoid some of the resultant problems of excessive demand (in the case of Shamva) or under-utilization (in the case of a replicated centre in Bolgatanga in Ghana) (p. 242).

2.3.1.2 Mercury amalgamation

The environmental and human health effects of mercury exposure have been well-documented and are widely known (GMP 2009, Baluyut 1985). Moreover, the ubiquity of mercury as a by-product of small-scale gold amalgamation has long been recognized as a serious environmental issue (Hinton et al. 2003; Vieira 2006; Hylander and Plath 2006). The persistent trends in mercury usage in ASM are underscored by inappropriate
and ineffectual policy responses aimed at mitigating its problems (Tarras-Wahlberg 2003) and an ongoing oversupply of the chemical itself through (despite a paradoxical move away from mercury in other industries) European Union imports into the African continent (Viera 2006). Consistently accused of a poorly conceptualized notion of mercury usage (Hilson 2006), and despite recognition of its damaging consequences, the precise terms under which GSF-instituted mercury abatement strategies have failed vary considerably.

For example, as a response to the under-utilization of opaque mercury retorts by local miners, largely because of their fears ‘of not being able to see the mining process’, the UN introduced glass replacements for use in Africa and the Philippines (Hilson and Maponga 2004: 29). That an unwanted opaque retort was introduced in the first place was the result of the UN failing to consider ‘the diversity of backgrounds (cultural, religious, economic etc), level of knowledge and varied perceptions of individuals in ASM communities’ (Hinton et al. 2003: 102). To compound the misguided policy yet further, the glass replacement was even more poorly received by local miners because of the design’s ‘low capacity, high cost, and fragility’ (Hilson and Maponga 2004: 29). The failure of these schemes was a commonly heard part of ASM operators’ narratives during this research and the retorts can be seen to represent something of a paragon in a wealth of inappropriately generic technical initiatives that have sidestepped the need to engage on a site-specific basis.

It has been suggested that alongside the need to be ‘community specific’, any technical initiatives that aims to augment ‘clean’ artisanal mining and to be accepted by target ASM communities should satisfy certain criteria (Hinton et al. 2003: 100). First, they should be ‘economically beneficial’ where the equipment is both inexpensive to purchase and to operate, and should also be capable of generating significant revenues (ibid). This notion is congruous with the dominant discourse of ASM operators as ‘opportunistic’ or ‘mercenary’, and belies local contexts that may be far more nuanced and complex. As Andrews-Speed et al. posit, ‘central government may be able to argue cogently that the aggregate costs incurred by small-scale mining far outweigh the benefits at a national scale; but the balance of costs and benefits at the local level may

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10 Mercury retorts are a basic means of capturing mercury in the process of gold amalgamation. It captures the released toxic vapour in a crucible which then condenses back into a liquid form. This prevents the inhalation of the dangerous fumes and means that the mercury can be recycled and reused.
be quite different’ (2002: 48). A second criterion is for technical initiatives to be ‘simple’ — in other words, technology should be easy to use and readily available (Hinton et al. 2003: 100). However, new technologies need to be developed in collaboration with mining communities where cognisance of community dynamics is privileged over the routinized Participatory Rural Assessments and Environmental Impact Assessments that often form the *modus operandi* of the GSF technical design and policy processes.

### 2.3.1.3 Equipment leasing schemes

Equipment leasing schemes are another technical initiative that has become increasingly popular in the last few years. As noted in a recently published UNECA report in Tarkwa (a mining locality in the Western Region of Ghana), ‘equipment is made available on a cash sale or loan basis [to miners], and is manufactured in collaboration with local fabricators’ (UNECA 2002: 29). Elsewhere, the Ghanaian Government has set up a revolving fund and lent 223 million cedis (£90 million) to ASM operators in Talensi-Nabdam District in the Upper East Region ‘aimed at increasing the production of gold and diamond’ (Ghana Districts 2007). Whilst such schemes do give miners rare access to credit, the quality of the equipment loaned is often substandard or inappropriate for the tasks required. Yakubu (2003) expounds further that the leased tools were ‘too small for that duty [...] soon gave way […] and the miners, after working for several days, reneged on payment, claiming that the pumps broke down’ (p. 5). Hilson’s critique of the GSF expands on this point by adding that the aforementioned ‘local fabricators’ are ‘Chinese merchants, who now provide an assortment of poorly-designed ASM equipment, ranging from generators to pumps, but with no guarantees or warranties’ (Hilson 2007: 243-244). There were similar stories that emanated from the life histories of ASM operators during this research regarding the sub-standard quality of mining equipment loaned by Lebanese traders. In short, despite improved access to credit for ASM operators, equipment schemes remain beset by problems which, though not insurmountable, are redolent of a broader failure by the GSF in this area.
The alternative livelihoods programmes propounded by policy makers have emerged with the aim of encouraging moves away from mining activity altogether; yet, these have also been unsuccessful. Critics have argued that poorly researched initiatives that have failed to engage sufficiently with grassroots communities can actually serve to deepen the poverty cycle further rather than alleviating it (Hinton et al. 2003, Banchirigah 2006). Certainly, such projects have failed to reduce the numbers participating in ASM and there is a suspicion that, while they may appear fashionable, ‘the reality is that in most cases, the profits potentially earned from activities such as snail rearing, batik and soap making within the localities in which they are being promoted are significantly less than those that could be earned in artisanal mining’ (Hilson 2007: 245-246). ASM is commonly argued to be a higher source of potential income than the alternatives promoted by international donor agencies (Banchirigah 2008; Jønsson and Bryceson 2009; Kitula 2006).

The proclamations of success derived from moves towards alternative livelihoods projects away from ASM have usually originated from LSM companies (AngloGold Ashanti 2006) or government. Intended to ‘augment income-generating activities for the disadvantaged […] and boost community resilience and participation’, these initiatives are often aimed towards the acquisition of agricultural skills such as animal husbandry and livestock training (AngloGold Ashanti 2006). There may, however, remain dissonance between the aims of the predominantly agricultural initiatives and the aspirations of diverse ASM communities with differing levels of literacy. Even allowing for a more nuanced understanding of ASM communities (and hence better targeted alternative livelihoods projects), the number of people engaged in ASM activity is increasing (Nyame 2002). As a result of this proliferation, the search for new policies to manage better ASM activity continues, manifested most recently by the emergence of the Fairtrade and Fairmined gold initiative under study in this thesis.
2.3.2 The Private Sector as Regulator: Corporate Social Responsibility

Against the background of failed public sector reform, there has been a marked shift towards the private sector as regulator and respondent to the challenges of development. In response to consumer and NGO pressure, mining MNCs have, as an alternative to government-led regulation, established voluntary schemes and accompanying CSR criteria that purport to engage with the specific development issues that they impact upon. Originating under the auspices of the Global Mining Initiative (GMI) — a coalition of the world’s largest mining companies that includes AngloGold Ashanti (the large-scale project near to this project’s research sites) — the industry launched the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) project, which later transmuted into the International Council of Mining and Metals (ICMM). These ‘multi-stakeholder’ approaches have been heralded by their apologists as effective ways of both engaging with the specific demands of ‘sustainable development’ challenges and ‘better representing the industry to its critics’ (Whitmore 2006: 310). However, their efficacy has been criticized on the basis that they are predominantly only useful as a means of grounding the reputations of firms rather than impacting coherently on development challenges (Jenkins 2002, Sciavi and Solomon 2007), as only marginal percentages of mining MNCs’ operating budgets (typically 0.5% to 4%) are spent on community development projects (ibid).

Alongside, and often constituted by, these broad industry-wide codes of conduct, individual LSM firms have moved to develop their own CSR packages that purport to work more closely with affected communities, repeatedly asserting their improved ‘sustainability’. Often premised on a ‘stakeholder engagement process’ of working directly with ‘all parties concerned by a project’, the companies promote how communities are being continually told of companies’ plans and invited to modify them’ (Whitmore 2006: 313). However, the development effects of these ‘stakeholder-led’ consultations are widely critiqued as giving too little power to the stakeholders at the community level. Rather than say providing local residents of the area the right to veto a project, they instead ‘give [the company] legitimacy and pose its demands of somebody else’s land as reasonable’ (Whitmore 2006: 313).

Indeed, the extent to which communities are properly consulted and represented in the decision-making processes is an ongoing challenge for companies aiming to
‘green wash’ their activities. Their discourse of ‘sustainable development’ and ‘stakeholder engagement’ is heavily imbued with the privileging of a participatory research agenda. However, as elucidated more fully in chapter 3, such rhetoric, through its reliance on the social norms of ‘community’, ‘organization’ and ‘stakeholder’, washes over complex differences essential to understanding the dynamics of poverty in ASM. Representing ‘community’, for example, as a singular, static and largely homogenized body in need of improvement and empowerment, ignores ‘interests and needs based on, for example, age, class, caste, ethnicity, religion and gender’ (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 6). It also ignores the social mobility (or otherwise) experienced by the key ‘stakeholders’ within that ‘community’. Drawing on the researcher’s previous experience, in a meeting with a farmer and his (heavily pregnant) wife operating on an LSM concession in Ghana, they explained how the mining company had indeed held initial meetings to determine the hopes and needs of the people affected by their proposed mine construction. However, as the male farmer explained, neither he nor his wife had been able to attend due to working commitments. Instead, they had been represented by their cousin who lived four hours away and who was unable to express their (the ‘stakeholders’) desires most fully. It highlighted just one of the many ways in which CSR packages often fail to address sufficiently the needs of people affected by LSM. The ASM operators taking part in this study commonly asserted this theme of marginalization and, sometimes, dislocation in Tanzania.

CSR is the latest manifestation of what certain critics have termed ‘corporate philanthropy’ (Porter and Kramer 2002), a specific response to civil society pressures for more ethically sound business practice. The strong capitalist logic that runs throughout companies’ CSR directives promise better community-level development initiatives, not to address the development challenges that the company itself has generated, but rather to ‘create value’ for their product (in this case gold) and to give the company a ‘competitive advantage’ over other companies in the sector (Zisch 2006). CSR becomes, therefore, a way of differentiating one company’s gold from that of its competitors. As such, it is a useful marketing tool that makes it attractive for potential investors looking to create more ethical investment portfolios and helps, according to the managing director of one large gold firm, to ‘decrease social resistance to new projects’ (Zisch 2006). In short, it can be argued that Newmont (and other LSM

11 This was part of a two week scoping exercise to Ghana in 2007 where the intention was to observe ASM and understand its dynamics with specific regard to West Africa.
companies) are less focused on the ‘social responsibility’ aspect of CSR than on the ‘profit maximizing’ aspect that remains at the heart of its neoclassical economic logic.

As charitable contributions from companies have fallen in the last fifteen years (down 50% as a percentage of profits), companies caught between the competing pressures from investors (for profit maximization) and social activists (for increased CSR) have responded by targeting their philanthropy more ‘strategically’ (Porter and Kramer 2002: 57). In practice, this means it is used as ‘a form of public relations or advertising, promoting a company’s image or brand through cause-related marketing or other high profile sponsorship’ where, in certain instances, the amount of money spent on a particular support initiative is actually surpassed by the amount spent on advertising the initiative (Porter and Kramer 2002: 57).

Following this contention, Porter and Kramer have developed their argument by emphasising the notion of ‘shared value’ between both companies and the societies in which they operate (Porter and Kramer 2006, Porter and Kramer 2011). This view holds that business should go beyond mere public relations and ‘start thinking in terms of “corporate social integration”’ (Porter and Kramer 2006: 57). Moreover, based on the recognition that it is ‘societal needs, not just conventional economic needs, that define markets (Porter and Kramer 2011: 2), they present a typography of ‘shared value’ with three strands, each of which has some relevance to the study of Fairtrade gold. Firstly creating ‘shared value’ through the ‘reconception of products and markets’ clearly resonates with gold’s position as a new Fairtrade product (ibid.). Secondly, ‘shared value’ is generated when ‘productivity in the value chain is redefined’ to include notions of environmental stewardship (ibid.), which FT/FM gold proposes. Finally, under this typography, companies need to ‘enable local cluster development’ which Fairtrade, with its commitment to democratic structures clearly echoes. In short, this recent scholarship offers a theoretical framework with which to approach the study of Fairtrade gold.

Despite an increase in CSR from mining companies, much work remains to overcome the scepticism that they fail to address contemporary development challenges. Indeed, major distributors such as Walmart (in conjunction with major mining companies such as Rio Tinto and Newmont) are now offering a new product line in jewellery entitled ‘Love, Earth’ that is ‘made with materials from sources that are committed to protecting the environment’ (CS 2010). The launching of a high profile initiative such as this is rhetorically strong, but substantively hollow and fails to engage
with the specific development challenges associated with large-scale mining. Moreover, the signification of green washing that pervades mining company CSR is a deliberate response to the critique of civil society, and a necessary discourse that is co-produced with its detractors. As Hartwick (1998) hypothesizes ‘in addition to function and symbol, signification at the consumption end necessarily involves hiding, through image-making and myth, the conditions prevailing along the interlinked spatial lines of connection of commodity chains, especially conditions of production’ (p. 427). This has led to an ongoing discordance between expectations generated by a global civil society on the one hand and by local development challenges and opportunities on the other (Hamann 2007). CSR directives from mining corporations are the specific responses to civil society pressures, produced through dialogue with the ‘global’ community and targeted precisely at the points at which they are most pressurized. This is not to say, of course, that they are necessarily any more effective at promoting socially thick development. Indeed, as Blowfield (2005) contends poverty reduction has rarely been a meaningful part of the CSR agenda. Rather, companies attend to their primary motive — the protection of their extractable resources (and with it, their profit margins) — most efficiently. In short, it is within a ‘context for rivalry’ that CSR initiatives can be described at their most ‘strategic’ (Porter and Kramer 2002: 60). LSM companies compete with one another through CSR in order to satisfy demands made by shareholders and civil society alike, by driving out the competition (‘rivalry’) of other companies (ibid).

Asserting another dimension to CSR, Barnes (2005) identifies the geostrategic expedience of ‘Africa’ to the US on account of the ‘special set of challenges’ that it presents (securing an uninterrupted oil supply and mitigating the ‘threat of terror’) (p. 1). Along with the pillars of an increased military presence on the continent and a poorly reported media output, the ‘strategic philanthropy’ of community development initiatives is emphasized as a key policy response of mining companies seeking to create a more fertile ground for business. The community development policies that mining companies invoke also serve to reconfigure their relationship with the affected communities that they aim to help. As Barnes (2005) explains, ‘by setting themselves up as donors in the development sector, and by inserting themselves into civil society, corporations place recipients in a position of dependence in which responsibility for performance is reversed and in which the local public becomes accountable to them’ (p. 14). In this way, the business rhetoric of ‘participation and partnership’ may function,
conceptually speaking, ‘as political slogans to hide other motives’ (Erikkson–Baaz 2005: 7).

CSR community development projects are derived from an internal negotiation between readily achievable, but developmentally hollow initiatives on the one hand and rigorously researched, developmentally sound initiatives that are too complex (or costly) to achieve on the other. As Jenkins (2002) contends,

adoption a very strong code which the company cannot meet would be totally counterproductive, leading to intensified external criticism, further calls for regulation and demoralized staff. Feasibility of compliance will involve an element of being able to meet conditions without entailing excessive cost. On the other hand, the code must also be externally credible if it is to protect the company’s reputation and not be seen purely as a PR exercise. (Jenkins 2002: 13–14)

Certain critics have tentatively mooted ways forward in the role that business could play in responding to the development challenges that arise from mining. Ellis (2008), for example, contends that businesses should move away from CSR packages that ‘just say the right things’ and instead focus on ways in which their capitalist logic can be satisfied while simultaneously promoting sustainable development. The challenge, she maintains, is ‘to create mechanisms that reward businesses financially for increasing their contribution to development’ (ibid). One solution that has been suggested is that companies can utilize their large profit margins to create global networks constituted by a multi-stakeholder approach. As Barnes (2005) further explains,

one important positive response is that companies are leveraging funds and creating huge community development partnerships with U.N. organizations, other international bodies, governments, and globally based NGOs. Among other benefits, these leveraged partnerships can help dilute the patron–client relationships that permeate community development projects run by single donors such as corporations. (Barnes 2005: 14)

It is important however to remain cognisant of the challenges that the CSR agenda faces not least because there is a pressing need to for ‘scholars to regain the initiative in the CSR-development nexus debate’ and to ‘identify and understand circumstances under which the developmental impacts of CSR are most likely to occur’ (Idemudia 2011: 14).
It is against this background that companies such as APM emerge as a source of enquiry for this thesis. It simultaneously works within a logic of profit maximization, but does so at the same time as it seeks support from the Fairtrade network. Moreover, regardless of whether the support is forthcoming or not from ARM, it still maintains a rhetorical commitment to ‘Fair Trade’ through its FTGCs. The extent to which it can successfully engage with community development projects where both the public and private sectors have failed is precisely the reason for its selection as a case study. Understanding the ways in which CSR works in the mining sector in Tanzania can provide lessons for understanding the field more generally across Africa regarding the emergence of Fair Trade gold (Knorriga and Helmsing 2008).

2.3.3 Civil Society as Regulator: Fairtrade Gold and the Multi-Stakeholder Approach

Following a critical review of how the GSF and private sector has intervened, the emergence of Fairtrade as a means of regulating ASM is part of the current shift in emphasis towards a multi-stakeholder approach to natural resource governance more generally. Alongside myriad ‘ethical’ initiatives and increased media exposure of the mining industry’s problems, projects such as Oxfam’s ‘No Dirty Gold’ campaign, The International Council on Minerals and Metals’ (ICMM) Mining Certification Evaluation Project (though focused on LSM) and the high profile nature of the Diamond Development Initiative exist to tackle the issues surrounding large-scale mining. Conversely, Fairtrade and Fairmined gold is marketed as a potential solution to the specific problems involved in ASM and is unique in the sense that it attempts to regulate mining on an artisanal and small scale. Though incipient, the multi-stakeholder group that facilitates Fairtrade gold, the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM), in collaboration with the Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO), has drafted a now operational protocol that has set a dual Fairtrade/Fairmined label for gold. In this new form of governance in ASM, Fairtrade certification makes the promise of a ‘more formalized, organized and profitable activity’ (ARM 2011b).

The Fairtrade network’s focus on ASM is marked by a desire to address all of the different documented forms of poverty that mark the industry. Indeed, there is as much attention given to an amelioration of health conditions for small-scale miners and a reduction in the environmental impact of their activities as there is towards ensuring a better price for their gold. Invoking collaboration between the FLO and other smaller
Fairtrade actors, ARM — comprised of policymakers, activists and industry researchers — has established certification criteria to serve as a model for a global Fairtrade gold initiative (ARM 2010). Prescribing Fairtrade initiatives similar to those in place for agricultural tropical commodities (most notably, coffee), ARM officers maintain that the standards (following an earlier draft version) is ‘an adaptation of the FLO standards for small producers to the situation of ASM and therefore follow the characteristic Fairtrade grouping of social, economic, labour and environmental development standards’ (ARM 2007: 2).

There remains considerable speculation, however, as to whether the Fairtrade model can or should be applied to ASM. To avoid duplication of the generally-unimpressive results of the majority of community-based support initiatives implemented to date for the alleged benefit of ASM, it is essential that the plans put forward by the proponents of Fairtrade gold are critically appraised. Further with its focus having hitherto been in Latin America, little is known about the working groups being targeted in sub-Saharan Africa and, most importantly, the potential obstacles impeding the launch of such a project. Owing to its contemporaneity, there has been little critical academic enquiry of the reform promises made by the Fairtrade gold network. This thesis addresses this gap through an examination of how the discourse of ‘fairness’ is substantively enacted in Tanzania. However, presented below is a critical review of Fairtrade gold’s intentions, replete with possible challenges that the movement may face.

In economic terms, the central way in which a Fairtrade gold agenda would impact upon the livelihoods of impoverished miners is through guarantees of a better price for their gold. Such thinking is congruous with evidence that suggests that ASM activities would only be improved by an increase in the received price for gold, as it is profitability that ultimately drives workers’ actions (Gibb 2006; Hinton et al. 2003). If this is deemed to be the case by policy makers, especially for those critical of the liberalization of the mining sector, then the Fairtrade ideology may well emerge as offering the most salient solution to ASM’s problems. For these critics, Fairtrade can be said to ‘challenge the traditional neo-liberal view of commercial conventions through a reconsideration of the meaning of “fairness” in commodity prices, market exchanges, and North-south relations’ (Linton et al. 2004:229). It should be noted, however, that the setting of the Fairtrade price itself is problematic. Cognisant, for example, of the volatile nature of gold prices over the last twenty years, ARM concluded in its initial
draft standards document that the ‘fixing of a minimum price is not useful or feasible at this point’ (ARM 2007: 22). Currently, pricing is in line with that set by the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA). This, as it stands, is an imperfect situation, and ARM’s 2007 proposal for ‘further research [to] be undertaken’ (ARM 2007: 22) has yet to be fully solved.

Further caveats exist to the wider adoption of the Fairtrade gold initiative in sub-Saharan Africa that must be critically engaged with in order to avoid the ill-considered policy design associated with the failing technical initiatives outlined above. The first challenge to Fairtrade’s successful implementation lies at the very heart of its ideology. In presenting an ‘alternative’ to existing trade rules, this ideology is premised on connecting the producer and consumer as directly as possible by removing any intermediaries from the supply chain — it assumes that ASM gold can be produced for retail in the global North. However, the gold being produced at artisanal mines, rather than being exported, is often held in-country as it is an important source of foreign exchange for governments (Hilson 2008). This consideration offers a critique of Fairtrade’s applicability to gold mined on an artisanal scale which, though hitherto undeveloped, is of central importance to future research and provides a background to the empirical findings presented in the later chapters of this research.

It has been argued that governments in gold-producing countries in sub-Saharan Africa should not be encouraging a strengthening of trade links with western retailers. Rather, as Hentschel et al. (2002) posit, at a macroeconomic level, gold ‘is more or less a standard “currency” [and therefore] the produced value is equivalent to extra foreign income’ (p. 52). Buffering the foreign exchange reserves of a host country is particularly significant because in many cases, large-scale mining activities appear to be netting host governments minimal financial returns, as well as facilitating questionable levels of development in rural communities (Hilson and Nyame 2006). As Hentschel et al. (2002) expound:

This is particularly the case for artisanal small-scale mining, where no considerations of ‘repatriation of utilities’ of foreign investors are taken into account, as the ‘investors’ are the very own local miners. In this case the value of artisanally produced gold can be considered as a net contribution to foreign income, as freely convertible ‘currency’ is produced with pure local input...[and] the livelihood and wealth of the involved communities, and herewith the wealth of the national economy are beneficiary. (p. 52)
The concern as to whether a western retail market is relevant in achieving fairer trade for gold in the ASM sector does not preclude the fact that sub-Saharan Africa’s artisanal gold miners are receiving fair payments for their gold, are working in safe conditions or are operating in an environmentally sustainable manner. These miners are often represented as receiving below-market payments from licensed buyers (Jonsson 2011). However, the buyers may also provide tools and very basic forms of social security for the miners, meaning that the relationship, though one marked by dependency and poor prices for their product, also has its benefits. This absent understanding from local market relations in the trading of ASM is critically examined in section 5.4.3.

While some research (e.g. Keita 2001; Bougnaphalom 2003) has offered relatively superfluous accounts of how miners ‘are receiving below-market payments from buyers for their gold’ (Hilson 2008: 394), there remains little critical enquiry into why the dependency persists. Some critics suggest that it is the lack of regulation and the poorly-construed support facilities provided by international development organizations (such as the World Bank) for ASM practitioners that forces miners into such ‘dependent’ relationships with buyers (GMP 2009). Though there are undoubtedly flaws with the trading system in place for gold mined on an artisanal scale, it may be the case that buyers provide those miners with services that host governments are currently hesitant to supply (Hilson 2008). The potential for the successful application of a Fairtrade initiative hinges on identifying the reasons for the dependent trading relationships that already exist.

2.4 The Emergence of Fairtrade: Challenges and Future Directions

The final section of this chapter foregrounds the multifarious trajectories that Fairtrade (as a broader movement) has assumed in presenting itself as both a ‘new’ way of configuring economic relations between the global North and South and of ordering the governance of commodities (in this case, gold mined on an artisanal scale in sub-Saharan Africa). Amalgamating the existing literature with a critical eye, it specifically considers whether the Fairtrade movement should be considered an *alternative* to the
dominant paradigm of neoliberalism or merely a part of it, retaining its novelty only in
terms of the ways in which it presents itself rhetorically. Indeed, by evaluating its
historical experiences regarding agricultural commodities and their attending failures
and successes, the future possible directions for Fairtrade seem multifarious. For
example, Fairtrade must contend with critical challenges relating to its relations with
increasingly large retailers and producers, the internal relations between an increasingly
large network of its member NGOs in both the global North and South, and its
uniqueness in ‘the face of the growing number of competing corporate and NGO
standards and certifications’ (Murray and Raynolds 2007: 11). These challenges, central
though they are to this project, are underscored by the need to address a more
philosophical concern; namely, how does Fairtrade conceptualize ‘fairness’? For whom
is Fairtrade gold (and other products) ‘fair’, and what does ‘fair’ mean to both producers
and consumers? Negotiating Fairtrade’s moral purpose and its relationship to the market
is problematized in the context of an increasingly fluid dynamism between state,
business and civil society.

Fairtrade imagined itself historically as challenging ‘the traditional neo-liberal
view of commercial conventions through a reconsideration of the meaning of “fairness”
in commodity prices, market exchanges, and North-south relations’ (Linton et al.
2004:229). Fairtrade gold’s emergence as a means of ameliorating the problems of
ASM has transpired largely with well-documented reference to the successes of parallel
campaigns in other small-scale, producer-directed sectors. For example, it is estimated
that the Fairtrade of agricultural products, (plantation crops such as coffee, tea and
cocoa) generates annual sales between US$400 and US$600 million (Smith and
Barrientos 2005). This is only part of a burgeoning growth that has seen ‘worldwide
consumers spent over 2.3 billion Euros on Fairtrade certified products in 2007
[…representing] a 47% increase on the previous year and [meaning] that over 1.5
million producers and workers in 58 developing countries now benefit from Fairtrade
sales’ (FLO 2008). Originally only pertaining to coffee in Mexico, the number of
commodity groups certified as ‘Fairtrade’ has risen substantially from seven in 1998 to
eighteen in 2004 (Raynolds and Long 2007: 25). The most contemporaneous figures
also highlight the rapid expansion of Fairtrade in sub-Saharan Africa, where ‘certified
production is currently expanding most rapidly, with exports valued at US$ 24 million
in 2004’ (Raynolds and Long 2007: 26). The numbers of Fairtrade-certified produced
groups have also shown vigorous growth patterns, nearly doubling ‘from 78 to 152
between 2004 and 2005’ (Raynolds and Long 2007: 26). The growth has occurred most dynamically not in the more established tea and cocoa markets, but in newly certified products such as ‘fresh and processed fruits, juices and wine’ (Raynolds and Long 2007: 26).

However, the above figures do not include the move towards precious metals and minerals, a development that is likely to enjoy robust growth (at least in the short term). Indeed, while these experiences provide a platform of empirical evidence upon which to base the movement’s further expansion into Fairtrade-certified gold, it should be emphasized that the Fairtrade gold initiative has emerged only recently and betrays a history that did not include precious metals and minerals as part of its ‘alternative’ to the paradigm of neo-liberal market relations. Only fifteen years ago, it was considered a key certification criteria that a commodity should be

traditionally grown in the Third World and of major importance as a source of foreign earnings […] but not […] metals and minerals, because the supply chain is not direct to the final consumer, but the product is consumed only after complex processing. (Barratt Brown 1993: 181)

In this way, Fairtrade/Fairmined gold is a paragon of the Fairtrade movement’s rapid expansion into new markets.

The most widely cited ‘successes’ relate to Fairtrade’s economic performance. However, ARM assumes a broader scope in applying Fairtrade criteria to gold mined on an artisanal and small-scale by adapting its standard setting protocol to that which is characteristic of (Fairtrade) development standards. In this way, its guarantee at its inception to ‘pay a fair price […] reflecting the costs of production and quality of the product plus a margin for investment and development’ supports its original aim to ‘encourage environmentally sustainable production’ (Barratt Brown 1993: 183). Alleviating poverty through ‘sustainable development’ is as well established as the versatility of the terminology itself, and the analysis of Fairtrade’s ‘successes’ and ‘failures’ alludes to this multiplicity. For example, Murray et al. present a typography of benefits that variously affect individual producers, their families, broader communities and the ‘organization’ of Fairtrade networks (Murray et al. 2003). These benefits are said to include the aims that: Individual producers benefit through higher prices that ensure ‘greater economic and social stability’, while advance payments provide them
with ‘greater access to credit’; producers’ families have better access to ‘a diverse range of products’ including education and medical support; affected communities are augmented by an ‘improving natural environment’; while the ‘organizational capacity’ of producers is improved through a model that encourages democracy and accountability (Murray et. al. 2003: 6-11).

2.4.1 The Challenges of Fairtrade

The recent developments in its scope notwithstanding, the Fairtrade network faces unprecedented levels of critique and must engage with a gamut of widely articulated concerns. Raynolds and Murray (2007) frame these challenges coherently by presenting three interrelated debates at the heart of the challenges set before it: the ‘mainstreaming of Fair Trade distribution’; ‘the increasing scale and complexity of Fair Trade production’; and the specific ‘challenges of Fair Trade governance’ (p. 229). This framework is adapted in order to review the literature on the Fairtrade movement’s challenges.

2.4.1.1 The mainstreaming of Fairtrade distribution

The myriad conceptualizations of Fairtrade’s relationship with neoliberalism have fuelled much of the recent debate — either working within the rules of capitalism (‘mainstreaming’) or offering an alternative to them. The ‘mainstreaming’ of Fairtrade products being sold through conventional large-scale distribution channels has been a notable development ‘made possible by the growth of the FLO international certification system’ (Raynolds and Murray 2007: 224). This has caused polarity within the movement between its apologists (see Redfern and Snedker 2002), who see it as a reconfiguring of conventional market relations that includes Fairtrade’s moral purpose as its ultimate aim, and its detractors that ‘argue that this reflects nothing more than mainstream corporate efforts to profit from Fair Trade products’ and to improve their reputations (Raynolds and Murray 2007: 225, Low and Davenport 2006). Indeed, Raynolds argues cogently that the Fairtrade movement is increasingly characterised by ‘market driven buyers’, which means that in certain cases the value chain is oriented solely towards profit maximisation (Raynolds 2009). Certainly, in the case of agri-foods there are a burgeoning number of examples of companies (e.g. Dole Foods) that control
all aspects of production, exporting and importing as well as distribution. Deeper integration into such conventional channels may ‘weaken’ and obscure Fairtrade’s message, especially against a burgeoning background of alternative ‘green’ and ‘ethical’ labels that pervade the distribution channels of the global North (Murray et al. 2003: 22). The distribution of Fairtrade products in the northern jewellery sector, though incipient, may have to face the same challenges. For example, large jewellery companies are increasingly developing independent ‘ethical’ guidelines, just as ARM attempts to co-ordinate an ethically contiguous, small retailer-led version of Fairtrade gold. With the current emphasis on branding as a ‘strategic option’ in negotiating the relationship between ethics and capitalism (Nicholls 2002), Fairtrade’s transformative potential in consumer education may be compromised if it does not have a clearly defined message.

There are some critics who question whether the focus of Fairtrade should be moved away from its historical links with agro-exports, emphasizing instead a shift towards new product diversification such as gold (Murray et al. 2003: 26). The resultant flow of certified Fairtrade commodities to new geographical centres in the global North may be to the detriment of existing demand derived from domestic markets in the commodity-producing countries, creating a dependency upon northern consumers’ demand for the product. This point is evidenced most fully with regard to the potential adoption of gold as a Fairtrade-certified product. As indicated earlier, in mineral-endowed countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Tanzania, gold ‘is more or less a standard “currency” [and therefore] the produced value is equivalent to extra foreign income’ (Hentschel et al. 2002: 52). Contributions to the foreign exchange reserves of such a country from small-scale mining are of particular salience in light of the poor royalties and taxes derived from mining MNCs (see above) and the continuing failure of reform prescriptions in rural communities (Hilson and Nyame 2006).

### 2.4.1.2 The increasing scale and complexity of Fairtrade production

In order to meet the demand from ethical consumers, there has been a ‘scaling-up’ of both the numbers of commodities certified as Fairtrade (of which Fairtrade gold is the latest example) and the ‘complexity of production arrangements’ incorporating ‘increasingly large production units’ (Raynolds and Murray 2007: 227). Indeed there remains a suspicion amongst certain critics that the Fairtrade project has forwarded
more attention to the search for new markets in recent years than towards a reconfiguration of north-south market inequities (Fridell 2007). However, some contemporary studies have shown how such an increase in scale can be associated with a deeper integration with the key processes of Fairtrade management such as a buttressing of the commitment to capacity building amongst suppliers (Smith 2010). The export of many commodities is notoriously difficult and, as such, it may be impossible to fulfil Fairtrade’s desire to remove middlemen from the production chain, meaning that ‘intermediary firms are often essential’ (ibid). Certainly, ASM has many stages of production and the extent to which these can be managed by a single co-operative is unstudied — hence the reason for the present study. One response to the increasingly complex production arrangements has been an accompanying incidence of ever-larger producers that stand in opposition to Fairtrade’s original focus on small co-operative organizations. This has led to some critics to question whether ‘exports should be promoted at all’ supported on a variety of empirical evidence (Raynolds and Murray 2007: 227). For example, some have warned against the export of nutritionally rich crops such as quinoa owing to its importance for ‘local food security’ (Caceres et al. 2007: 195). Other critics have pointed to the erosion of small-scale worker bases in the face of an escalating demand for Fairtrade products and the associated rise of larger distributors (Kruger and Du Toit 2007, Wilkinson and Mascarenas 2007, Renard and Perez-Grovaz 2007). Smith and Barrientos (2010) assert that the prevalence of ‘own brand’ Fairtrade products in supermarkets mean that ‘competition may drive out traders with the most affinity to Fairtrade principles, and that producers able to meet their exacting standards have a comparative advantage over the more disadvantaged producers Fairtrade originally set out to support’ (p. 120).

Underpinning these empirical examples is the notion that long-term stability of ASM operators may be being compromised. This is especially pertinent when confronted with rising market price of commodities and the subsequent dovetailing of the gap between the market price and the Fairtrade price inclusive of its premium (Murray et al. 2003: 17). Fairtrade gold (and the expansion into other commodities) cannot function effectively without an accurate forecasting of future markets for ethical gold. Further, world gold prices have shown robust growth in recent years; 2011, as shown by figure 2.2, showed a record high gold prices at over $1,800 US Dollars per ounce. In short, a strong gold price, ensured by current global economic conditions, is likely to attract more operators to undertake ASM activity.
However, the current strong commodity prices like those displayed by gold should be treated with caution as a future price decline would undermine Fairtrade’s efficacy. There is evidence from other better-established agricultural commodities of ‘slow growth in the Fair Trade market’, with coffee sales having reached a plateau in Europe (Murray et al. 2003: 15). Murray et al. (2003) predict that after a boom in US sales it is likely that, though the US and Canadian markets are currently expanding, they too will flatten out. The ramifications of this for Fairtrade products (including gold) are twofold: first, potential producers who meet Fairtrade criteria cannot join; secondly, existing groups may not be guaranteed a Fairtrade buyer. The potential for deleterious effects upon communities affected by to the whims of market fluctuations is best evidenced by the historical effects seen in global (and Fairtrade) coffee markets, most notably in Mexico, where they are unable to compete with the economies of scale enjoyed by large plantation-based corporations (Renard and Perez-Grovaz 2007). Moreover, ‘FLO estimates that Fair Trade coffee export capacity in Latin America,
Africa, and Asia is roughly seven times greater […] than what is currently exported via Fair Trade channels’ (Murray et al. 2003: 15). In this way, Fairtrade gold could have the effect of encouraging new participants in mineral-endowed countries in sub-Saharan Africa without the necessary levels of demand to support their sustainable operation.

2.4.1.3 The Challenges of Fairtrade Governance

In distinction to the variety of ‘ethical trade’ initiatives that saturate western consumer markets, which are focused primarily on ‘the welfare of producers’, Fairtrade has been characterized by its mission to ‘change unequal relationships between producers and consumers [in order to] empower producers’ (Tallontire 2002: 13). However, in spite of its still marginal volume of sales as a proportion of global trade — 0.01 % (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 17) — Fairtrade’s steady growth across the majority of sectors, its burgeoning search for new products, markets and areas of production has placed increased pressures on the bureaucratic structures of its governance systems. Indeed, there is widespread discontent at the ways in which southern producer groups (as well as northern ATOs) are affected by the machinations of the FLO’s certification system.

Critiqued for its advancement of ‘commercial over development interests’, the legitimacy of FLO’s pursuit of ‘Fair Trade certified volumes’ has been said to be ‘divorced from local empowerment and development concerns’ (Raynolds and Long 2007: 229).

This has been despite the fact that one of Fairtrade’s defining characteristics has been the emphasis and reliance on a ‘partnership model’ between Alternative Trading Organizations (ATO) in the global North and producers in the global South (Tallontire 2000). However the dynamics of the relationship, one whose ‘ethical dimension is based on participatory development’, remains largely contested where the ‘levels of commitment’ of the respective partners may differ (Tallontire 2000: 176). For example, Tallontire has shown how the ATO ‘was perceived more in terms of assistance or as a consultant than as a partner’, while the producer organization displayed a ‘weak commitment […] to the developmental as opposed to the market dimensions of the partnership’ (ibid). This provides more evidence to support the claims in chapter one that, in development, ‘the creation of a non-paternalist, equal relationship has proven difficult in practice’ (Eriksson-Baaz 2005: 6). Following this argument, Reed (2009) has emphasised precisely the critical need to move towards a non-paternalistic partnership.
and to think strategically about the ways in which Fairtrade movement engages with corporations. First, the movement needs to establish the means by which large retail markets can be accessed without being marginalised by corporate power (which echoes the ‘mainstreaming’ argument outlined in section 4.1.1). Secondly, Reed argues, there is a need to avoid the deployment of the rhetorical ballast of ‘Fair Trade’ without suitable substantive change to support its use (Reed 2009). To further the conceptual understanding of the partnership relationship, not only in Fairtrade discourse but also in that of CSR, remains at the heart of this research inquiry.

In terms of its likely application to ASM, the ways in which ASM operators (the producers) conceptualize the Fairtrade ‘partnership’ differ from the instrumental purpose of ‘sustainable development’ propounded by ethical jewellers and marketing imperatives in the global North. This forms a key part of this research and is discussed in chapters five and six. Securing consensus over the terms of ‘partnership’ between small-scale producers (artisanal miners) and alternative trade organizations in the global North, as well as a coherent vision of what ‘partnership’ even looks like, is a critical challenge to Fairtrade gold’s efficacy. For example where ATOs may privilege the ‘developmental aspects’ of Fairtrade partnerships, the contention that producers may understand the Fairtrade partnership ‘primarily in terms of the market offered by fair trade, rather than [as] a process of learning and self-help’ (Tallontire 2000: 175) is a notion that is examined in the chapters that follow. To recapitulate the contention of chapter one, the negotiation of this dissonance, and with it a coherent understanding of what ‘Fairtrade’ actually means to the different actors involved in ASM, lies at the heart of the analysis. In this way, this thesis moves beyond the existing reading of Fairtrade and its links with social justice that has focused upon the economic limitations of a market-based approach to reform (Fridell 2007). Rather, the argument is made that better recognition, as well as better redistribution for Fairtrade producers (in this case, ASM operators) is an essential starting point in a move towards genuinely ‘fair’ trading conditions.

In presenting a critical review of the salient literature, this chapter has explained ASM’s emergence as a global phenomenon and as a symptom of increased FDI. The increasing conflicts of interest over the control and regulation of gold resources in sub-Saharan Africa are a part of this trend. As a result, new forms of governance have emerged and, as have been presented in the above typology, these efforts can be divided as emanating from the arenas of the GSF, business and civil society. Fairtrade’s
emergence straddles the last two of these arrangements, and the challenges and successes that it has hitherto displayed across agri-foods shape, as has been shown, the expectations of its application to ASM in Tanzania. Before a detailed analysis of this problem commences, however, the following chapter will explain both the design and practice of the research methodology that was employed in investigating these processes.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

‘No inquirer ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his or her approach.’ (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 116)

Between 2009 and 2011, primary data collection was undertaken. In order to investigate the respective aims of the research and their accompanying questions, the design included an ongoing discourse analysis of Tanzanian newspapers and Fairtrade policy documents. This was completed in order to explore the first and second of the research questions, a summary of which can be found below in table 3.1, which sets out the research methods used and the data generated. Fieldwork was conducted between June and August 2009, and included a range of research methods that featured a total of 32 life histories and two focus groups at three different villages with ASM operators in the Mwanza and Shinyanga regions of Northern Tanzania (to engage with questions three, four and five). Additionally, a series of 13 key informant interviews and one group interview were carried out with members of the Tanzanian government, the Fairtrade and Fairmined gold movement, and APM staff (also to investigate questions three, four and five). This chapter provides a full and critical analysis of this research methodology and elucidates the research design that framed the thesis as a whole.

As the previous two chapters have shown, both the development intervention of APM (through its building of the FTGCs) and the emergence of FT/FM have the challenge of engaging with an ASM sector in Tanzania that is at once heterogeneous and marked by a history of development ‘failure’, much of which can, in turn, be explained by poorly conceived research design. As has been shown in section 2.3, many of the reasons for this ‘failure’ have been the result of a policy that has been overly technical and has failed to engage with the cultural specificities of the affected ASM communities. Moreover, where there has been recognition of the importance of ‘community’ to policy design, there has also evolved a tendency to view the notion in
Table 3.1: Summary of Research Methods Used and Data Generated

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<tr>
<th>Research Aims</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Research Methods</th>
<th>Data Generated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To assess the politics of representing ASM operators in Tanzania in particular ways.</td>
<td>1. How have ASM operators been represented by Tanzanian media and policy makers?</td>
<td>• Discourse Analysis of Tanzania media sources, FT/FM promotional materials</td>
<td>• 401 relevant articles in Tanzanian newspapers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. How does the Fairtrade movement recast their identity?</td>
<td>• Key informant interviews</td>
<td>• FT/FM standards and promotional literature</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Group interviews</td>
<td>• Transcriptions of 12 semi-structured interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. To analyse critically ‘Fair Trade’ in practice.</td>
<td>3. How is APM’s version of ‘fairness’ enacted substantively?</td>
<td>• Life histories</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>4. How does the rhetoric of APM’s ‘Fair Trade’ differ from the realities understood by ASM operators in the Mwanza region?</td>
<td>• Semi-structured interviews</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Focus groups</td>
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<td>3. To analyse critically the prospects and challenges for ‘Fairtrade’ gold in Tanzania.</td>
<td>5. What are the prospects and challenges for Fairtrade and Fairmined gold in Tanzania?</td>
<td>• Life histories</td>
<td>• Thirty two life history transcriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>• Two focus group transcriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus groups</td>
<td>• Twelve semi-structured interview transcriptions</td>
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homogenous terms whereby policy has failed to reflect the diversity of needs of individual ASM operators as well as the complexities of identity formation.

It is against this background that the reasons behind the commitment to an ontology of multiple realities can be revealed. Following this ontologological line of thought, this chapter will now lay out its methodology, the range of research methods employed and the locations and qualitative properties of the research sites visited. This is achieved by reflecting upon the conceptual and processual chronology of the research process. Therefore, the chapter begins in section 3.1 by positing the epistemological and ontological positions that underscore the design and practice of this thesis. Critiques notwithstanding, it also introduces the reasons behind the decision to employ participatory approaches in the research design so as to render salient the research methodology subsequently employed. It continues in section 3.2 by explaining the rationale behind the selection of the research sites and maps out this thinking with reference to the broader context of Tanzanian mineral extraction.

In section 3.3, it shows how the first research aim (‘to assess the politics of representing ASM operators in Tanzania in particular ways’) was approached critically. Concerned with an examination of the discursive construction and (re)construction of ASM operators in Tanzania, it explains the ways in which the discourse analysis was conducted. It highlights not only the strengths of this approach in achieving its aim, but also draws attention to the specific challenges faced by analysing both written texts (Tanzanian media sources, policy documents etc.) and oral texts (generated through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in ASM and the Fairtrade/Fairmined gold movement).

Section 3.4 examines the fieldwork component of the research and begins to assess each of the research methods used in turn. First, this includes an explanation of the key officials interviewed in Tanzania, the methodological issues raised by doing interviews and a brief discussion of the logistical considerations that were made prior to entry into the ASM sites in the Mwanza region. Following this, section 3.5 assesses critically the use of oral life histories at the four research locations visited. In total, eight qualitatively unique ASM sites were visited, and the individuality of each one is discussed further here. There is also a critical evaluation of the focus groups that were enacted in support of the life histories. Overall, it argues that the use of these methods was an appropriate mechanism through which to approach the research questions.
3.1 Theorizing Theory

The design of this research is informed from the outset by a particular mode of abductive strategy in so far as it ‘refers to the process used to generate social scientific accounts from social actors’ accounts’ (Blaikie 2000: 114). Epistemologically, this translates as a rejection of positivism towards social constructivism. In this way, this research is suspicious of the search for universal truths — ‘causes and consequences in the social world’ are not ‘just like they are in the natural world’ (Denscombe 2003: 299) — and is premised on an understanding that social phenomena are produced by those who are participant in it. This has particular resonance not only for the design of this research, but also for the research methods and techniques employed to generate data.

Following these epistemological assumptions, there follows a relativist perception that, ontologically speaking, multiple and always fluid social experience constitutes a myriad range of realities or worldviews. Such a ‘pluralisation of lifeworlds’ (Flick 2002: 2) has important implications for the type of relationship between the researcher and the researched, and emphasizes the need for characteristic cognisance of different people understanding their social reality in different ways. In terms of this project, such an academic ‘point of departure’ (Mikkelsen 2005: 135) is of critical salience in approaching the research objectives stipulated in table 3.1.

It is in keeping with a relativist tradition, for example, that the GSF’s reform initiatives are understood as intervening with those of large-scale business, just as they overlap with the governance agenda of Fairtrade networks and *vice versa*. In short, it is where these processes of interaction, overlap and obfuscation occur (A, B and C in figure 1.1) that the focus of the project is most acute. Indeed, it is this position that informs the interest in not only identifying the different stakeholders involved in a Fairtrade gold initiative, but also (and more importantly) in conceptualizing the different ways in which those stakeholders understand their own respective ‘lifeworlds’. For example, the GSF’s conceptual understanding of the tropes of ‘fairness’, ‘illegality’, and ‘community’ will be imbued with a different understanding to that of business and Fairtrade networks. The exploration of these links will highlight the power relations that affect ASM poverty alleviation policies (including, here, both ‘Fair Trade’ and FT/FM gold). Further, that the people who constitute ASM communities are routinely circumnavigated in the creation of policy interventions is a symptom of the unequal
relations that mark the sector. It is argued in chapter four that the ways in which they are constructed discursively by different stakeholders may serve to maintain misguided policy.

3.1.1 Why a Participatory Approach?

Some consider the approach of participatory methods as the ‘new paradigm’ (Reason and Rowan 1981) in so far as it features a sustained critique of positivism at its heart. Indeed, it emphasizes some of the central methodological tenets of qualitative research, such as a privileging of the ‘perspectives of the participants and their diversity’ and a critical consideration of the ‘reflexivity of the researcher and the research’ itself (Flick 2002: 5). Following Chambers, the proliferation of participatory methods as ‘a family of approaches and methods to enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act’ has continued largely unfettered (Chambers 1994: 953). However, this approach has occasioned criticism that has ranged from revisionist critiques (for example, Heron 1985, Francis 2001) to a questioning of the entire philosophy of participatory methods (Cooke and Kothari 2001).

Largely transpiring out of the so-called ‘new obscurity’ of existing research processes in development (Habermas 1996), participatory research aims to question claims to truth found in the orthodox discourse of ‘expertise’ by privileging the ‘involvement of socially and economically marginalized peoples in decision making over their own lives’ (Gujit and Shah 1998:1). ‘Local’ or ‘indigenous knowledge’ becomes valorized (which can, as is explained below, can be critiqued in itself) in order to correct the top-down approaches that permeate development practice worldwide. Notwithstanding these caveats, this research uses a mixture of participatory techniques that includes semi-structured interviews, focus groups and, most centrally to this research, oral life histories. Though designed to incorporate as many different interests as possible (in order to eschew the dichotomies of young/old, male/female, rich/poor) and thereby create a fuller understanding of the particular lifeworlds of stakeholders, these techniques have nonetheless been widely criticized, as is summarized below.

One of the major challenges that participatory learning and action faces is that too much prominence is given to the level of process and to the analysis of technique, while ‘accompanying social and structural analysis’ is often neglected (Francis 2001: 73). According to this argument, this leads to a belief that the various techniques
employed constitute ‘data’ in themselves that can be interpreted outside of the context in which they were produced. This research negotiates this challenge by foregrounding the importance of context through its application of a case study approach to examining Fairtrade gold. Indeed, while cognisant of the semantic reductionism of a term like ‘participation’ in development discourse, it aims to investigate precisely the different ways that different stakeholders conceptualize ASM communities. An examination of these differences pays explicit attention to the dangers of a homogenized notion of ‘community’ in participatory methods. In short, establishing context is essential, as is the securing of a nuanced understanding of how ASM communities fit together.

Historically, attempts at reform of ASM have, for the most part, failed to engage directly with mining communities in the reformatory process (Hinton et al. 2003, Hilson 2007). The critical response has, as a result, argued for a greater emphasis to be placed on participatory approaches to development in the ASM sub-sector. However, many of the calls for a ‘new’ way of ‘doing’ reform in the sector have been made from within the discourse of participation and have not radically challenged the underlying ideology that participatory research assumes. For example, criticism of the failure of the policy response has tended to set up a dichotomy between, on the one hand, a power that resides with macro-level host governments and policy makers, and, on the other, the apparent lack of a power amongst ASM operators denied ‘a place at the table’ (Tshakert and Singha 2007: 1305). This has led to a ‘valorization of “local knowledge” and the continued belief in the empowerment of “local” people through participation’ (Kothari 2001: 140). This understanding and resultant treatment of knowledge as an inherent and static resource is at odds with a Foucaudian argument that analyses power ‘as something that circulates […]. It is never localized here or there’ (Foucault 1980: 98). Rather, power should be seen as ubiquitous and all people are vehicles for it. If this view is taken then it is possible to find power ‘in the creation of norms and social and cultural practices at all levels’ (Kothari 2001: 141).

The methods used in this research aim to present a more robust analysis of the social norms found in the participatory discourse surrounding ASM operators in order to reveal the processes that determine ‘who gets what’. In conjunction with the objectives and epistemological approaches to this research, this is seen as drawing on the strengths of a mixed-methods approach, ‘not to adjudicate between participants’ competing versions but to understand the work that they do’ (Silverman 1985: 106). Indeed, though the research emphasizes the strengths of multiple methods, the social
constructivist epistemology adopted is suspicious of the singular truth that is implicit in the aims of triangulation. The aim is not to mitigate bias amongst the research data (it is inherent to all social interactions), but rather to highlight precisely those differences. In other words, it is the ‘situatedness’ of respondents’ conceptualizations of key terminology that is of central interest here.

3.2 The Geography of ASM in Tanzania: Selecting the Research Sites

Tanzania’s mineralogy is abundant¹² and includes a plethora of different precious metals and minerals. Geological surveys have revealed how gold is perhaps the most widely occurring of these minerals (Tesha 2000). Figure 3.1 below illustrates how these mineral deposits are distributed in Tanzania. However, many of these deposits are, as yet, underdeveloped and active mine sites are clustered in one area. As can be seen in figure 3.1, the major zone of LSM and ASM activity (represented by the crossed hammers) is situated in the Mwanza and Shinyanga regions to the south of Lake Victoria in the North of the country. The concentration of ASM gold occurrences in this region rendered its selection as a research site a formality both empirically (where the data was likely to be ‘thickest’) and logistically (by reduced transport times).

¹² Tanzania’s gold reserves are, for example, estimated to be in the region of 1,400 tonnes (URT 2005)
The positioning of APM’s four Fair Trade Gold Centres (FTGCs) was also found predominantly within this cluster of ASM mines. The first one was located in the city of Mwanza and had a refinery attached, although this was a four-hour drive from the hub of ASM and LSM gold activity situated to the west in Geita. The second FTGC was located in Nyarugusu, a village established around ASM with an estimated population of 27,000 (Fisher et al. 2009: 34) and located 30 kilometres south of Geita. It featured a mixture of legalized ASM concessions and sites that did not have a Primary Mining License (PML). A survey conducted by Fisher et al. (2009) concluded that the village was made up of a largely transient community in which ‘72% of residents […] were born elsewhere […] with over half of all households having a member [involved in] mining’ (p. 34). Also significant to this research design was the fact that over ‘50% [of ASM operators] have mined [in Nyarugusu] for between 11 and 20 years’ (ibid). This was important because by using oral life histories as the main research method, it was
essential that narrators were able to describe personal histories that were able to rely on an historical trajectory of ASM development interventions.

The second research site was in a Ruamgasa,\textsuperscript{13} a smaller village situated ten kilometres south of Nyaragusu, but also dominated by ASM gold activity. This was also the site of the third APM FTGC. As explained in more detail in section 3.5, the ASM activity was of a more rudimentary level than that found in Nyarugusu. The final research site was a further forty kilometres south of Ruamgasa, in a village situated in the Shinyanga Region called Ushirombo. This was chosen not only because it was the location of the fourth FTGC, but also because it was the site of the Kerezia ASM cooperative which had been identified by an ARM researcher during interview ‘as a potential pilot project for Fairtrade gold’ (Key Informant 3). This case study is analysed in section 6.3.3. Having identified the relevant sites to investigate for the purpose of engaging with the second research aim (‘to critically analyse “Fair Trade” in practice’), the study then turned its intention to the collection of data in order to approach the first aim.

3.3 Employing Discourse Analysis: Design and Practice

3.3.1 The Theory of Discourse Analysis

The aim ‘to assess the politics of representing ASM operators in Tanzania’ (research aim 1) was undertaken through discourse analysis. In order to this, and as stipulated in section 1.4, the thesis sought to analyse the (negative) representations of ASM constructed by first, the media, state and policy makers, and second the (positive) counter-narrative of ASM by Fairtrade policy documents and practitioners. The data was generated through a data set that included newspaper searches, ASM policy papers, Fairtrade standards and promotional literature, and interviews with government, Fairtrade and APM officials. In short, the texts were both written and oral in nature. The specific ways in which this was enacted is described in what follows. Before this, however, the theoretical rationale for the use of discourse analysis is explained.

\textsuperscript{13} Though the village is sometimes written as ‘Luamgasa’, local vernacular held that it should be spelt and pronounced as ‘Ruamgasa’.
Discourse, here, follows Hardy and Phillips’ definition as ‘an interrelated set of texts, and the practice of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being’ (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 3). Thus, it follows that the epistemological departures (that words are socially constructed) and the ontological departures (that multiple realities take preference over a universal truth) of this research also support the central premise of this thesis to utilize discourse analysis in order to answer the research questions that relate to ‘how’ fairness is conceptualized in the Fairtrade and Fairmined discourse. In this typography, the ‘objects’ of analysis consist of the recurring representations of ASM operators as ‘formal’ or ‘informal’, as ‘irresponsible’ and ‘uneducated’, or as ‘responsible’ and ‘rational’. These descriptors for ASM operators that emerged during the course of researching a whole range of texts not only revealed the fluidity of the terms, but also emphasized the appropriateness of discourse analysis as a tool for revealing their underlying power dynamics. Having identified the key themes in the discourse of ASM, the task then became the deconstruction of these ‘norms’ in order to elaborate the ‘concepts and theories’ that underpin current approaches to ASM policies in Tanzania (Rabinow 1994:11).

A critical perspective was applied as a particular mode of theoretical approach to discourse analysis. This so-called ‘critical discourse analysis’ positions itself in order to focus on ‘the dynamics of power, knowledge and ideology that surround discursive processes’, while remaining cognisant of the socially constructed nature of the research phenomenon itself in question (Hardy and Phillips 2002: 20). Context, as well as the texts themselves, is important to the quality of the research produced. Further, it builds upon the distinction made by Wetherell between ‘distal’ contexts (including ‘social class, the ethical composition of participants […]and] the institutions or sites where discourse occurs’) and ‘proximate’ contexts (or the interviewee’s perception of the style appropriate to the research interaction) (Wetherell 2001: 338).

Evoking the Foucaudian conception of discursive practices, the discourse was not considered as static, rather it was seen as transformed by a ‘complex set of modifications which may occur either outside it [the discursive practice] in the forms of production, in the social relations, in the political institutions’ (Rabinow 1994: 12). Moreover, the conviction that respondents will not orient themselves within ‘a social vacuum’, but will rather situate their discourse according to their audience (Mikkelsen 2005: 186) is aligned with the objectives of this research to analyse the ways that power flows amongst the different stakeholders in a Fairtrade gold initiative.
3.3.2 Discourse Analysis in the Mining Literature

The application of discourse analysis, though increasingly prolific in development studies research, has rarely been employed in the analysis of mining, even less commonly with reference to ASM. Where it has been used, it has raised interesting questions and provided valuable additions to the academic corpus that have furthered understandings of a myriad range of analyses, including poverty and identity formation. For example, Walton has employed discourse analysis to show how different community stakeholders articulate different discursive strategies in the struggle over a proposed mine site in New Zealand (Walton 2007).

Most recently, Tschakert has offered a social and environmental justice framework that foregrounds the importance of a politics of recognition. In this schema, small-scale miners’ lack of recognition in Ghana serves as a conduit for recurring marginalization from policy interventions in the sector (Tschakert 2009b). Her conviction that ASM ‘needs compelling accounts that demonstrate that small operators can and want to be good environmental stewards’ would provide a radical inversion of representations of the ‘irresponsible’ miner that this study seeks to develop further and to analyse with regards to the representation of ASM in Tanzania (Tschakert 2009a: 30). This is the focus of chapter four. Tschakert’s study builds on her earlier co-authored paper that had highlighted the rhetoric of criminality used to describe illegal miners in Ghana (galamsey), who are marked both politically (through representations of conflict on large-scale mining concessions) and/or environmentally (through land degradation and irresponsible or ignorant use of mercury) (Tschakert and Singha 2007). The recurring trope of the galamsey is imbued with negative meaning, whether they are presented in media sources (as ‘a security risk’) (Ghana Districts 2007) or by institutional apparatuses as ‘threatening [to the] lives of people’ (Ghana Chamber of Mines 2007). Such discursive contentions have manifest socio-political effects which, according to this thinking, ‘condemn, marginalize and criminalize’, and ultimately ‘shape environmental injustice in the ASM sector’ (Tschakert and Singha 2007: 1306). The compulsion to deconstruct this ‘anti-galamsey discourse’ (Tschakert and Singha 2007: 1305) is echoed in this research, extending its focus to an examination of the unexplored ways in which ASM is conceptualized in Tanzania variously by the media, the state, the business sector and, most originally, by the proponents of Fairtrade and
3.3.3 Generating the Data

This section details the processes by which data were selected for the subsequent discourse analysis. In order to analyse media sources in Tanzania, it was determined to only work with English-language newspapers. Though the absence from the analysis of Kiswahili-language newspapers limited the breadth of opinion that could be accessed, the limited competence of the researcher in the language rendered their inclusion inappropriate. However, the potential weakening of the research by this situation was to a large degree mitigated by the fact that the English-language newspapers are targeted at the higher socio-economic classes including, crucially, policy makers of ASM. This contention was borne out by experiences during interviews with key government and mining industry officials, where at the various ministries and offices visited it was observed that English-language newspapers were far more prevalent than their Kiswahili counterparts.

Against this background, results were generated through the powerful search engine tool on the pan-African website www.allafrica.com. The website collects all English-language newspaper reports from every country on the African content since 1998 and makes it possible to search every article by a combination of fully-customizable search ‘categories’. One limitation to the approach is that the electronic press in Tanzania is still in its infancy, which meant that the results, especially in the earlier years of its existence, were thin. However, since 2002 all feature articles from four major Tanzanian newspapers were electronically available. Thus it was that literature searches were conducted for the following newspapers: Tanzania Daily News, The Citizen, The Guardian and the Arusha Times. It was found that there were 401 articles in the above newspapers generated between the search dates 1998 and March 2011\(^\text{14}\) that contained the words ‘artisanal’ and ‘mining’. Upon analysis of this data set and the transcriptions from key informant interviews (detailed in section 3.3), three key related terms emerged. It was shown that the Tanzanian press negatively represented artisanal and small-scale operators as variously ‘criminal’, ‘irrational’, and

\(^{14}\) 14 March 2011 was chosen as a ‘cut off’ point for the research because this was the launch date of globally purchasable ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’ gold.
‘irresponsible’, and it is around these representations that chapter four frames its arguments.

The creation of social norms can wash over complex differences essential to understanding the dynamics of poverty in ASM. One example is the unquestioned orthodoxy of ‘community’ in small-scale mining discourse. The representation of galamsey as a singular, static and largely homogenized community in need of improvement and empowerment ignores ‘interests and needs based on, for example, age, class, caste, ethnicity, religion and gender’ (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 6). ‘Rates of literacy and education’ could be added to a list that constitutes a perpetuation of the ‘myth of community’ (Gujit and Shah 1998) that obscures a more complex understanding of a transient galamsey that may be historically or socially located (Peters 1996).

Another recurring trope amongst participatory discourse is that of ‘organization’. Complex dynamics within the links between the social structure and individual agency are, as with ‘community’ above, washed over as the need for organization is asserted. ‘Organizations’ are ‘highly attractive to theorists, development policy-makers and practitioners as they help render legible “community”, and codify the translation of individual into collective endeavour in a form that is visible, analysable and amenable to intervention and influence’ (Cleaver 2001: 40, citing Scott 1998). This has particular resonance in the discourse of a Fairtrade initiative because the protocol for its adoption originally stated, ‘Fair Trade gold certification will only be given to community mining organizations, not individual miners or small scale entrepreneurs’ (ARM 2007, emphasis added).

3.4 Doing Interviews

Having established the deployment of critical discourse analysis in the design of this research, this chapter now turns to a critical reflection on the research methods used during the fieldwork. The first of these techniques, semi-structured interviews, were important in assessing the conceptualization of ‘fairness’ by the institutional stakeholders in ‘Fair Trade’ and FT/FM gold. A total of thirteen interviews and one group interview were conducted with key stakeholders in the emergence of Fairtrade gold policy. Three interviews were conducted in the UK prior to the fieldwork, whilst
the other ten and the group interview took place in Tanzania. Each of these is considered in turn because they each raised different methodological issues.

3.4.1 UK-Based Interviews

The three interviews conducted in the UK were comprehensive encounters (each interview lasted nearly two hours) and generated a rich data set for subsequent discourse analysis. These were with the secretary of ARM (the most senior position under the structure of the organization), an ARM board member (one of five) and an influential Fairtrade activist, and the chief researcher of ARM employed to undertake a feasibility study of potential FT/FM pilot projects in Tanzania.\(^{15}\)

Described as the ‘practitioner’s method “par excellence” in development studies’ (Mikkelsen 2005: 169), qualitative interviews were considered to be a crucial part of data gathering for this project. They were premised on the preparation of predetermined topics in line with the research aims delineated in table 1.1. As such, the planning process was key to ensuring the quality of an interview in so far as it determined the discursive arena within which questions were asked and answered, and meanings were made. The interviewer’s overall aim (to establish an understanding of the different stakeholders’ conceptual understanding of ‘fairness’ in the discourse of Fairtrade gold, as well as the ways in which they cognized the problems of ASM) was hence factored into the formation of a list of questions for interview.\(^{16}\)

A rigorous analysis of the quality of the planning process was considered essential because it ‘is decisive for the quality of the later analysis, verification, and reporting of the interviews’ (Kvale 1996: 144). In short, without a critical reflection upon the interview itself, any subsequent discursive inquiry into the text becomes insufficient, as other factors such as setting are ignored. Cognisant of this importance, a critical review of the interview’s instrumentation was conducted based upon four distinct conditions: ‘the extent of spontaneous, rich, specific and relevant answers from the interviewee’, ‘the shorter the interviewer’s questions and the longer the subject’s answers, the better’, ‘the degree to which the interviewer follows up and clarifies the meanings of the relevant aspects of the answers’, and ‘the ideal interview is to a large

\(^{15}\) A list and brief biography of each key interviewee is set out in appendix 1, with their names removed in order to ensure anonymity.

\(^{16}\) An example of the interview question guidelines used is listed in appendix 2.
extent interpreted throughout the interview’ (Kvale 1996: 145). These criteria were used as a model in assessing the quality of the interviews, while a particular emphasis was placed on the last of the four.

In this way, a typical first question was one designed to be open ended and relating directly to the notion of ‘fairness’ in ASM. Hence, questions such as ‘what for you constitutes fair mining practice?’ or ‘what do you consider to be “unfair” about ASM?’ were posited. In line with Kvale’s aforementioned criteria, the answers given to these questions were then interpreted in a dynamic manner and determined the direction in which the interview proceeded. Where, for example, ‘unfair’ ASM practices were said to include ‘draconian and intellectually not credible’ laws on land rights (Key Informant 2), the interview then investigated the ways that the Fairtrade gold could counter that, for example, by asking ‘how can the Fairtrade gold movement make these laws fairer?’

The loosely structured nature of the interviews was designed so that, while remaining cognisant of the research aims, the interviewee was apt to describe ‘fairness’ in an ‘uncontaminated’ manner. It was of the utmost importance that the research did not ‘lead’ the interviewee in conceptualizing ‘fairness’ with an implicit prejudice as to what that term might mean. Precisely because the interviews were designed to assess the ways in which policy makers made meanings out of ‘fairness’, the intention was for the interviewer to be as far removed from the process as possible. This was to a large extent achieved. Despite a preparedness to reconfigure this approach should it have failed, rich ‘thick’ data were generated. This is due largely to the high degree of experience that all interviewees had built up through their promotion of Fairtrade gold. Indeed, one key informant interview took place the day after the interviewee had been interviewed by a battery of national and international media outlets, including the BBC, CNN and the Guardian newspaper, which explained the apparent ease with which the participant expressed their position at length. The experiences of doing interviews in Tanzania, however, raised different challenges. These are analysed below.

3.4.2 Tanzanian-Based Interviews

Following the UK-based interviews, a total of ten interviews and one group interview were carried out in Tanzania. At a government level, interviews were conducted with the Commissioner for Minerals in the Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MEM), the
Assistant Commissioner for Small-Scale Miners’ Development, and the Geita district mines officer. The group interview included the country officer for the World Bank, as well as two senior officials from MEM. In terms of the interviews that related to the case study of APM, the four managers at each of the FTGCs, the CEO of APM, and the chief strategic officer of APM were consulted. Additionally, the leading environmental and human rights lawyer, who specializes in ASM, was interviewed.

The setting up of these interviews, especially with the senior members of MEM, was facilitated by contacts provided by the chief strategic officer of APM. Once the interview with the commissioner for minerals at MEM had been established, there followed a process of networking whereby contact was made with the other interviewees of the basis of his recommendation. It was through one such recommendation that an interesting insight into the unequal power relations found in ASM policy was revealed. After being invited to a UN-hosted reception on ‘ASM Strategies in Tanzania’ in order to meet potential interviewees, it became noticeable through personal observation that despite the meeting’s commitment to ‘work closely with small-scale miners’, there was no representation from ASM communities. One attendee in a position of high authority with Tanzanian domestic politics, when asked by the researcher of the reason for the absence of ASM operators, even joked that ‘they wouldn’t know how to eat this sort of food!’ (2009: personal communication). Such a dehumanizing discourse of misrecognition was a window into the broader research problem of ASM representation that will be analysed more fully in chapter four.

The interviews proceeded using the same design as their UK equivalents. Thus it was that all interviews were digitally recorded with the consenting participants in order to allow for their later transcription. In all but one case (the CEO of APM), interviewees consented to being recorded. Where they did not, notes were taken and, where a direct quotation seemed significant, transcribed verbatim. Anonymity was guaranteed and all interviews were conducted in English.

However, when conducting the group interview with a senior World Bank official and two representatives of MEM, a certain methodological constraint emerged. Namely, that, in facilitating meaningful results, the bank official’s presumed superiority over the other members of the group led to the voices of the other interviewees being compromised. It was an example of the ‘inherent power structures [that] may be present within the group which, though valuable to the researcher, may lead to “minority” voices [being] muted within “majority”/“general population” groups’ (Kitzinger 1994:
110). Perversely, it was perhaps that in encountering this problem the strength of group interviews was revealed. Indeed the utility of their use may is expressed more fully when revealing social norms that inform action, rather than simply the free articulation of ‘cognitive structures’ (Kitzinger 1994: 106). Thus, it could be argued that this provided an insight into the dynamics of power found in the governance structures of ASM policy making.

3.5 The Stories of ASM Operators: Oral Life Histories and Focus Groups

3.5.1 Selecting Participants for the Analysis of the Case Study

Following the use of a critical literature search and semi-structured interviews, the third major technique employed during this research was oral life histories. This was used in order to investigate ‘Fair Trade’ in practice through the case study of APM. The use of a case study approach is in many ways a ‘typical design’ element of an interpretative study that aims here to conceptualize ASM poverty governance through an interpretation of the myriad perceptions of stakeholders within Fairtrade gold (Mikkelsen 2005: 125). The efficacy of a case study design is predicated on its grounding in theory: in this case, it is as an examination of the complex configuration of governance in ASM as exemplified by African Precious Minerals (APM), a key stakeholder of the Fairtrade gold network (APM) in Mwanza region of Tanzania.

In order to investigate these dynamics, the fieldwork was conducted in the Mwanza and Shinyanga regions focusing on three main sites at Nyarugusu, Ruamgasa, and Ushirombo. Though officially described as ‘villages’, their size (Nyarugusu is estimated to have a population of 27,000 (Fisher et al. 2009)) meant that the selection of participants would have to be significantly streamlined. It was decided, therefore, that in order to generate a large enough data set within the time and financial constraints imposed, a total of thirty oral life histories would be sought. In the end, thirty-two histories were recorded across the three sites (ten in Nyarugusu, twelve in Ruamgasa and ten in Ushirombo). In order to ensure a broad representation of social backgrounds, a ‘theoretically motivated decision’ (Valentine, 2005: 112) was taken to listen to the stories of those ASM operators who had a minimum of fifteen years’ experience in mining. This figure was decided upon not only so that respondents were able to reflect a
broad historical trajectory of ASM practices, but also so that they were able to recall any shifts in experience as a result of the inception of the Tanzanian Mining Act in 1997 and the attendant legalization of the sector.

Also factored into the sampling process was a commitment to ensuring gender equality. This was inspired by this desire to avoid Crewe and Harrison’s (1998) contention that development research tends to privilege male voices. Despite a concerted effort, this was not always possible. Indeed, of the thirty-two life histories conducted, only eight were with women. This could be for two possible reasons. First, there were local cultural concerns expressed that women could not be seen talking to unfamiliar men. For example, one potential female participant who declined to offer her life history shouted ‘I can’t talk to you! What would my husband say!’ Secondly, the researcher’s position as a *mzungu*\(^{17}\) sometimes led to a distrust of the intentions of the research. In many cases, potential respondents were unsure of whether or not the researcher was an employee of the large AngloGold Ashanti mine in Geita and were not prepared to participate. This is symptomatic of a broader distrust of development intervention in ASM governance by ASM operators, a notion that forms a key conclusion of this thesis. This point is fully expounded in section 6.2.5.

### 3.5.2 The Production of Oral Life Histories

The choice of oral life histories as an important research technique for this project is predicated on the eliciting of narratives from ASM operators affected by development interventions concerning ASM in Tanzania. It functions here not only as ‘supplementary information’ to an ‘in-depth case study’ (Mikkelsen 2005: 94), but also to ‘understand how history-as-lived is connected to history-as-recorded’ (Tonkin 1992: 12). The narrators that were selected had a temporally wide-ranging experience of ASM based upon the assumption that these were people ‘living and developing in times that also change’ (Tonkin, 1992: 12). These times included a history of development intervention and the governance of ASM from long before the arrival of APM’s FTGCs, ‘Fairtrade’ or ‘Fairmined’ gold. The aim was for ASM operators to ‘narrate the story of his or her life in all dimensions: personal, spiritual, social and economic’ (Slim and Thompson, 1998: 116).

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\(^{17}\) *Mzungu* is a Kiswahili word that denotes an outsider or foreigner. It also has racial overtones and denotes whiteness (Dolan 2008).
However, whilst the oral life histories did, to an extent, begin by following such an aim, alongside the researcher’s invitation to ‘tell me about your life and how you began in mining’, there was a need to keep the narratives focus on the research aims of the project. It was important, for example, to guide the narrative towards a discussion of ‘fairness’, or as Slim and Thompson (1998) suggest towards a ‘single issue’ in order to explore ‘a particular area of knowledge or experience’. In terms of reflexivity, however, this presented a problem; namely, that it inevitably influenced the direction that narratives took and produced a particular type of knowledge. This said, it is argued that the role of the researcher in affecting the produced discourse emanating from key stakeholders is of interest in and of itself, enabling an insight into the ways in which power relations operate between the interviewee and researcher. It is also congruous with the relativist ontology employed, accepting the fluidity of the articulated spoken (and written) ‘truths’ not only as inevitable, but also as significant.

It was also important to remain cognisant of the fact that, while the researcher served to influence the narrative, so too did the narrators themselves have the power to move the story in particular ways (Yarrow 2008). For example, a key member of the leadership of a local mining union determined that his life history should focus on a history of the evolution of the union itself, rather than a discussion of policy intervention per se. It was reflected upon that this is part of what life history should constitute; that history should be understood in the terms of a cognitive framework, of a personal reality and memory, and that it should allow for individual agency. This being so, a narrative that did not relate explicitly to ‘fairness’ was still considered equally valid data since it highlighted other factors (such as the importance of the union to local ASM politics) that had not previously been considered. It was, following Kamat (2008), merely an example of a memory of the past being ‘socially reconstructed to make sense of and negotiate the present’ (Kamat, 2008: 360).

Oral life histories were narrated in Kiswahili, and as a result it was essential to employ a full-time translator and research assistant for the duration of the fieldwork. This raised certain methodological issues relating to the processes of meaning making. Because of the emphasis on the discursive construction of certain terms, most notably the idea of ‘fairness’, the centrality of understanding the nuances of the narratives was essential. Inevitably, in any process of translation, in this case from Kiswahili into English, there is a danger that meaning will be lost, misinterpreted and the quality of the resultant data compromised. As Gal (2003) asserts, this is the concern that the ‘semiotic
aspects of the translation’ directly affect ‘the transfer of sense relations from one language to another’ (p. 106). This issue was, however, to a large extent mitigated by the highly qualified nature of the translator. Indeed, he was fluent in five languages and could be considered truly multilingual. His obvious interest in the science of translation meant that he was particularly scrupulous in the translation of key terms. These were discussed at length during briefing sessions that occurred before the life histories were recorded.

3.5.3 Focus Groups

The fourth research method that was used as a means of understanding the challenges faced by ASM’s operators were focus groups. In order to provide another form of qualitative data, these groups consider the importance of subjective viewpoints and are exemplar to a reflexivity that recognizes both researcher and object as ‘meaning-makers’ that in themselves constitute data. However, the modus operandi of the researcher in focus groups is to ‘facilitate [sic] the group and not [to] control it’ (Bloor et al. 2001: 48). Moreover, focus groups in particular (as opposed to group interviews) concern themselves most pertinently with the importance of interaction and conversation between group participants (Kitzinger 1994: 104). It is the ‘explicit use of group interaction as research data’ that is the distinguishing feature of focus groups and was the reason behind its deployment in this research (Kitzinger 1994: 103).

The research approached the recruitment process for two focus groups investigating different understandings of ‘fairness’ by contacting the local government mining officer in Geita, who in turn referred the group composition to the APM FTGC manager in Nyarugusu. When investigating participants’ attitudes to ‘fairness’ in ASM, and in order to maximize the richness and reliability of the data, a pre-existing group was used that was facilitated by APM. They were given a brief that participants needed to have been active in ASM for over fifteen years and that it was desirable to have a mixture of male and female participants. Using pre-existing groups such as this was considered to have certain logistical and organizational advantages too. For example, it significantly ‘reduce[d] [the] recruitment effort for the researcher as [he could] contact group members through one individual group member, rather than contacting each group member separately’ (Bloor et al. 2001: 23). In addition, employing pre-existing groups helped to secure full attendance due to ‘a sense of shared obligation to attend’
(Bloor et al. 2001: 23) and was scheduled, sensitive to the availability and demands of the participants, at the end of the working day (Keown 1989: 65).

While the strengths of the approach were clear, there were several caveats that emerged during the organization of group composition. First, the recruitment process was carried out without the luxury of pre-existing contacts. Thus, despite the recommendation that APM’s selection of the group remain cognisant of representing the familiar binaries of male/female, rich/poor and young/old, full control was nonetheless ceded. While these requests were to a certain extent provided for, there were still issues that arose concerning the power relations among the group participants. For example, not only were the voices of women less heard than their male ASM operator counterparts, but also the presence of members of the mining union leadership led to the ‘repression of views of certain individuals’ (Bloor et al. 2001: 20; Conradson 1995). This was significant in and of itself however, in so far as it helped to formulate an understanding of the power dynamics of pre-existing politics, a theme that is analysed in detail in chapter five.

One of the major obstacles to reliable data also lay in the extent to which the researcher (inadvertently) influences its production. Therefore, it was held as essential that the facilitator be as far removed from the control of the conversation as possible. The role was to allow the group to interact, as far as possible, independent of the researcher’s presence (Laws 2003). Indeed, the reduced input of the researcher actually helped to lessen the dichotomy of power with the participants, to the extent that it actively encouraged a higher degree of participation.

It was also important to remain cognisant of the cultural differences that group participants held, and there was an assumption (especially at the beginning) that the researcher was affiliated with APM. This was mostly due to the fact that the introduction to the group was made through an APM official who had misrepresented the aims of the research. Aware of the potential for the produced narratives to be iterated in such a way as to correspond to the researcher’s assumed prejudices, it was made clear to the participants that this an independent research project. They were also informed of the extent of the research’s remit. Moreover, the presence of the APM official meant that ASM operators often felt the need to assert their sympathies with APM’s practices, regardless of whether that accurately reflected their feelings, so as not to jeopardize the potential access to financial loans in the future. It was fortunate, however, that the APM official was not present throughout the duration of the focus
group and left after around ten minutes of its commencement. Following their departure from the research setting, participants were more ready to express themselves fluently and were able to reflect on APM’s intervention in a more critical manner. Indeed, following the absence of the APM voice from the group, there was a strong sense that participants offered ‘mutual support in expressing feelings which [were] common to their group but which they might consider deviant from mainstream culture (or the assumed culture of the researcher)’ (Kitzinger 1994: 111). This was perhaps best illustrated during the discussion of the practices of trading unlicensed gold. At first some participants were reticent in speaking about an activity that was considered illegal, but the presence of, and invitation by, other members to ‘carry on and explain’ (focus group 1) helped the narrative to continue.

The focus groups were fully recorded and, congruent with Bloor’s assertion, a ‘full and thorough audiotranscription’ was carried out (Bloor et al. 2001: 72). Subsequent indexing helped to reveal themes in the data concerning the ‘fairness’ of APM’s ‘Fair Trade’ intervention. Indeed, despite its deployment and the notion that ‘programmes developed by people participating in them (i.e. bottom-up measures) tended to be the most effective and enduring’, certain analytical challenges remain (Hinton et al. 2003: 102). Finally, issues of sensitivity were considered and the risks of over-disclosure accounted for during the facilitation of the focus groups. For example, it was held that individuals ‘identify themselves not just to a researcher but to other members of the group’ (Bloor et al. 2001: 23) and this may have precluded reliable data collection, a notion that has the most salience with regards to the voices of women in the group being heard. Acknowledging these issues, it is nonetheless maintained that focus groups construct results, just as they reveal meaning and therefore must ‘maintain a reflexive awareness of how focus group methods actively formulate group norms and understandings as well as report them’ (Bloor et al. 2001: 94).

3.6 Concluding Remarks

This project has shown how the process of primary data collection was both designed and practiced. The decision to employ the methods and methodology stipulated were largely shaped by the social constructivist epistemology of the research, where there was a rejection of a singular social reality that ‘can be seen from different angles’. Rather, it understood the likely emergence of a ‘mismatch and even conflict between’
those realities (Laws et al. 2003: 281). The research techniques used, including life histories, focus groups and semi-structured interviews largely bore this assumption out. The divergences that were made apparent between (and among) the life experiences of ASM operators and the voices of the institutionalized development apparatus revealed the most interesting insights into the framing of ‘fairness’ in ASM. Indeed, it was in the competing ways in which ASM, ‘fairness’ and even development intervention itself was conceptualized by the fluid motors of governance that provided the most fertile ground for research into the efficacy of Fairtrade gold initiatives in mineral-endowed countries, such as Tanzania. The following chapters analyse precisely these phenomena.
CHAPTER 4: THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTING SMALL-SCALE MINERS

‘It’s like Jo’burg out there. Miners are single minded in their pursuit of gold and money — nothing else. They are not like us. Once they get the money, they’ll spend it on criminal-type things — drugs, women and so on.’ (Key Informant 7)

4.1 Introduction

The historical instances of policy failure that have marked attempts by development institutions to reform the problems associated with ASM (detailed in chapter 2) have been well documented (Hilson 2008; Bush 2008). However, where such analyses have focused variously on the institutional failure, cultural misunderstanding and poorly conceptualized research design promulgated by development institutions and host-country governments, they have only been implicit in articulating the ways in which policy makers have represented those that they have sought to support: ASM operators. A crucial distinction must be made in examining the nomenclature applied to such miners between, on the one hand, the ‘small-scale’ miner and, on the other, the ‘artisanal’ miner.18 Whilst it has been recognized in recent scholarship that differentiating between the two has been ‘one of the biggest conceptual headaches’ (Gibb 2006: 42), little work has been undertaken to investigate the politics of representing a miner in specific ways.

It is argued in this chapter that a critical (and explicit) understanding of this distinction, of the ways in which the figure of the artisanal miner is discursively constructed, is essential because it is precisely this construction that has ensured the marginalization of small-scale miners in the writing of small-scale mining policy in Tanzania. Indeed, the ASM operator can be considered as a trope insofar as it has become, figuratively speaking, imbued with pervasive and multifarious images that have helped to form its identity. The figure that emerges in this construction is one marked by a pejorative range of traits that include criminality, irrationality, venality and irresponsibility. Each of these agents of identity formation, arranged in this chapter

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18 As explained earlier, this is the reason behind the group being delineated in this thesis as ‘ASM operators’.
schematically, combine so as to define the artisanal miner as a figure that is rendered marginalized from ASM (and broader development) policy.

Throughout this thesis, the figure of the ‘othered’ ASM operator, inspired emotions from policy makers ranging from fear to anger, and who was marginalized, or worse, outright rejected from the formulation of policy. Crucially, the discursive representations of the ‘artisanal miner’ impact upon the ways in which the ‘small-scale miner’ (as defined by development institutions) is viewed and often the boundaries between the two become increasingly blurred. In other words, what charges are levelled at the ‘artisanal’ miner can hold true for the ‘small-scale’ miner in the eyes of policy makers. The analysis of these notions and their attendant themes are read here, as Tschakert (2009b) has argued, through a social and environmental justice framework, one that incorporates Nancy Fraser’s thesis that ‘misrecognition’ is tantamount to an assault on ‘social status’. Following this theoretical framework, it is argued here that ASM operators are socially ‘subordinated’ and are ‘prevented from participating as peers in social life’ (Fraser 2001: 24). Such ‘status subordination’ applies to ASM operators in Tanzania because they can be viewed through this theoretical lens ‘as inferior, excluded, wholly other or simply invisible, hence as less than full partners in social interaction’ *(ibid)*.

This chapter proceeds by revealing the processes found in the discourses and ‘institutional configurations’ (Harvey 1999: 401) that can be said to have constructed the myth of artisanal miners as criminals. Privileging the analysis of ‘the ways in which economic inequalities intersect with problems of […] discourse’ (Dahl et. al 2004: 375), it shows the ways in which the small-scale miner has been (mis-)represented and, thus (mis-)recognized, through a close reading of Tanzanian media reports, interviews with key informants in the policy making arena, as well as policy documentation itself. By understanding the ways in which the discursive constructions operate, the reasons why ASM operators are either inappropriately included or marginalized from policy interventions are revealed.

After establishing the hegemonic and negative representations of ASM operators found in policy and media discourses, the chapter will examine, in the latter half of this chapter, a counter-discourse to this dominant narrative. Indeed, it is against this background that the application of the Fairtrade model promises to mark a radical shift by reconstituting the artisanal miner as a positive figure, capable of community-driven empowerment. In this new discourse, the miner is re-imagined as responsible rather
than irresponsible, professional rather than irrational, trustworthy rather than opportunistic and so forth. Here, the analysis does not centre on Fairtrade’s headline promotion of new marketing opportunities for its members and the material effects of its intervention (see chapter six), but rather it analyses the shift at the level of discourse. It notes in particular how the trope of the artisan is reclaimed and coloured with positive notions of craftsmanship, care and quality, rather than a lack of mechanized equipment and the inefficient use of mining technologies. Thus, this chapter engages directly with the first two research questions that ask how ASM operators have been represented by the Tanzanian media and policy makers, and how the Fairtrade movement has recast their identity.

Within the Fairtrade discourse, the miner, thus re-imagined as a positive figure, is promised rightful access to the policy-making process. This shift, read through the social and environmental justice framework outlined above, can be seen as part of ‘a paradigm shift in which claims for redistribution, those based on a fairer and more equal division of the pie, have been eclipsed by claims for recognition, based on respect and valuation for group differences’ (Hobson 2003: 1). However, the ‘eclipse’ of redistributive claims to justice by those for recognition may be overly presumptuous. Indeed, ‘the institutionalized patterns of cultural value that constitute certain groups of people as less worthy than others of social respect or esteem, and [which] prevent them from participating as equals in social life’ are linked in a gamut of ways ‘with injustices in economic redistribution’ (Phillips 2003: 263). With regards to the research here, Fairtrade not only makes claims for recognition on behalf of small-scale miners (not always unproblematically), but also does so cognisant of its overall aims for economic redistribution in the sector. The three major themes that emerge through the contradictory discourses of ASM are now examined; these are not only the negative representations of ASM as criminal, irrational, and irresponsible, but also of the counterpoints of ASM as victim to an inequitable system, rational and responsible.

4.2 Representing ASM: Three Themes and their Counterpoints

4.2.1 A ‘Criminal’ Livelihood Strategy?

The epigraph that opened this chapter epitomizes many component parts that constitute the figure of the ASM operator in the prevailing discourse. Moreover, it is possible to
find within the quotation, iterated by a senior government mining official interviewed in Geita district, many of the prejudices which have served to marginalize the small-scale miner from the processes of policy formation in Tanzania and sub-Saharan Africa more generally. Indeed, the miner is here simultaneously represented as mercenary (literally, a ‘gold digger’), irresponsible and immoral. These alleged aspects of the miner’s character, distinctive though they might be, are imbricated under the broad narrative of criminality. It is this discursive trait that will be analysed first.

In the above quotation, the district officer contended that an ASM site is analogous with Johannesburg. In doing so, the text reveals two important points. First, he contends that Geita is defined by the pursuit of money, which is, according to Mbembe and Nutall (2004), a characteristic discursive trait of ‘late and modern Johannesburg’ that has witnessed the city branded ‘a nursery of cynicism’ (p. 355). This self-interest resonates with the ‘single-mindedness’ described by the official and demarcates these mining areas as cultures of individualism, where the search for gold takes preference over broader societal concerns.

Secondly, a declaration that ‘they are not like us’ differentiates ASM operators from the normative ethics of Tanzanian society. In asserting their propensity towards vice, the text not only separates miners from mainstream society in terms of their morality (a discursive construct which is analysed in section 4.3), but also ‘others’ the miners on a more fundamental level. It removes miners from a legal world. They are, instead, marginalized as illegal people who operate in the shadows of the mainstream economy. This is, again, congruent with the Johannesburg simile, a city that has emerged as being populated by a people that ‘encompasses slum dwellers, migrant workers, strikers, hawkers, prostitutes, domestic servants, squatters, criminal classes, and so on’ (Mbembe and Nutall 2004: 355). In short, ‘miners’ (interestingly, there is no distinction made between ‘small-scale’ and ‘artisanal’ here) are represented as part of a criminal underclass that operates not only outside, but also underneath the dominant ‘us’ of normative society that is implicated by the governmental officer.

By viewing ASM operators as outside the institutional framework, policy discourse has portrayed miners who work without a licence as not only informal, but, crucially to the discourse of criminality, ‘illegal’. For example, in a central policy directive disseminated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, their ‘compendium for best practice’ posits that ‘SSM [small-scale mining] activities are carried out illegally, thereby reducing the possibility of rent capture by the host
government’ (UNECA 2002: 8, emphasis added). This is part, so the document argues, of a broader dynamic that sees ‘miners and regulatory authorities play[ing] a “cat and mouse” game with negative consequences’ (ibid). In this discursive construct, the tropes of the ‘regulatory authorities’ as ‘cat’ and of the ‘miners’ as ‘mouse’ function to reveal important distinctions over power relations between the two parties. Indeed, the phraseology employed can be read in two distinct ways. First, it realizes that the ‘miner-as-mouse’ is made socially subordinate to the predations of the ‘cat-as-authority’ figure. This serves to recall Fraser’s misrecognition thesis that, applied here, renders the miner as illegal. Indeed, Merriam Webster’s definition of ‘cat and mouse’ as ‘a contrived action involving constant pursuit, near captures, and repeated escapes’ (Merriam Webster 2011) echoes UNECA’s language of authority, chasing a target that is both elusive and operates in opposition to the aims of the (legal) pursuant. Secondly, describing the miner as a mouse evokes the image of a body that survives through hiding in the shadows, by remaining always just out of reach, but always there. Echoing the ‘shadow networks’ that have been used to describe the machinations of mineral production chains (Hilson 2009:2, Ferguson 2006), the mouse metaphor renders the miner a marginalized figured, operating in the shadows of legalized gold buying networks.

In addition to the recurring discourse of criminality iterated from policy makers to define the ‘nature’ of ASM operators, the media also plays a key role in reporting mining as marked by illegality. One leading English language Tanzanian newspaper, The Citizen, reports on attempts by police to control ‘illegal’ mining activity at the Tanzania–Mozambique border. The coordinator of the patrol asserts that,

It was not worthwhile trying to expel illegal Tanzanian gold panners. In our experience, we found that waging these little wars produces no results […]. We know there are illegals, and we are organizing them to […] bring the production under control. (The Citizen 19/08/2002)

Most notable here is the reductive sense in which the term ‘illegals’ is used. By distilling miners who operate without a Primary Mining Licence to a single term, it simultaneously denies the different reasons and strategies that are factors in the decision to operate without a license (lack of capital, time, knowledge etc.), while constructing a readily identifiable target that can thus be more readily managed. Indeed, the ‘criminal’
stereotype facilitates and permits the application of an aggressive discourse of ‘little wars’, whereby the aim is to ‘organize’ miners who ‘cannot be covered by policemen on patrol in the area’ (ibid). Within this belligerent discourse of war and policing that highlights the institutional incapacity to tackle the extent of the problem, miners operating without a licence are over-determined as a threat to wider society and imagined as an ‘aggressive people, who have an assortment of vices and a greed for money’ (ibid). These formulations at once condemn ASM operators working without a licence as dangerous outlaws, while denying a discussion of the restraints in which they are operating.

Much of the criminalization of ASM operators found in both policy and media discourses is manifested through their depiction as (to varying degrees) larcenous, mendacious and even piratic. These representations are, it should be noted, not necessarily specific to ASM operators alone and resonate closely with the ambivalent colonial stereotypes highlighted by postcolonial academic enquiry. Indeed, just as Bhabha (1994) has revealed how the colonized ‘other’ was depicted as both simultaneously ‘mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces’ (p. 82), so too can the ASM operator be read through media and policy discourses in Tanzania as guilty of the same pejorative characteristics. For example, a senior figure at the World Bank country office for Tanzania during an interview used the figure of the untrustworthy miner to lament the difficulty of regulating the transit of gold: ‘But sometimes those people steal. They get something, he hides it either in the mouth, in the pocket, wherever. I think they actually enjoy giving people the run-around!’ (Key Informant 4). Here, the miner is articulated not only as a thief, but as someone who takes as much pleasure from the very challenge of deceiving as from the smuggling of gold itself.

Likewise, media reports remark that, ‘Tanzania could be losing over $25 million worth of gold and gemstones annually […] giving smugglers a field day’ (The Citizen 26/07/2000). Here again, this is congruous with the notion of the ‘deceptive other’ as expounded by the postcolonial turn. In this construction, the ASM operator is portrayed as a paragon of mistrust, both ‘unreliable and deceptive’ (Eriksson Baaz 2005: 135). By presenting artisanal and small-scale miners as untrustworthy, it raises significant questions about their capacity to be subsumed under the terms of Tanzanian mining policy, one which ‘promotes partnership’ and ‘encourages transparent business transactions and discourages smuggling’ (URT 1997: 15-16). It is precisely this
projection of the duplicitous ASM operator that the Fairtrade gold initiative seeks to redress through a discursive commitment to trust and reliability (see section 4.4 below). Nonetheless, examples of ASM operators depicted as larcenous, deceptive and untrustworthy further bolster the image of them as a criminal.

The discourse of mistrust that imbues the prevailing understanding of ASM operators as illegal was revealed not only by the many media representations of miners, but also by all key informant interviewees. In these texts, miners’ untrustworthiness is driven discursively by their relentless, usually criminal, determination to acquire gold. For example, in commenting upon relations at the Tanzanian–Mozambique borderlands, the coordinator of the Mozambican Mining Fund (FFM) in Niassa, Mateus Alfandega, iterated that some of the Tanzanians were beaten to death by other miners, and some were stabbed in order to steal the small amount of gold they possessed. Here, concern is expressed that ‘we don’t have any security from the police’ and that ‘we’re working with aggressive people, who have an assortment of vices and a greed for money. The sole policeman on patrol cannot cover all these areas’ (The Citizen 19/08/2002). This reveals two relevant dimensions in the discourse of ASM illegality. First, the (by now) familiar refrain that ASM operators are actively engaged in criminal activity and, secondly, that there is a simultaneous revelation of fear (through a lack of police security) and hopelessness inspired by the unmanageable geographical extent of the number of miners.

There was also a strong sense that ASM operators’ illegality forced them into the shadows of a criminal underworld. As one senior figure in the Tanzanian ministry of mines asserted in an interview, ‘most of them are afraid of being known. They want to hide and think that if they stay, then they will be caught and have their rights removed by the government’ (Key Informant 6). The idea that there was volition displayed in the miners’ act of hiding is explained, so the informant continued, by a basic economic rationale of profit maximization:

The main challenge in this country, as it is in other countries is that they [the miners] want to remain informalized. They actually want to continue illegally so that they can have an avenue to sell their gold without having to pay taxes to the government. The ambition for them is to maximize the output from their gold. (Key Informant 6)
This explanation of the complexities found in the economic relations of ASM also presents a fundamental challenge to the construction of the miner as irrational. Paradoxically, viewing the miner as irrational and primitive (as will be explored in section 4.3) simply does not fit with the notion that he is motivated by a mercenary desire for profit maximization. The ‘ambition to maximize output’ is precisely part of a rational decision that it makes more economic sense to operate outside of the formal taxation system than to be part of it. Further, the official’s conflation of the ‘informal’ with the ‘illegal’ fails to capture the different reasons and modus operandi of miners operating without a licence. As he continued, ‘these guys have nowhere to apply for a PML [Primary Mining Licence]. In essence they become invaders. They just invade a mine’ (Key Informant 6). In this construction, the significant distinction between an ASM operator that has operated in a single location for twenty years, but has done so without a licence due to its prohibitively high cost or illiteracy, and an opportunistic group of men who operate on an ad hoc basis to loot gold resources are reduced to the same motivation of ‘invasion’. Homogenizing ASM operators as ‘invaders’ repeats the discourse of war, universally positioning them as dangerous and as legally ‘outside’ with little respect for the authority of a formal mine site.

The construction of the ‘illegal miner’ by policy makers was found to conflate not only formalized ASM operators with those who operate without a license, but also to include other actors along the supply chain of the gold. For example, the country director of the World Bank asserted during an interview that,

Some of them [the miners] know certain things and they decide to act, to operate illegally and so on and so forth. Particularly, the marketing aspect. The marketing aspect is done very illegally and we have, what do you call them, dealers and brokers who are marauding and going to places and buying the things without any legality. (Key Informant 4)

Here, ‘dealers and brokers’ are subsumed under the rhetorical ‘them’ who are cognisant of ‘certain things’ that can be read as both clandestine and illegal. These groups of actors, as found in the language of ‘invaders’ analysed above, are expressed in the language of looting and banditry as ‘marauding’. The use of this term is significant because the notion of marauding confers a roaming sense of desire to steal and to attack. It should be noted, however, that this negative depiction contradicts the prevailing
views expressed by ASM operators during this research who saw these dealers and brokers as a necessary part of their marketing arrangements for selling gold.\textsuperscript{19} The fact that they are ‘misrecognized’ by policy makers serves to undervalue the important role that they play in providing financial support and rudimentary forms of capital investment to ASM operators. That they remain outside of the official discourse of ASM policy and are rather termed as ‘illegal’ rejects the existence of such informal networks as both credible and mutually negotiated by the miner and the dealer. It also further illustrates their marginalization from the contemporary writing of a new mining policy for ASM in Tanzania.

Negative discursive representations of ASM operators not only result in their exclusion from policy formulation, but, in certain instances, can also lead to the suppression of their political voice altogether. This political silencing is brought into sharpest relief through the discursive and material interactions between large-scale mining (LSM) corporations and ASM operators at work on the former’s concessions. For example, the Canadian firm Barrick Gold’s North Mara mine has reported how ‘200 to 300 illegal miners are trespassing on licensed areas every day in search of ore’ as part of a ‘scramble’ that has led to ‘the loss of about 2,400 hours’ work’ (\textit{The Citizen} 5/12/09). This loss to productivity has induced the company into the ‘deployment of up to 25 paramilitary police guards in recent months’, leading to ‘an increase in confrontations with locals and […] a number of shootings’ (\textit{ibid}). These experiences resonate with views presented by Tschakert (2009b), who argues that Ghana’s informal (\textit{galmasaey}) mining community, in exerting their legal right to demonstrate, ‘are threatened to silence’ by a paramilitary force allegedly deployed by a union between state and business.

By following the environmental and social justice framework demarcated above, these experiences of the silencing and discursive representation of illegality of ASM operators can be seen as a symptom of political misrecognition. As Fraser (2003) explains, misrecognition, in this sense, ensures that its attendant ‘parity-impeding values are institutionalized at a plurality of institutional sites and a plurality of qualitatively different modes’ (p. 28). Here, misrecognition is not only realized via myriad modes of government policy and professional practices, but it is also ‘juridified’ as miners are ‘expressly codified in formal law’ (\textit{ibid}). In other words, by defining ASM’s operators

\textsuperscript{19} This relationship is examined in more detail in chapter five.
as ‘illegal’, it simultaneously writes them into a language of law, just as it excludes
them from the benefits of legal status. By representing those people operating without a
licence as ‘illegal’ (as opposed to, say, as ‘informal’ or ‘unregulated’), it constitutes
them as ‘deficient or inferior’ in contrast to the ‘normative’ prescriptions conferred by
‘legal’ small-scale mining (ibid). The substantive differences in working practices
between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ small-scale mining in Tanzania are, however, often
negligible.

For example, during fieldwork undertaken for this research, it was not
uncommon to witness ‘illegal’ ASM displaying a better regulated use of mercury in the
processing of gold than their ‘legal’ counterpart. Likewise, incidences of child labour
were oftentimes less prevalent at an ‘illegal’ ASM site, than at a ‘legal’ one. In short,
the creation of a discursive binary between legal/illegal to describe ASM practices is not
only misleading, but it is also serves to deny the ‘illegal’ members of the ASM
communities ‘the status of full partners in interaction, capable of participating on a par
with other members’ (Fraser 2003: 28). Whether this was through the denial of business
loans, the restrictions placed upon political forms of protesting or through the
accusations levelled at the very characteristics of ASM operators, the discourse of
illegality is central to their status subordination. Counter to this discourse, then, the
terms of ‘illegality’ should be read as fluid enough to allow for the participation of ‘the
subordinated party as a full partner’ in research, and hence in policy formulation in
ASM.

4.2.2 From ‘Criminal’ to ‘Victim’: ASM Operators in an Inequitable System

The policy intervention of Fairtrade into ASM promises a radical new direction for the
material ways in which ASM is organized, governed and economically rewarded. Its
substantive repositioning of the sector is achieved, however, through a fundamental
rewriting of the way in which ASM operators are represented. Rather than the negative
discourse of criminality detailed in section 4.2.1, small-scale miners are, in the Fairtrade
gold model, re-imagined as a positive figure and are promised rightful access to the
policy-making process through a resituated discourse of ASM as a viable livelihood
strategy. Against this background, one of Fairtrade gold’s major strategies, as outlined
in the official standards document, ‘is to promote the formalisation of the ASM sector,
bringing with it improved working conditions for producers, strengthened producer
organizations with the capacity to lobby for legislation and public policies that promote a responsible ASM sector’ (ARM 2010: 4). Such lobbying and ‘support to national governments to promote better policies for ASM’ (ARM 2011a: 4) is premised on an inherent understanding that ASM operators’ actions can be explained not because of a naturally criminal predilection to vice (as described above), but because of a range of socio-economic and cultural barriers. The official Fairtrade position is explicitly stated in ARM’s official ‘Legislation Guide for Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining’:

There are different reasons that can explain the situation of illegality or informality of this sector, including: the lack of understanding in regulatory terms of the differences between Large Scale Mining (LSM) and ASM; the inappropriate existing regulatory frameworks for ASM; negative preconceptions about ASM, and; the difficulty to regulate ASM in particular situations. (ARM 2011a: 3–4, emphasis added)

In this way, the Fairtrade gold programme includes an official recognition of the importance, at a policy-making level, of the deleterious impact of the negative stereotyping that ASM operators have faced. Moreover, by seeking to present a counter-narrative of struggle and hardship faced by its miners, it casts the miners as victims of structural inequality and not as purveyors of crime.

The discourse of Fairtrade gold is articulated with a deliberate concern towards redressing the negative representations of ASM operators and the words that are chosen in their policy dialogue do so explicitly in order to defy accusations of their inherent criminality, as examined in section 4.2.1. One policy document clearly outlines this position: ‘The concept that there exist categories of ASM that are impossible to regulate is a false concept that is rooted in the idea that there is some “intrinsic nature” in certain peoples, situations or activities that cannot be changed’ (ARM: 2011a: 15). Following this conceptualization, ASM is recognized as a ‘distinct economic and mining sub-sector’ (ARM 2011a: 13). This formulation, along with the focus on the redress of ASM’s negative portrayal, leads to an implicit move away from consumer lobbying and towards a critical analysis of producer relations. This is a significant shift away from erstwhile ethical and Fairtrade campaigning that has tended to place emphasis on consumers to be more responsible in their consumption decisions. Such campaigns ‘often invoke the theme of collective responsibility in the effort to motivate individual behaviour change, implicitly falling back on a model in which responsibility is about
being held liable for the consequences of one's actions’ (Barnett et al. 2011: 7). In the case of the Fairtrade gold movement examined here, the promise of an alternative economic model is heralded through the invocation of responsibility upon state, multilateral and private sector mining policy, and not consumption patterns, to change. By doing so, Fairtrade gold rejects the notion that ASM operators are criminals, describing them instead as victims of an inequitable policy framework.

The Fairtrade gold movement sees the illegality of ASM operators, along with its corollary of criminalization, as a direct consequence of the shortcomings of existing legal structures. In this conceptualization, marginalization of these people is effectively an unavoidable result of a self-perpetuating legal cycle: they are unable to engage in formalized practices because they are considered as simultaneously illegal and criminal, and are hence ignored, by what institutional support mechanisms that there are. However, at the same time, their illegality is determined by little more than the lack of an operating license and says nothing about environmental practices, working conditions, division of labour and so forth. In short, the institutional designation of miners as criminal is entrenched by a legal system that sees it as impossible for ASM operators to operate both without a license and to do so responsibly. The Fairtrade gold movement argues that not only is it possible, but that it is also happening everywhere. It is precisely these miners who Fairtrade is addressing through its lobbying of governments to make the acquisition of small-scale mining licenses more accessible. It is argued that ASM is not a criminal activity, so much as a livelihood choice that is rendered criminal by a poorly conceived legal system. One senior member of the ARM board was explicit in formulating this position: ‘If a particular government decides that they don’t like small-scale mining, they can end up creating laws which are draconian and intellectually not credible, thereby marginalizing, and in some case making it illegal to be a small-scale miner’ (Key Informant 2).

Furthermore, small-scale mining laws are inconsistently codified on a global scale. In the case of Ecuador, as ARM duly notes, ‘small scale mining is considered a mining activity but artisanal mining is considered a subsistence activity. This interpretation results in the restrictions on succession and transferral of rights for the artisanal mining licence’ (ARM 2011a: 14). In Tanzania, ASM includes both the ‘artisanal’ and the ‘small-scale’ as part of a ‘strong, vibrant, well-organized […] small-scale mining industry conducted in a safe and environmentally-sound manner’ (Tanzania Chamber of Energy and Minerals 2011). The distinction here is articulated
through concession size, where mining on an artisanal scale represents the smallest acreage. However, these differences assume a further degree of ambiguity, at least in the 1996 Mining Act, owing to a great number of typographical and grammatical errors. This unclear wording makes a putatively agreed understanding of ASM difficult to achieve and leaves open the possibility of arbitrary and discretionary decision-making.

Such ambiguity was revealed during an interview with a senior member of the Tanzanian Ministry for Energy and Minerals, who stated that,

You can tell when someone is artisanal because they are doing things on the side. You know what I mean. They might not declare their gold for tax purposes. They are criminals you might say. This is not like those small-scale miners who have a PML — they are part of a legal binding system that benefits Tanzania. (Key Informant 5)

Even with legal recognition, being a small-scale miner in Tanzania clearly retains a certain amount of prejudice at the institutional level, where the term, used interchangeably with the ‘artisanal’, can easily come to mean ‘criminal’. Fairtrade gold’s programme aims to change explicitly the vagaries of the legal terminology by encouraging and lobbying for a tighter constitution that gives ASM operators well-defined legal rights.

If recasting the ASM operator as a victim of an unfair legal framework with high barriers to entry, and not as a criminal, provides an alternative explanation of ASM’s informality, then the need to re-inscribe it as a valid livelihood choice, one marked out as a distinct economic sector in which responsible mining is a key component, is presented as the solution. It is ‘crucial’, so ARM argues ‘because it provides the government with basic orientation in terms of the need to create the legal and public policy conditions for the economic and technical [sic] viability of the activity (ARM 2011a: 13). From Fairtrade gold’s perspective, emphasizing the full role that ASM’s operators have to play in a clearly defined economic framework is an essential part of redressing an entrenched view of ASM as criminal. As an official policy document puts it, ‘marginalization typically also generates a culture of informality which cannot be changed overnight. A new business culture needs to emerge and be nurtured’ (ARM 2011a: 9). Fairtrade gold’s discursive shift emphasizing the positive contribution that ASM operators can make has its roots as an entirely political development. Recognition of miners as a positive force can be read as ‘a means to further ends rather than an end
Applying Phillips’s theory of recognition struggles, such a determined effort to counter the prevailing discourse of negativity and criminalization emerges from Fairtrade gold’s political aims. As she invokes, ‘the object is not so much the recognition of the group [ASM’s informal operators] as of equal worth [their licensed counterparts], but the recognition of group specificity in order [sic] […] to achieve a more just distribution of resources between privileged and disadvantaged groups’ (Phillips 2003: 266).

Fairtrade gold’s emergence as a third party spokesperson for marginalized ASM operators is attempting to break a tradition whereby the political voice of miners in response to accusations of their criminality has been lacking hitherto. This has been either due to a lack of agency or sometimes to an enforced silencing. For example, clashes between ASM operators and large-scale mining companies have incited a bellicose media response, which have inscribed ASM identity with representations of infiltration and trespassing (Lange 2011). However, despite the reportedly forced removal and killing of ASM operators, there has remained little media condemnation of the allegations. Indeed, for the international human rights lawyer investigating this case, the limited evidence of a coherent voice from civil society at a public level can be explained by a ‘fundamental asymmetry of power’ (Key Informant 15). During an interview, he elaborated his position:

It is the rural communities, mostly rural communities facing up to these massively rich multinational corporations siding with the violence of the state. And, you know, faced with a kind of a monster, communities have not been able to defend themselves. So, their fundamental problem to me is one of democracy, democracy writ large. Who should be making decisions about allocation of these critical resources? Should they be made by these faceless bureaucracies in Dar es Salaam, Washington and corporate boardrooms, or should they be made through the democratic decision-making processes of communities making decisions about what to do with their resources? It is a question of power as far as I’m concerned. (Key Informant 15)

Here, as with the Fairtrade counterpoint to the discourse of criminality, the ASM operator is defined as the passive victim of institutional injustice in the political allocation of gold extracted on a small scale. The answer in ‘re-representing’ ASM, he contended, resonates strongly with the Fairtrade position by starting with a shift away
from the discursive strategy that ‘artisanal miners are dirty, they destroy the environment, they cheat on government taxes’ and towards a politics of recognition:

All the government needed to do to spark a transformation was to say, to acknowledge the fact that these people [the miners] were undertaking a very important economic activity. Important not just to their own lives and livelihoods but also to the national economy and therefore if it is important, instead of trying to crush them, we will help them by legalizing. (Key Informant 15)

The lawyer’s campaign for a state-led recognition of ASM’s economic legitimacy is founded on the guiding principles of the social and environmental justice framework evoked by Fairtrade gold. However, for Fairtrade gold to draw successfully upon this incipient redress in the media, it must do so against a media culture that has failed to support artisanal miners. As the lawyer stated, the reason for this is clear:

So the problem with the media is, by and large, self-censorship. They would give you stories of the journalists who were attacked last year and the year before because of the critical stories that they were writing, that is true. But that does not account for the kind of compromising of the Tanzanian media. The problem of self-censorship is very big. There is also a problem of simple incompetency. They have killed so many of my good stories simply because they don’t know what to do with the story! They don’t know what the issues are! You know they’ll just kill the story because they don’t know just what a good story they have. (Key Informant 15)

Two issues emerge here in the struggle for recognition of ASM operators. First, there is the significant problem of access to information for Tanzanian civil society. The tight regulation of the press makes it difficult to present information that is critical of the state and, by implication, simultaneously sympathetic to miners. For example, the ‘Tanzanian Newspaper Act’ of 1970 makes it illegal, punishable by a jail sentence, to publish any material deemed ‘seditious’ against the state (GOT 1976). Under the constitutional definition, this means that any material that ‘intends to show that the government has been misled or mistaken in any of its measures’ ([ibid]) can be considered illegal. The implication regarding the reporting and representation of ASM operators is that in criticizing the governmental approach to handling informal ASM, one faces the deterrent of incarceration. Simply put, representing such miners as non-
criminal, valued economic members of society could be rendered ‘seditive’ by the state, undermining the efficacy of any programme of recognition by Fairtrade gold.

The second problem for Fairtrade’s recognition struggle lies in the question of agency. Since ‘recognition politics assumes that subjects are able to speak on their own behalf’ (Valiente, citing Phillips 2003: 256), when the situation exists that they cannot do so (as above) because they are silenced by legal deterrents, damage is done not only to the discursive struggle over the terms of ‘criminal’ or ‘legal’, but also over the socioeconomic prospects for ASM operators. As Fraser’s theory of social and environmental justice contends, redistribution struggles often play out alongside recognition struggles and have substantive effects in the material or ‘real’ world (Fraser 2003).

The Fairtrade movement’s understanding of this informs their focus on a discursive strategy as a starting point in campaigning for a redistribution of wealth to ASM operators. This standpoint was supported by an ARM board member and key figure in the Fairtrade gold movement during a personal interview:

Fairtrade is a business, first and foremost, and because of that we are in the business of making miners more money. But to bring them economically in line to where they should be, you first have to get the policy makers to treat them as equal players in the system. This means winning the hearts and minds of those people who have historically seen them as criminals. They are not criminals. They are ordinary people like you or me trying to make a living with the skills that they have got. We have to get away from calling them degrading terms and start recognizing them as a valuable part of an industry that needs cleaning up. (Key Informant 2)

In returning to the theoretical framework of this argument, this call to recognition for ASM operators by the Fairtrade gold programme can be read as echoing the call made by Fraser to understand the recognition as ‘a question of status’ (Fraser 2003: 32). By recognizing the criminalization of ASM as a form of ‘status subordination’, Fairtrade gold’s counter-discourse of victimization in an inequitable or ‘un-fair’ political economic system provides a platform from which the promise of a new and ‘fairer’ form of governance can be made for ASM operators everywhere.
4.3 Artisanal and Small-Scale Operators: Irrational or Strategic?

4.3.1 ASM as Irrational

Following the examination of the discursive construction of ASM operators as ‘criminal’ and the counter-discourse of ASM as a ‘viable livelihood strategy’, this section examines the discursive nexus between the representation of ASM operators as ‘irrational’ (by policy and media) and, contrarily, ‘strategic’ (by Fairtrade gold). Recalling the first research aim of this project, it is a second way in which the representation of ASM in either negative or positive ways has serious, yet underplayed, political consequences for the shape of governance strategies. The ways in which the construction of ‘irrationality’ is iterated are myriad, encompassing representations that range from the view that ASM operators are ‘morally deficient’ to the notion that they are ‘Victorian’ (*Daily News* 21/11/2009). Each of these terms will be critically analysed in turn before the analysis of Fairtrade gold’s counter-discourse that resituates the ASM operator as ‘strategic’, ‘caring’ and ‘skilled’.

‘Primitivism’ was found to be an implicit understanding of ASM operators from the overwhelming majority of interlocutors interviewed, especially from those directly involved in policy interventions. For example, the Commissioner for Mines in Tanzania described ASM operators as,

very environmentally hazardous and primitive in their methods. They destroy the land, they also use things like mercury and other unwanted chemicals. We try to educate and send them retorts but they use them for two days and then they throw them away! It’s so strange! It’s tough to make them understand because they are not educated. (Key Informant 8)

In this conceptualization, a dichotomy is established that privileges the ‘rational’ knowledge promulgated by the developmental state (‘we try to educate them’) over the ‘primitive’ and destructive practices of the ASM operators. Hence, any efforts made by development interventions to ‘make them understand’ (such as the dissemination of mercury retorts) are thwarted by the miners’ perceived irrationality, and renders the state official himself, rather ironically, incapable of understanding the reasons for their rejection (‘it’s so strange’). This formulation recalls the well-established postcolonial
critique of development discourse that posits ‘a rational, scientific “developer” Self’ as superior to the ‘irrational, “recipient” Other’ (Eriksson Baaz 2005: 114).

The promotion of developmental ‘knowledge’ as a corrective to miners’ perceived primitivism is particularly significant because it places the miners’ themselves, and not the tools which they are using, at the source of operational backwardness. However, this reading by the Tanzanian commissioner jars with the accounts of ASM practices described during life histories recounted by ASM operators themselves. One small-scale miner’s narrative was typical of all those heard during the research:

Although we are using different machinery now, it is still primitive compared to what’s out there. There is no profit in the mining industry, only enough money to get by. In addition to that, there are other reasons why there is no gain in small-scale mining. We don’t have the tools to do the job. So, when I go down the hole it is very difficult to know whether or not there will be gold down there. Nowadays, the gold is down further than it used to be but the minute you hit 100 feet your costs go right up. You are going to need pumps, compressors and all the necessary things. If you are, by a miracle, able to get those things and hence get the gold, there is no government market any more. So you end up having to sell it wherever you can. Even the processing part is so primitive that you land up losing a lot of the gold in the methods that we have to use. (Interview 23)

Here, it is the machinery, and not the level of mining knowledge, used during the processing of gold that is conceived of as ‘primitive’. The miner’s viewpoint is consistent with that iterated in the narratives of ASM operators drawn upon throughout this research. It has a strong sense of awareness of not only the requisite tools to improve productive efficiency (‘pumps, compressors and all the necessary things’), but also that the current status quo of lack of market opportunity and inadequate tools is, in itself, a reason for limited output. As analysed in chapter two, this self-reflexivity presents an account of ASM that is consistent with its reading as a poverty trap (where ‘there is only enough money to get by’). Moreover, when juxtaposed with the state official’s narrative, it offers a rebuttal to accusations of primitivism by displaying both a developed understanding of available ASM technologies and the reasons behind the current methods employed.
The most overt example of ASM’s representation as irrational can be found in the contemporary controversies stirred by a series of albino murders in the Lake Zone region of Tanzania (encompassing the regions of Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara). It has been widely reported both domestically and internationally that the murder and subsequent acquisition of albino body parts are linked to ASM operators’ desire to ‘secure lucky charms for finding minerals and protection against danger while mining’ (Bryceson et al. 2010: 354). The reporting of these events assumes particular significance here because the sensationalist tone of the press discourse reveals specifically defined readings of ASM operators not only as irrational, but also superstitious, poorly educated and dangerous. Additionally, these negative representations of superstition are actually at odds with the concurrent boom in LSM investment in Tanzania that ‘firmly embedded in global commodity and wage labour markets and capitalist profit-optimisation strategies’ (Bryceson et al. 2010: 354).

Since the first report in 2007, albino murders have become one of the key stories to be published by the Tanzanian press with articles appearing almost daily until the time of writing. This press has focused on the links between the violent nature of the killings and the characteristic traits of their perpetrators, increasingly conjectured to be ASM operators. Despite an initial uncertainty concerning the identities of the murderers, the assumption that miners are central to its occurrence is now well-established. As one leading weekly newspaper posited:

The motives behind the killings being witchcraft, it is said that those who are involved believe that albino body parts bring great wealth to their businesses especially in the mining sector […] More than 20 albinos have perished in this primitive, barbaric and satanic business. Regions where the killings have been rampant are Mwanza, Mara, Shinyanga, Kigoma and Kagera. (*East African Business Week* 15/11/2008)

The disturbing and graphic nature of the murders is used to construct an image of miners that not only marks ASM as primitive, but also leads the reader to imagine a superstition at the very heart of the activity — its association with witchcraft is a ‘belief that is mostly due to lack of education’ (*The Citizen* 6/8/2008). Terms such as ‘barbaric’ and ‘satanic’ serve to remove ASM from a modernist view of society, relegating its

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20 There were 94 instances of articles related to the albino murders in Tanzanian newspapers analysed between November 2008 and March 2011, with the vast majority (47) in the latter three months.
operators to a world-view marked by primitivism, iniquity and a lack of civilization. In presenting miners as pre-modern and ‘barbaric’, the image of the invader is again revealed by a crudely defined quest for material wealth. However, this presents something of a paradox when attempting to understand the motivations of miners: although the press, politicians and development workers are quick to reduce the albino murders to a primitive and fetishistic search for financial gain, at the same time, they cite the superstitious and spiritualistic value placed on albino body parts by ASM operators.

Bryceson et al (2011) have argued that the events can be seen as an example of fetish creation. They assert that, ‘in the quest for mutually beneficial exchange and material rewards, miners and waganga [witchdoctors who sell albino body parts] have simultaneously marginalised, dehumanised, objectified and deified albinos, many of whom are among the rural society’s most vulnerable members’ (p. 378). However, they argue that this fetishism goes beyond an irrational commitment to the acquisition of financial gain and reject as ‘grossly simplistic’ the claim that ‘the albino fetish simply reflects primitive beliefs that can be eradicated through education’ (ibid). It is rather, so they continue, an example of cultural negotiation between the existing ‘traditional’, pastoral motivations of the ‘old agrarian order’ and a ‘new, coalescing mining-centered power bloc’ (ibid).

In analysing the discourse of the albino murders, it is argued here that ASM operators are not only presented as fetishistic, but also as objects of fear. In addition to the venality highlighted, the reporting at all geographical scales has constructed a pervasive image of the miner as not only irrational but also as dangerous. This has led to a discursive reduction such that all people involved in ASM are represented as driven ‘to be using albino body parts in their superstitious search for riches’ (The Citizen 20/10/08). This construction fails to acknowledge the specificities of the trade in albino body parts, a specific instance of a supply chain that includes not only the buyers (a diverse and ‘unknown’ demographic that may include miners, fisherman, businessmen and so on) but also the ‘suppliers’ (which include the waganga (witchdoctors) as well as the murderers themselves). Instead, it has been speculatively assumed that it is the miners who are committing the murders. The most widely distributed newspaper in Tanzania asserted that:
The most affected areas are mining and fishing communities in the Lake Zone region…where the belief is rife among fortune seekers…the incidents took a rise last year with reports in some areas of people even exhuming dead bodies to cut off body parts. Some of the parts said to be mostly targeted are genitals, limbs, breasts, fingers and tongues. (*The Citizen* 20/10/08)

Not only do we find the, by now, familiar motif of ‘fortune seeking’ miners being repeated, but the graphic listing of body parts being targeted serves to explain miners’ motivations to commodify the albino victim through a process of dehumanization.

As interest and the levels of sensationalism in the murders has increased, the populist discourse promulgated by the Tanzanian press has moved beyond the universal denigration of ASM operators as irrational towards a position of moral judgement in which the miners’ moral composition has been examined in a series of editorials. One such article opined:

> Albino killing is nefarious murder in cold blood. This can only happen in a rabid world where morons have no qualms about killing socially disadvantaged people […] A normal human being in the moral sense must possess all the characteristic feelings of regret, remorse, fear, anxiety, guilt and righteous indignation. (*Tanzania Daily News* 21/11/09)

In this formulation the ‘morons’ are alleged to be ‘illegal miners’ and ‘fishermen’ (*ibid*), incapable of feeling. This overlaps with the implicit understanding of ASM operators as mercenaries, emotionally detached in their pursuit of gold. But this excerpt also echoes the marginalized status, or ‘status injury’, that was so evident in the epigraph to this chapter. Just as ASM operators were seen to be ‘not like us’, so too are they depicted here as not being a ‘normal human being’. By implying that ASM is ‘a rabid world’, it repeats the idea that its participants are fanatically consumed by the quest for gold, and hence material wealth, above all things. Such is the strength of focus in this pursuit that ASM operators ‘have no qualms about killing’ albinos, so long as it aids the increased acquisition of gold. In this one statement, the miners are simultaneously presented as superstitious, fanatical, abnormal, irrational and, perhaps above all, dangerous.

The trope of the ‘dangerous’ miner also was a recurring feature of the policy and press discourse surrounding ASM. Violent clashes initiated by ‘illegal miners’ are often portrayed as the product of mindless barbarism in the desire to acquire gold. For
example, the international press reported how a leading British gems expert was ‘hacked to death with machetes by a gang of illegal miners who ambushed him’ in the Tanzanian–Kenyan borderlands (The Independent 2009: 13/8). The attack, described by the victim’s son as ‘unfathomable’, saw ‘Eight men with machetes, spears, clubs, knives, bows and arrows appeared shouting “We’re going to kill you all!”’ Then more people came down the mountain like ants, 20 or 30 of them’ (ibid). The report evokes academic research that has highlighted how African conflict is represented as being informed by a particular sense of ‘cultural dysfunction’, one that ‘portrays Africans as anarchic and primitive’ (Kaplan 1999: 105).

Notwithstanding the overtly violent nature of the attacks, the newspaper article nonetheless removes the violence from its socio-economic context (a dispute over mineral rights) and situates it as a symptom of an ‘unfathomable’ and irrational character specific to illegal miners. In this way, such reporting repeats the familiar postcolonial reading of the ‘African other’s’ psyche as ‘incomprehensible, contributing to images of savagery […] and have an especially bizarre and barbaric nature’ (Eriksson Baaz 2006: 143). Moreover, domestic reports of intra-‘tribal’ contestation over mineral resources have tended to focus on ‘sensationalist accounts of […] amputations’ (ibid). One such conflict reported how a small-scale miner

was beaten up and slashed with machetes, which made his fellow miners, armed with clubs, machetes, spears and stones, start hunting for Sonjes. Eyewitness said that in a move to revenge, the miners yesterday decided to invade the Sonje tribe. (TOMRIC: 6/10/2000)

As Eriksson Baaz (2006) concludes, ‘such revelling in the methods of fighting and killing recycle and amplify stereotypes of primitivism and barbarism’ and, hence of ASM as an activity characterized by irrationalism and danger.

Whilst this representation was evident in the albino murders discourse and with reference to opportunistic banditry in gold producing areas, it is also revealed in the interactions between ASM and LSM on major mining concessions. Violent clashes between large-scale and ASM operators are a well-recorded aspect of the study of gold markets in many parts of Africa (Ferguson 2006; Hilson 2007). In Tanzania, they have been reported with reference to confrontation at the Barrick Gold-owned sites of Bulyanhulu and North Mara. Allegations by the leading human rights lawyer in Tanzania that 52 resident small-scale miners were killed in the land clearing process of
the Bulyanhulu mine have been largely refuted by a World Bank ombudsman (Key Informant 15). However, as the official government report concluded, these allegations have had ‘consequences on the business reputation and trading ability of a private enterprise and on the individuals concerned’ (Barrick 2011). These ramifications were contended to be bad for the role of civil society, bad for the reform of the World Bank Group that many actors seek, and ultimately bad for the people in whose name the allegations are made, for they are at the end of the day manipulated and even more voiceless. Who will listen to them now? (Ibid)

The marginalization and ‘voicelessness’ of ASM operators is evident in the most contemporary policy directives even at an official, state-led level. For example, the new ‘Mineral Act’ of Tanzania, passed in 2010, has extensively amended the terms of large-scale mining (including the retention of larger royalties and taxation from large firms). However, amendments to small-scale mining policy and ‘illegal mining’ are entirely absent from its wording, continuing its de facto policy of ‘no interaction’ with those people operating without a licence. The above analysed representations of miners as criminal, irrational or, as will be shown in section 4.4, irresponsible, fail to mitigate against the status injury suffered by ASM operators.

4.3.2 The Rational, Strategic Miner

Fairtrade gold’s resituating of ASM operators aims to establish a discursive platform from which to introduce substantive changes realized by its standard setting criteria. Here, in tackling environmental injustice, it casts the ASM operator as capable of rational thought processes, having agency over the strategic planning of his practices going forward. Perhaps the key pillar of what it means to be a ‘Fairtrade gold miner’ is, in this formulation, a concern for the issue of environmental and economic sustainability. By doing so, it presents further evidence of how Fairtrade gold aims to be more than just a ‘new form of environmental governance’ (ILO 1999). Rather it is fundamentally concerned with a ‘procedure to reduce distributive and recognition-based injustice’ (Tschakert 2009b: 709) in ASM. In this way, it clearly resounds with Fraser’s proposition that in order to confront perceived environmental and social injustices, there
is a need for ‘participatory parity’ or ‘equality of status’ in order for social transformation to occur (Fraser 2001; Tschakert 2009). To this end, it is the processes of respect for cultural value and a rewriting of how the marginalized are represented that are foregrounded in the Fairtrade gold movement’s depiction of ASM operators.

This discursive shift by the Fairtrade gold movement inscribes the figure of the artisanal miner with a positive, more robust sense of ‘cultural value’. The Fairtrade gold producer is, rather than irrational and dangerous, described as caring for the environment, traditional in his approaches to gold processing and skilled in terms of the quality of the gold that he is able to extract. The movement’s promotional material frames this new understanding succinctly. Artisanal miners, it asserts:

are compatible with the mining techniques that have been ancestrally used by the Afro-Colombian communities [such as panning]; chemicals, such as cyanide or mercury, are not used, while land reclamation through the application of analog [sic.] forestry techniques has a central role in the scheme. (ARM, 2007: 23)

The reclamation of the ‘traditional’ is here characterized by representations of the Fairtrade producer as ‘ancestral’. In doing so, it marks a break from the normative understanding of ASM operators as backward and irrational. For example, gold panning, rather than being a sign of primitivism and technological incapacity becomes a marker for care, a deliberate ‘technique’ that is written into a particular culture. Such techniques are part of a ‘scheme’ and a strategy that involves the skilled use of the surrounding environment. In this way, this discourse aims to locate the idea of ‘artisanship’ within a positive framework of ‘good governance, legality, participation and respect for diversity’ (ARM, 2007: 4).

The strategizing and planning mentioned in the Fairtrade gold literature also hints at a further dimension in arguing for environmental justice for ASM operators. The normative understanding of ASM as a transient, temporary activity by policy makers, state actors and development organizations is subverted by Fairtrade gold’s discourse of ancestral mining developed over hundreds of years. By giving miners a sense of place, tying them to a fixed location for their operations over a long period of time, Fairtrade gold draws parallels with contemporary academic research into ASM, which has suggested that miners rather than being irrational and motivated by a ‘rush’
mentality employ a decision-making process that is ‘rational in view of the economic alternatives’ (Jonsson and Bryceson 2009: 275).

Fairtrade gold’s *modus operandi* is premised on a discourse of partnership — it is the major recurring theme in all the literature studied and was a regular feature of interviews with key stakeholders in the Fairtrade movement. By bringing ASM producers into the collective institutional framework that helps define the Fairtrade identity, the movement better positions previously marginalized operators in engaging with existing policy frameworks. In other words, being part of a ‘Fairtrade family’ (Key Informant 1), ASM operators can assume many of the traits that are implied by Fairtrade more broadly. As the secretary general of ARM explicitly stated:

> These miners need our help. Governments, companies, even development workers sometimes tend to see them as these unthinking, disorganized mercenaries who want nothing but money. But if you can say that you are a Fairtrade gold miner, then you can say that you are organized, have solid democratic structures, think rationally with clear strategies in place for the development of your enterprise. This is part of what it means to be a Fairtrade miner; not just having more money, and mining in a more responsible manner, but doing so with respect. You get respect. And this is something that has been missing in a lot of gold producing countries. (Key Informant 1)

In this way, Fairtrade’s certification promises ‘respect’ for miners, together with the myriad counterpoints of rationality and organization that serve as rebuttals to the normative representations of irrationality and disorganization. It is a clearly defined part of ARM’s commitment to the values of social justice and a strategic attempt to remedy the ‘status injury’ suffered by ASM operators.

Fairtrade’s commitment to social and environmental justice for ASM operators can also be found in its standards for Fairtrade certification. For example, there is critical regard given to securing rights for miners through a capabilities approach to justice. This approach pays attention to ‘how distributed goods and bads affect people’s well-being, their functioning and agency, and how they can be transformed to support the flourishing of individuals and communities’ (Tschakert 2009: 709). The theory, popularized by Sen (2005, 2010) and Nussbaum (2000, 2006), promotes the capability to determine one’s ‘bodily health and integrity, control over one’s environment, freedom of expression, and the right to determine one’s notion of a good life’
(Tschakert 2009b: 709). Such concerns are clearly articulated by the FLO/ARM standards document and can be seen as mirroring the aforementioned list. Evidence for this is found in the sections of the Fairtrade standard variously dedicated to ‘health and safety in the workplace’, ‘ecological restoration and ecosystem health’, ‘freedom of association and collective bargaining’ and ‘social development’ (ARM 2010: 2-3). In all cases it is asserted that ‘the rights of artisanal and small-scale miners must be respected, and their violation, denounced’ (ARM 2010: 9).

An interview with a senior board member of ARM also highlighted the deliberative targeting of the standards as a means to transformation:

Changing the way that ASM works starts by changing the way that it is talked about. What is the point in putting in policies if the miners themselves are viewed in these profoundly negative ways? Just look at what is levelled at these people; criminal, wreckers of the environment, irrational. You name it, they get it. Now, I am not saying that some of these miners aren’t culpable in some way, but the notion that they are all dangerous or haphazard in their approaches is just nonsensical. What ARM tries to do is to address this fallacy. That starts by actually writing our position into our standards, our constitution if you like. The struggle for better social and economic access to rights is founded on the idea of respect. We put that respect down in writing. It is there for everyone to see. (Key Informant 2)

In this excerpt, recognition struggles have a dual approach. As before, it takes its inspiration from Fraser’s status model of recognition by ‘expressly integrating claims for recognition with claims for redistribution’ (Fraser 2003:31). ASM operators are discursively transformed, making alterations to their projected identity, but this is done in order to secure a better economic, and thus redistributive, outcome. To be specific, as the same interviewee iterated:

The economic benefits of being a Fairtrade certified miner only come about at the moment that they are respected as equals. This means that the days where we think it is acceptable that miners are thought of as, universally speaking, irrational are over. It is unacceptable. They are not, they can be long term strategists who have full cognitive control over their lives and decisions. That is the message that we need to communicate to national governments and to the world. (Key Informant 2)
Thus, it is that the ‘unacceptable’ discourse of irrationality is replaced by Fairtrade’s representation of ASM operators as rational. As with the reversal of the criminalization discourse revealed in section 4.2 and the critique of the discourse of irresponsibility below, this aims to resituate ASM as an important and equal part of mining policy globally.

4.4 Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners: From Irresponsible to Stewards of the Environment

4.4.1 ASM as Irresponsible, Short Termist and Transient

Following representations as criminal and irrational, the third major theme that emerged during this research was the view that ASM operators were *irresponsible* on account of both a short-term approach to mining and a lack of organization in their activities. This frequently led to complaints from public officials, voiced through media outlets, that ASM directly contributed to the degradation of the environment. A common understanding of ASM organization at all levels studied was that ‘the artisan miners operate in groups of three to five men. They use hand-held shovels to dig out low-grade ore, then move the ore in polythene bags to surrounding villages, where women and children extract the gold using mercury’ (*The Citizen* 5/12/09).

This understanding of the organizational structure of ASM activity was universally held by all interviewees as well as by the press reports. Artisanal and small-scale miners were characterized by their use of rudimentary tools and the prevalence of child labour was considered to be the *status quo* at ASM sites. The basic level of mining equipment used, served to bolster the view of ASM operators as primitive (as analysed above in section 4.3) and, whilst the existence of child labour was condemned by all public officials interviewed (and is illegal under the terms of both Tanzanian mining law and Fairtrade gold standards), it was held to be a social fact. A senior representative of APM (the focus of the case study presented in chapter five) iterated that, even at a ‘responsible’ ASM site,\(^{21}\) children are ‘milling about shall we say and they are idle. I...

\(^{21}\) Fair Trade gold’s commissioned study into potential pilot projects for Fair Trade-certified gold in Tanzania concluded that there were two possible sites that could be considered
definitely saw them at the Katente co-operative. They were not minding it I should say’ (Key informant 10).

However, perhaps owing to the political sensitivity of the subject, the issue of child labour was not considered by interviewees with respect to the socioeconomic dimensions in which it was found. It was rather rejected as an example of ‘irresponsible’ mining practices. This argument resonates with critical enquiry into child labour in ASM in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. For example, Hilson’s analysis of ASM in Ghana reveals that ‘policymakers are poorly acquainted with the various dimensions of the poverty plaguing the ASM sector in sub-Saharan Africa: why it is poverty driven; why operators find themselves trapped in poverty; and ultimately, the underlying reasons why children are increasingly caught up in this impoverishment’ (Hilson 2008: 1244, emphasis in original). Similarly, here, little effort is made to understand the socio-economic context that informs the presence of child labour and is instead, in the words of the Tanzanian Commissioner for Mines, dismissed as ‘a part of ASM that is flatly dismissed and roundly condemned by the state’ (Key Informant 8).

Much of the ‘irresponsible’ discourse centres on the notion that ASM is a highly disorganized activity. According to the policy officials interviewed, such thinking pervaded not only the conceptual basis for the failure of policy intervention, but has also been a feature of many academic studies into ASM. An official from APM, for example, expressed frustration at the difficulty in enacting policy reform:

One of the biggest challenges is that one of the main associations in the area, MwaReMA, unfortunately is very disorganized. They are supposed to protect the small-scale mining community by lobbying for their needs, better equipment, and so on. However, MwaReMA is very corrupt. We tried to align with them and work together when we set up the first centre in Nyarugusu. Unfortunately, they took us for a lot of money, taking loans with no intention of paying us back. It’s like this for ASM in general here. (Key Informant 10)

In this example, the disorganization that marks the union of small-scale miners in the Mwanza region (MwaReMA) is iterated as symptomatic of ‘ASM in general’. This lack of organization, so it is argued by the APM employee, is analogous to the problem of ‘responsible’: the Katente co-operative in Ushirombo and David Liundi in Nyaragusu (Key Informant 3). This forms two case studies at the end of chapter 6.
corruption. The miners’ predetermined will to steal (‘taking loans with no intention of paying us back’) resonates with the thievery discourse analysed in section 4.2, but it also represents something more endemic. That ‘disorganization’ can be seen here as a by-word for ‘corruption’ is particularly relevant when analysing the mining industry more broadly. Tanzania, like many other mineral-rich states in sub-Saharan African, has made visible commitments to counter allegations of occluded access to the economic transparency in mineral transactions. Their contemporary commitment to the World Bank’s Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI²²) has emerged primarily, for example, to safeguard investment opportunities for foreign multinational mineral corporations. However, in becoming the most visible of recent policy interventions in the political economy of mineral rents, the EITI assumes that it is corruption, dishonesty and irresponsibility that are the motors of poor developmental gains.

The problem with this line of argument is that, in this formulation, corruption and irresponsibility are inherent to practices at all scales of mineral development (including ASM) and become the issue that results in underdevelopment. The EITI’s conceptualization of the problems that mark mining in sub-Saharan Africa fail to address or even recognize the deeper-rooted barriers to more fairly distributed economic rents not just for ASM operators, but also for mineral-rich states (such as Tanzania) in general. Representations of mineral-rich states like Tanzania, and their participants as ‘irresponsible’ and ‘corrupt’, should perhaps not be surprising because by doing so, the EITI can eschew criticism that economic gains overwhelmingly favour foreign multinational mining corporations and not community level development. As Bracking theorizes:

In assessments of relative power, political theorists have long stressed that the powerful are often those who make decisive issues about their behaviour ‘disappear’ from view. In this case, profit sharing is removed from political space, since the problem of reporting and transparent accounting crowds it out. This is further a good example of that phenomenon, since the case that corruption is critical to maldevelopment is actually weak, but is taken as a given, thus taking attention away from the critical a priori division of reward in mining to legitimate stakeholders. (Bracking 2009: 7)

²² The EITI is a multi-stakeholder initiative that ‘aims to join together in a common purpose governments, companies, civil society groups, investors and international organizations to improve governance in resource-rich countries, in order to defeat the ‘resource curse’ and bring benefits to the public in economic growth and poverty reduction’ (Bracking 2009: 3).
Accusations of a mineral sector defined by ‘irresponsibility’ and poor levels of organization render the needs of ASM operators further marginalized as the state concerns itself with a commitment to multi-lateral level policy initiatives. At the same time it embeds the ‘culturalist’ assumptions that Tanzanian miners are anathema to the World Bank’s defined aims of development. Whilst economic malpractice is certainly present in Tanzania, as is the case elsewhere, ‘the poor economic performance of Africa’s conventional mineral producers’ can be seen ‘more [as] a result of inequitable mining codes than poor governance’ (Hilson and Machonachie 2009: 87). This argument counters that voiced by a Tanzanian official in the Ministry of Mines during a private interview — that ‘systems like the EITI, to which we are signatory, are in place to make sure that the whole thing — from us to the small guys with pick axes — is cleaned up’ (Key Informant 5). Thus, ASM operators are subsumed into a policy discourse of anti-corruption, a discourse that has little interest in tackling the underlying reasons behind the poverty trap in which many find themselves.

The most widely recurring way in which the theme of irresponsibility was articulated was with regard to ASM operators’ purportedly negative impact on the environment. This, in turn, was mostly revealed through miners’ use, and mismanagement, of mercury in gold processing, but was also made evident regarding deforestation and the abandoning of erstwhile mine sites. The World Bank country officer for Tanzania summarized these accusations of ‘irresponsibility’ succinctly, noting that ‘they pose environmental degradation by leaving the pits, by using mercury irresponsibly to the extent that sometimes they contaminate the land and water’ (Key Informant 4). Academic study has also, at times, been quick to attach blame to ASM operators and their deleterious impact on the environment. Gibb (2006), for example, contends that ‘legacies of years of continued exploitation, ignorance, inability to comply and blatant disregard on the part of the miners, added to the powerlessness and ineffectiveness of faraway government bureaucracies to enforce these regulations, has meant that ASM continues to function at the expense of the environment’ (p. 52). Clearly, artisanal and small-scale miners are not only associated with environmental damage, but also with a large degree of irresponsibility, inclusive of accusations of either ignorance or deliberate mismanagement of responsible mercury usage.
This theme was continued by a World Bank project official who emphasized the need for responsibility in managing environmental resources. According to this argument, ASM operators have clearly defined responsibilities:

to operate, to do the operations legally within the framework of the laws of the state. Then, they also have a responsibility that puts them to do it in a manner that mitigates some environmental degradation and that does not expose their workers to dangerous chemicals like mercury. We have been to the sites recently and you see them handling mercury. I don’t know whether they know or they don’t know. Actually, you can guess which way I’d answer that if I had to. (Key Informant 4)

The rhetorical questioning of miners’ level of understanding regarding mercury’s dangers reveals an underlying suspicion amongst policy makers that ASM operators understand, but choose to ignore, policies and educational training initiatives that aim to encourage responsible mercury usage. Certainly, there was a widespread view amongst small-scale miners in the area researched that the dangers inherent to mercury were well known. In only two cases out of the 40 oral life histories narrated was a sense of ignorance regarding mercury training articulated. One man, who claimed to having been actively mining for over twenty years, explained how mercury training had been received and understood, but that it failed to engage with the heart of the problem.

A: We haven’t had any support financially. The only kind of support that we have gotten has been educational. We have been taught on numerous occasions by VETA on the correct ways to use mercury and explosives.

Q: Has this training helped?

A: The education has not really helped because we have been taught but we don’t have the necessary tools to actually make the changes. We are knowledgeable but, for the things that matter — like too much water, unsafe air — we can’t do anything about it. It’s nice to be knowledgeable, but without the necessary tools, it is not going to change anything. (Interview 16)

Here, it can be seen how the explanations for the lack of reform in the practices of mercury handling given by the World Bank officer (that ‘they don’t know’) and the
small-scale miner (that ‘we are knowledgeable’) contradict one another. Indeed, despite the consensus in both cases that mercury practices in ASM are not changing, strong and divergent assertions are evident regarding the motivations for its continuing usage. For small-scale miners, it is because there has been a lack of support financially, whilst for the World Bank official, it is because ASM operators are fundamentally, by their nature, irresponsible and untrustworthy. Moreover, such mistrust (as another form of status injury), has substantive financial implications, denying ASM operators access to micro-credit or the extension of micro-loans. According to one small-scale miner in Ruamgasa, the view of policy makers towards ASM is part of a cultural homogenization that marginalizes certain miners economically: ‘because of the unfortunate actions of a few people, they don’t trust any of us. Even for the trustworthy ones, if we try to get a loan we are told “no”’ (Interview 14). In short, the discursive construction of miners as irresponsible helps to situate their political and economic marginalization.

The final way that the discourse of irresponsibility in ASM was expressed was through the notion of operators as short-term and highly transient. ASM operators, in this manifestation, migrate on the strength of oral accounts concerning where new gold deposits have been discovered. Upon their movement to new gold-rich areas, and following the subsequent exhaustion of mineral resources, the mine sites are abandoned and the movement to new deposits is recommenced, thus repeating the migratory process. This standpoint was either explicitly or implicitly contended by all interviewees involved at all levels of ASM policy formation. For example, the manager of one of the Fair Trade Gold Buying Centres in Nyaragusu argued that such transient behaviour applied to all types of small-scale miners, including Primary Mining Licence holders:

You would think that the PML holders are fairly settled, but they are not permanent. They would shift at a stroke whenever news arrives that there has been a gold rush somewhere. They would go straight to that place. So you’ll see a good deal of the miners here are not really tenants. So they would shift at any given moment in time when they hear that there is a gold rush nearby or some other place. But as soon as the gold rush gets exhausted they will come back to their place and they will come back to their original mine. (Key Informant 12)
The representation of ASM operators as ‘environmental criminals’ (Tschakert 2008: 1307) that ‘rush’ to the nearest gold deposit evokes long-standing and deeply entrenched stereotypes of other historically infamous ‘gold rushes’ in California and Australia. Such a historical imagination was repeated by a leading policy official working for APM who hypothesized that the ASM sites in Mwanza ‘are like the wild west minus 50 years’ (Kathleen Charles). In returning to the environmental and social justice framework, such misrecognition can be seen to be expressive of ‘disrespect, devaluation, disenfranchisement, and oppression […] preventing them from participating, from having a “place at the table” and speaking for themselves’ (Tschakert and Singha 2007: 1318). Contrary to this misrecognition and building on the work of Fraser (2003), the notion of an environmental justice that argues for ‘fair treatment’ for those who are marginalized can be seen to have been appropriated in the ideology of the Fairtrade gold movement.

4.4.2 Fairtrade Gold: A Vision for Responsible Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining

ARM’s and FLO’s collaborative vision for ASM is prefixed by the need for the activity to be recognized as responsible. This is expressly stipulated in its foundational standards document that frames all subsequent standards by a definition of this aim:

Responsible ASM actively encourages better preventive and restorative environmental practices and the application of responsible methods of production. Responsible miners abide by the environmental laws in their countries, contribute to environmental protection, human health and ecological restoration in its operations and communities, and mitigate negative impacts. Respecting protected areas, avoiding damaging important biodiversity, minimizing the ecological footprint of mining, and, where possible restoring or replacing biodiversity, and where this is not possible, compensating for that residual loss, are principles for environmental protection. (ARM 2010: 9)

Within this view of responsibility, there is clearly an emphasis on the importance of environmental stewardship. Countering the image of ASM operators as ‘environmental terrorists’ (Key Informant 7), as a government district officer from Geita described them, they are rather situated as ‘restorers’ and ‘protectors’ of the environment. This placing of a positive perspective on the potential for responsible ASM can be seen on
the Fairtrade Foundation website. There, the ‘Fair Trade miners’ are described as having the purpose to ‘safeguard the surrounding environment’ (Fairtrade Foundation 2011). By placing this view so prominently in their promotional material, they go some way toward answering the call from social and environmental justice activists for an increase in the number of positive narratives of environmental care. As Tschakert (2009) posits, ASM ‘needs compelling accounts that demonstrate that small operators can and want to be good environmental stewards and that they can flourish as recognized and valued citizens’ (p. 30).

The conviction to emphasize ASM’s potential for responsibility is reaffirmed by Fairtrade gold apologists with reference to Tanzania. ARM’s director for example stated:

The situation is no different for miners in Tanzania. I’m sure that the potential for responsible mining is there as it has been in Latin America. The notion that Tanzanian miners, or anyone from elsewhere for that matter, are naturally predisposed to damaging the environment is rubbish, for want of a better word. Tanzanian miners, we feel, are prime examples of how Fairtrade can make a difference. I mean, the opportunity to make ASM responsible is there — the miners just need the framework to make it possible. (Key Informant 1)

Here there is displayed a fundamental faith that Fairtrade can provide an institutional framework within which ASM can flourish based on a reversal of the normative view that miners are irresponsible. It is yet another example of the commitment to social justice; it is, in short, ‘a revision of the stigmatizing galamsey [illegal mining] discourse from contaminating criminals to responsible environmental stewards’ that is an essential part of the drive for greater recognition and, thus redistributive justice, for ASM operators (Tschakert 2009b: 720).

Fairtrade gold also seeks to counter the myth that ASM operations are disorganized. Notwithstanding the fact that groups of miners vary in the size and level of organization, the assumption that Fairtrade gold seeks to build upon is that there is always some level of organization. Indeed, the ARM secretary asserted that, ‘the point is that miners are always organized in some way or another. What Fairtrade aims to do is to provide a particular structure and set of procedures that gives them the space to

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23 An overview of the way in which miners organize is provided in section 5.3.
participate more fully in a fairer system’ (Key Informant 1). In Tanzania, a country that remains marked by the assumption that mining communities lack suitable levels of governance, echoes of those (enduring) colonial stereotypes that Tanzanians are ‘suffocatingly disorganized’ can be heard (Eriksson Baaz 2005: 115). This presents a major challenge to the social justice imperatives of the Fairtrade gold movement.

The extent of the challenge facing Fairtrade — specifically, the task of overturning the negative discrimination facing ASM operators — was made clear by one researcher employed by ARM to undertake an initial scoping exercise in Tanzania. In a meeting with top government officials in the Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MEM), the researcher expressed her frustrations at the beliefs found at the state level:

It’s very difficult when you speak to government officials there [Tanzania]. They talk about miners being disorganized — like a rabble. But honestly, they should look at themselves. The sense of joined-up government is just not there. Information seems to get lost between one person and the next — that, to me is disorganized. And yet, they are so quick to say that ‘the problem with ASM is the level of disorganization’. I’d have to say to that one of the biggest issues that Fairtrade will have is getting strong lines of communication in motion with the Tanznian government. (Key Informant 3)

Notwithstanding the allegations of disorganization at a state level, the salient point to draw from the researcher is that there remains an unshakeable assumption, at the state level, that ASM is a fundamentally disorganized activity. That this belief persists not only contradicts extant academic studies which show how the complex but workable ways that ASM operators do organize themselves, but also acts as something of an indictment of recent government policy to improve and formalize this aspect of ASM. For example, more recent studies have concluded that ‘miners have developed an intricate system of labour organization, which features hierarchies, shift work and allowances’ (Gratz 2010: 151). This understanding was supported by this research where, as will be discussed in more detail in section 5.3, ASM operators in Geita district all had well-defined roles for their mineral extraction, processing and marketing. The reference to the failed government policy reveals one possible reason for the stereotypical view of disorganization. The Tanzanian Government, for example, made it mandatory for each mining region to have an association representing miners (Regional Miners Associations). This was seen by claim holders as a platform for greater
advocacy and lobbying work. However, as one government official asserted, these have failed because ‘the people who run these things are more than miners, they are politicians motivated by their own greed and are organized with only the simple aim to maximize their personal gain’ (Key Informant 5). In returning to the ARM researcher’s above assertion over the government’s, and not ASM’s, level of disorganization, Fairtrade’s strategies for transformational form of ASM governance becomes clear. As the researcher concluded:

The challenge and, in a way, duty for the FT [Fairtrade] movement is to overturn some of the prejudice over the ways in which miners are represented as disorganized. Actually, it is also to expose and highlight some of the ways in which government transparency and organization could be improved. This would, of course, need to be worded with extreme sensitivity as the government would be an important partner in working towards fairer systems for these miners. (Key Informant 3)

The final mode of irresponsibility that the Fairtrade gold programme seeks to overturn is that of short-termism. In contrast to this, the movement instead presents a counter-narrative of planning and long-term environmental management. A case study in ARM’s ‘Guide to Responsible Mining’ emphasizes how ASM can be considered responsible in this way:

We, as artisanal miners, have a duty to our families and communities to ensure that what we are doing is sustainable in the longer term and does not destroy our environment […]. We need to learn how to use clean, non-polluting technologies that will not only preserve our environment but also help us recover increased quantities of metals. (ARM 2008: 9)

Here, there is an iterated desire for self-improvement that is expressed as a means of being more ‘sustainable’. Such long-term environmentalism is a regular feature of Fairtrade literature that seeks to promote miners as long-term environmental stewards. In this light, the secretary of ARM said during an interview that, ‘what is needed is more positive examples of environmental management from artisanal miners. Something that says “we can plan, we can be responsible and look after our long term strategies”. We are always listening out for stories that can present the positive side of ASM. It is something that we can use to repair some of the damaged reputations of these miners’ (Key Informant 1).
One such ‘story’ could have come from one ASM site visited during this research. The small concession in question (the site has recovered 17kg of gold since its first operations in 1986) produced a narrative of environmental responsibility and a concern for the sustainable management of the area surrounding the mine site itself. Because of this, it has been evaluated by a preliminary Fairtrade scoping exercise to ascertain its suitability for potential certification in the future and is analysed in more detail in section 6.3.2. During the recounting of his life history, the owner of the concession explained his long-term strategy for the site.

So I thought why not try to take care of a few trees and maybe at some point it will help. So that is exactly what I did. Some of the trees are small but a lot of the trees are quite large now and everyone gets shade and there are enough that some can be used for firewood, some of it will be used eventually for building. But the vast majority I will keep to make sure that the land doesn’t revert back to what it was before. (Interview 17)

This expressed concern for sustainable management of the surrounding fauna correlates strongly with the representation of erstwhile Fairtrade-certified gold sites in Latin America. For example, in describing one such Fairtrade co-operative, a leading Fairtrade jeweller pronounced that,

These conscientious miners practice the environmentally and socially responsible technique of analog forestry, which restores ecosystems, soil fertility, and food productivity. In areas where the soil’s fertility is severely compromised, they are judiciously introducing vegetable species that rehabilitate and restore nutrients to the soil. (Brilliant Earth 2011)

The concept of analog forestry discussed resonates with the methods employed by the Tanzanian miner highlighted before. Moreover, its wider adoption into the mining culture of Geita is something that the miner feels is an inevitable, though potentially long-term, move towards greater responsibility in the region. To explain his view, he used the following analogy:

Let’s say that all of us in this room sleep in the same room, it doesn’t mean that we all open the door at the same time in the morning. It was me that started this in this area, but
I have already seen people that are now following my example and starting to take a bit more care of the environment while they mine. (Interview 17)

4.5 Moving beyond Discourse — Fair Trade Gold in Practice

Though the Fairtrade gold programme is in its infancy, it has been argued in this chapter that its strategy is clear. It aims, through a process of recognition and claims for redistribution, to rewrite ASM operators worldwide into a mainstream policy discourse that treats them as equal partners. With reference to Tanzanian ASM, it has been shown how the discourses of criminalization, irrationality and irresponsibility have been counter-narrated as victimhood, rationalism and responsibility, respectively. This trilogy of narratives can be seen as working in two distinct modes. First, Fairtrade’s discursive claims for recognition engage both in an educative capacity for consumers and as a means of lobbying ‘unjust’ state policies and attitudes towards ASM. At this level of discourse, it makes claims to repair the ‘status injury’ suffered by ASM operators in their marginalized position. Secondly, however, it makes substantive, political claims to justice. In other words, its blueprint for ‘getting gold humanely’ (Tschakert 2009b: 731) includes a set of principles and standards through which ASM can be seen as legitimate, responsible and thus economically viable for its practitioners. Above all, the chapter has addressed the ways in which the representation of ASM is embedded in politics — it is both a political process and has political consequences for ASM operators.

As the Fairtrade gold movement makes contemporary assessments over the locations and suitability of pilot projects in sub-Saharan Africa, this thesis turns its attention in the following chapter to the substantive ways in which Fairtrade intersects with the challenges facing the governance of ASM in Tanzania. Specifically, it does this through a critical examination of the impact that the emergence of four newly constructed ‘Fair Trade Gold Centres’ has had on ASM operators in Geita district, questioning not only how this new form of governance affects livelihoods in the area, but also how the discursive shift towards ‘fair’ mining analysed in this chapter is understood in more material ways.
5.1 Introducing African Precious Metals (APM)

Following Fairtrade’s scoping of Tanzania for ASM gold sites for potential certification, this chapter concerns itself with the critical study of what ‘Fair Trade Gold’ might look like on the ground through a case study of three ‘Fair Trade Gold Centres’ (FTGCs) in Tanzania which have been built and facilitated by the Federal Bank of the Middle East (FBME). It should be noted that these are ideologically and substantively distinct from the ARM/FLO version of ‘Fair Trade’. Notwithstanding this disjuncture, African Precious Metals (APM), a subsidiary of the aforementioned bank, provides services for ASM operators in the area that, according to its chairman, promise ‘to provide a new, fairer, more just way of trading gold in the region’ (Key Informant 9).

Moreover, APM has an affiliated link with the more official work of ARM through its position as a key member of the ARM ‘Stakeholder Alliance’. These global networks of NGOs and businesses have a series of functions in terms of their relationship with the development of FT/FM gold including the provision of ‘high level advice on strategy and policies’ and ‘on issues that may affect ARM’s ability to implement its programme and achieve its specific goals’ (ARM 2011e). In short, APM does have a key role to play, not only in the enacting of a particular business model based on the rhetoric of ‘Fair Trade’, but also in the very formation of FT/FM standard setting. However, as shall become apparent throughout the following case study of APM, despite these rhetorical links, much of the work done by APM remains largely disconnected from the aims of the FT/FM approach propounded by ARM and much of the minutiae of APM’s work is largely unfamiliar to the broader FT/FM network. Indeed, a cursory inspection of the ARM website, which stipulates that ‘APM Gold has constructed five Fair Trade Centres’ (APM 2011f), reveals the failure to fully understand APM’s operations owing to the fact that there are only four such centres, the fifth not being built owing to operational problems which are critically analysed in this chapter.
APM’s so-called ‘new’ modes of fairness are centred on improvements made in four key areas. First, an improvement in communications and understanding of global gold market prices for ASM operators through the provision of free internet access. Secondly, the provision of microfinance for ASM operators to invest in improvements to their mineral concessions. Thirdly, improved transparency by allowing miners to witness the measuring and weighing of their gold at the point of sale. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the promise of the ‘best available price’ in exchange for legally acquired gold (Key Informant 12). Each of these policy areas, when critically analysed, as we shall see in section 5.4, poses significant challenges to the efficacy not only of APM’s strategy, but also to the potential application of the ARM/FLO FT/FM model to the Tanzanian context.

The analysis of this case study remains of central importance to the study of Fairtrade gold more broadly because on the one hand many of its ethical pillars (such as transparency, justice and better price) correlate with the FLO/ARM standards, whilst on the other ‘there is no difference between one “Fairtrade” and another “Fair Trade”’ for many of the miners studied during this research (interview 23). In short, this is a chapter that is concerned with the challenges facing the governance and marketing of ASM gold in Tanzania, the barriers to implementing a new and ‘fairer’ means of doing so, and a critical examination of the convergences and divergences between what ASM operators and business/development interventions conceptualize as ‘fair’.

Structurally, section 5.2 presents a narrative of ASM gold marketing in the district of Geita through the oral life histories and semi-structured interviews of long-term ASM operators in the region. In section 5.3, two supply chains are constructed in diagrammatic form to show both how ASM is currently organized and how it is supplied when marketed through APM. It is difficult, if not impossible, to fully categorize the separate stages of gold production though these diagrams, but it is precisely this complexity that the Fairtrade model aims to simplify. To this end, these supply chains serve as a precursor to the construction of a full Fair Trade gold supply chain in Tanzania, which is depicted in the following chapter, section 6.1. Having explained the governance and marketing arrangements of ASM in Geita, section 5.4 analyses critically the interventions of APM by addressing the four key modes of fairness identified in the opening paragraph of this chapter.
5.2 An Oral History of ASM Gold Marketing in Tanzania

During the course of enacting a set of research methods that included at their heart an emphasis of the importance of multiple truths, one key epistemological question arose. This was namely that in attempting to sketch a brief history of development intervention into ASM in Geita, the frames of analysis regarding the definition of distinct periods of time was at odds with the narratives of ASM operators, who understood their history as a continuous process defined predominantly by their levels of economic marginalization. In other words, the intention to draw together an understanding of miners’ experiences of ASM under different political administrations failed to mirror the narrated stories of ASM operators, who had a tendency to see such temporal divides as meaningless. As one miner said, ‘what is the point of asking how was it under Mwinyi, how was it under Kikwete? It’s all the same. Nothing. You received no support from any of them. To me all that matters is who was buying my gold, at what price, and how were my living conditions’ (interview 25). It was clear that this discrepancy had resulted from a desire on the part of the researcher to compartmentalize different periodizations, which reflected the researcher’s culture rather than those being researched (Toohey, 2003).

Nonetheless, there have been a series of development interventions, meaning that there have been a number of different actors buying gold in Geita. That these projects have failed universally in this district can be seen as symptomatic of the broader failure of the ‘global support facility’ to address the problems of ASM (Hilson 2007). To explain a history of ASM marketing, conventional recorded histories are therefore intertwined with those oral histories recorded by long-term miners. As such, the resulting history is not a definitive history of development intervention in Geita. Rather, it becomes a story of the lived-through experiences of miners who expressed a general trend toward dissatisfaction and marginalization, punctuated by moments of positive-leaning nostalgia ‘when things were good and the mining easy’ (interview 26).

The earliest recorded artisanal gold activity occurred in Geita in 1895, when Tanzania was under a German colonial administration, and is the first example of gold prospecting in the country (Tesha 2000). Until independence in 1961, gold production peaked at 106,000 ounces of gold in 1960 (Tesha 2000: 3). After independence, the fall in production of large-scale mining saw a concurrent rise in numbers of small-scale mining. This led, along with World-Bank driven pressures for structural adjustment, to
widespread economic liberalization aimed at attracting foreign direct investment in the large-scale production and a series of ‘government introduced measures aimed at controlling illegal gold mining activities which were common within the small-scale mining areas’ (*ibid*).

Prior to the policy reform in the 1980s, the Tanzanian government, attracted by the potential for high export yields,\(^{24}\) established a dedicated marketing arm that existed to buy ASM gold from formalized miners operating with a licence. For many of the miners encountered during this research, the State Mining Corporation (STAMICO), as it was known, became the first type of interaction with the government.\(^{25}\) However STAMICO’s buying units were beset by a series of organizational problems that resulted in its dissolution just over a year after its creation. Despite its comparatively short operational lifespan, the episode remains prominent in the memories of both government officials and the ASM operators. As one senior government official articulated,

> The whole STAMICO thing was a bit of a disaster to be honest. It should have been an opportunity to establish positive relations with the legalized small-scale mining sector through an equitable trading relationship. What actually happened was that various illegal gold — and by that I mean gold from those guys who didn’t have a license — was being sold to STAMICO. This caused something of a scandal because it took away the whole thing’s credibility. The problem is, of course, that if STAMICO didn’t buy this type of gold, then someone else did. I remember hearing from a report years later that around 20 tonnes of gold went out the country illegally. That is a lot of gold that could have provided tax revenues for the government. (Key Informant 6)

This official version of events was contradicted by a majority of miners who spoke about the STAMICO experience in something approaching nostalgic terms. The view, for example, that ‘the discrepancy between the amount of work you put in and the money you would get was less than it is at the moment’ was almost universal amongst interviewees (interview 15). One ASM operator even went so far as to say that,

\(^{24}\) In 1992, it was estimated that ‘76% of all the mineral export earnings were from gold mining by artisanal miners’ (Tesha 2000: 4).

\(^{25}\) STAMICO was established in 1972 (STAMICO 2011).
Looking back, the STAMICO days were the best times. Even though you knew that the gold would run out one day or another, there was a sense that you should make the most of the opportunity whilst it was there. I mean to have a regular buyer for your gold and at a decent price — who can say that nowadays? It didn’t seem to matter that it wouldn’t last forever. Give me back those days of easy mining and good rewards! (Interview 11)

This yearning for a positive past as contradistinct to a negative present and future evokes a strong sense of ‘aspiration without possibility’ evident in much of the nostalgia narrated by ASM operators (Bissell 2005: 226).

Following STAMICO’s dissolution, and partly as a result of the 1990 policy reform, the Bank of Tanzania was established to formalize gold marketing arrangements. Under this new approach to governing ASM in Tanzania, ‘miners were encouraged to peg their claims, organize miners’ co-operatives and societies’ which, in turn, resulted in ‘a substantial increase in legal artisanal operations most of which earlier operated illegally’ (Tesha 2000: 5). For those, newly rendered ‘legal’ miners, the benefits were, as with STAMICO before, well emphasized. As one miner pointed out, the Bank of Tanzania ‘was good because you could trust the buyer. You got a decent price as well’ (interview 19). However, unlike the STAMICO intervention, there were some stories of frustration and disillusionment expounded: ‘I remember thinking, “here we go again”. First it was STAMICO and then it was the bank [of Tanzania] going bust. Every time you got your hopes up and life seemed better, these buyers just disappeared’ (interview 29). The Bank of Tanzania undoubtedly provided a reference point in the memories of those ASM operators interviewed. Many miners, for example, made this connection and were careful to distinguish between ‘the bank’ (i.e. the Bank of Tanzania) and ‘the bank now’ (referring to the ‘Fair Trade’ buying centres that will be analysed later in this chapter).

Despite this putatively positive narrative, the Bank of Tanzania failed after four years, with the final direct government intervention into marketing for ASM, Meremeta, emerging in 1998. Formed as a joint public-private partnership with a large-scale South African mining company, this hitherto most ambitious programme of ASM support provided access to rudimentary forms of investment. These included the ‘provision of equipment such as pumps, compressors and drilling equipment’, ‘the installation of custom grinding equipment […] and buying gold directly from the miners at a 20% reduced price to cover the cost of grinding with no questions asked about the source’
The initiative seemed, in the words of one miner, ‘a really exciting opportunity. This was the first time that the same people who bought my gold, also loaned me the equipment that I needed’ (interview 25).

Despite its initial success and the suggestion that ‘everyone was telling those that didn’t know about Meremeta that, for the first time, mining was the thing to do’ (interview 22), the programme was not successful due to the failure of the South African company to recapitalize the collaboration. Though ‘it was just another example of hope and promises gone bad’ (interview 20), the collapse of the programme failed to surprise a majority of the ASM operators interviewed. For example, one stone crusher concluded that ‘this was it as far as I was concerned. I wasn’t really shocked that the whole thing disappeared — I mean we had already seen failure from other companies — but I was disappointed. This was the first time that I thought, “they are all the same”’ (interview 19). One unintended consequence of Meremeta’s initial success in the area did leave something of a legacy however. A female miner noted that,

One thing that I did notice at that time [when Meremeta were operational] was that there was a huge rise in the numbers of private traders and brokers that came here to get a piece of the profits. It was the only time that I can remember that there was a real choice about where should I sell my ore — to Meremeta or to these others. (Interview 20)

These ‘private traders’ represent a combination of entrepreneurs who made available for lease their own grinding equipment made functional by the engines of tractors, or the makota.26 The dual opportunity for miners at that time to use the equipment from either Lebanese, Chinese or local traders, combined with the ability to sell to makota at higher prices, would often render Meremeta uncompetitive. A mzee (elderly) miner from Nyarugusu summed up the situation succinctly:

Meremeta seemed great when they first arrived, but then the others followed. Now if you ask me ‘where did I sell my gold?’ I’ll tell you. I’ll sell it to those who give me the best price. At that time, as now, that was the makota. I think everyone was doing the same really. I guess this is what killed Meremeta’s business. (Interview 26)

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26 Makota is a Kiswahili word for an unlicensed buyer, although on occasion it is used interchangeably with brokers and buyers that operate with a licence.
The impact of the *makota* remains a contemporary reality for a majority of the ASM operators working in the Geita district. Miners are either selling to these unlicensed buyers or, more rarely, to APM’s FTGCs, being the latest intervention into gold marketing arrangements in the area.

This research now turns to an analysis of the ways in which ASM is organized in Geita through a supply chain model, before updating that schema to include the impact made by APM, which will in turn provide the platform from which a ‘Fairtrade gold’ supply chain for Tanzania can be constructed in chapter six.

5.3 How ASM is Organized in the Geita District: A Supply Chain Analysis

In the studied area, ASM operators are organized through a predominantly capitalist mode of subcontracting. This means that the claim holder will hire individual or groups of mineworkers in exchange for payment variously in the forms of unprocessed ore, gold amalgam, tailings or cash. As noted earlier in chapter one, defining what constitutes an ‘ASM operator’ is a problematic exercise as the term encompasses a vast range of different jobs. However, there is always a ‘claim holder’, or ‘primary mining licence (PML) holder’ if legalized. This may be a miner, responsible for the management of his own team of workers. Alternatively, the claim holder may act as a landlord, sub-leasing the mining concession to individual ‘pit owners’, who, in exchange for a proportion of the mined ore, are granted the right to mine. Additionally, some claim-holders spoke openly about sinking mineshafts into the ground of other concessions, thus becoming ‘pit owners’ in their own right. However, it should be noted that this practice is effectively illegal, as the notion of sub-leasing is not recognized by the ASM policy in Tanzania.

Gold in the Geita district was mined from a mixture of hard rock deposits and alluvial sedimentary deposits (found in waterways), both of which are predominantly found underground. The methods and people employed to extract the gold at this point of the mining process vary significantly however. Whereas the hard rock deposits are acquired by ‘ore breakers’ who either sell the ore to the claim holder or are employed on a fixed wage, the alluvial rock deposits are more complicated owing to the amount of water that needs to be pumped away from the area. ‘Miners’ who work these deposits may be either mineshaft diggers, miners of the gravel deposits, or ‘carriers’ who move
wood to the mineshaft. Additionally there is a range of support workers on the site who often classify themselves as ‘miners’. These include cooks, site foremen, ‘runners’ (who collect required materials on an *ad hoc* basis) and so forth. Once the alluvial deposit is acquired, the gold is washed and sometimes refined or processed with mercury before the gold is sold onto the next stage of the supply chain: the PML holders. This vast range of jobs are collected into one box in figure 5.1 below both for reasons of diagrammatic simplicity and because the jobs undertaken often overlap, such that ASM operators may do more than one of the aforementioned tasks as part of their daily routine.

Indeed, whilst it is recognised that the reduction of such a diversity of ASM activity into a singular stage of the supply chain diagram could appear somewhat contradictory in the light of the critique of an ASM discourse that reduced a diverse body of ‘miners’ to a singular, criminalised entity, it is here a matter of necessity. However, in avoiding an overly complicated representation of ASM operators, one which would render any resulting supply chain diagram both unwieldy and analytically unclear, it is important to nonetheless emphasise not only the ways in which the range of roles carried out overlap, but also to explain the diverse range of ways in which labour hierarchies are organised. During this research it was found, for example, that each ASM site was qualitatively unique. For example, whilst it was found that at a certain ASM site a cook could be simultaneously employed as an ore crusher, so to was it also noted at another site that such a person could be involved in brokering whereby the crushed ore was directly used as a medium of exchange for sub-contracting labour rather than as payment to their employers. Thus it was that such complexity in identifying hierarchies of labour became apparent; just as a pit owner or claim holder could be responsible for the hiring of local labour at an ASM site, so too could ore crushers or foremen also be responsible for micro-level subcontracting of labour. Such complexity also has important implications for the nature of co-operative building, a centrepiece of the proposed FT/FM standards. It serves to render FT/FM’s move towards a model of co-operative formation a difficult prospect whereby the division of labour into a coherent, productive whole based on democratic decision making (a pillar of their definition of co-operation) becomes unrealistic. Rather it must face the need to

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27 The supply chain figures presented below and in chapter 6 are included and used in a descriptive rather than an analytical sense. Cognisant of the established literature on supply chain and value-chain analysis, the descriptive rationale delineated here operates so as to provide explanatory clarity in the face of the complex and multi-faceted range of actors present in the ASM sector.
fundamentally alter the culture of labour division into more atomistic roles not only so that co-operative can perform more clearly but also so that any potential standards can be monitored more effectively.

Following the mining and subsequent processing stages, the PML holders will most commonly sell the gold to informal *makota* or to formalized, government-appointed brokers. Notwithstanding the complex trading dynamics specific to this stage of supply (which are discussed in more detail in section 5.4.4), these actors will sell the gold to dedicated gold buyers (usually based in Tanzania’s major city Dar es Salaam) who, in turn, export the gold to a master dealer based globally (often in Nairobi in Kenya, or Dubai in the United Arab Emirates). This represents the final part of the supply chain for gold mined in Geita, before its acquisition by an overseas importer.

The many stages of production highlight not only the reasons for Barratt-Brown’s (1993) original scepticism regarding the Fairtrade certification of minerals, but also the opportunity to simplify the trading stage of the overall supply chain for actors such as APM, and potentially Fairtrade.
Figure 5.1: The Gold Supply Chain in the Geita District, Tanzania

DEPOSIT TYPE

- Hard rock (HR)
- Alluvial sedimentary (AS)

MINING

- Ore brokers (HR)
- Diggers, miners, carriers (AS)
- Cooks, foremen, runners (HR, AS)
- Washers, Refiners (HR, AS)

PROCESSING

- Claim holder
- Primary Mining License (PML) holder

TRADING

- Gold brokers, *makota*

EXPORTING

- Gold Dealers
- Master Dealer
- Overseas Importer
The emergence of APM into the local marketing arrangements introduces a new dynamic into the gold supply chain and is described in figure 5.2.

*Figure 5.2: The Gold Supply Chain in the Geita District inclusive of APM*
APM claims, according to their chairman, to ‘make it easier to trade gold responsibly in and around Mwanza’ (Key Informant 9). In order to facilitate trading, he continued, ‘the aim is to minimize the different stages of production. This seems to me to be an important condition of responsible mining’ (ibid). This means that an ASM operator, in selling to one of the APM FTGCs, effectively replaces the extant trading stage described in figure 5.1 with its own model. In practice then, this means that it assumes the all-in-one role of broker and dealer before the export stage. This can be seen in the recapitulated supply chain, whereby APM buys gold either from the claim holder or from registered brokers and dealers. The problem, in terms of ensuring the ethical provenance of the gold purchased by APM, is that those same PML holders, brokers and dealers may have acquired their gold from unregulated means. In all cases, APM claims only to ‘deal with registered operators, in so far as we are a formalized company that pays our government taxes’ (Key Informant 9). However, during the course of this research it emerged that several unlicensed, and therefore ‘unregistered’, ASM operators alleged that they were selling directly to APM, a transaction that is represented by the dotted red line in figure 5.2. This brings into question not only the provenance of the gold, but also the extent to which APM can be seen to be a different form of gold marketing from that which it seeks to eliminate. This problem is expanded upon in section 5.4, but the notion that ‘APM is here, in part, to drive out unlicensed gold from the system’ (Key Informant 9) must be questioned.

5.4. Questioning the ‘Fairness’ in APM’s ‘Fair Trade Gold Centres’

As highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, APM premises its particular version of ‘Fair Trade’ upon four dynamics of ‘fairness’. First, there is a commitment to an improvement in communications and a commitment to increased professionalism between ASM operators and buyers by providing free access to internet-enabled computers. Secondly, APM’s version of ‘fairness’ is enacted through the distribution of microfinance loans for ASM related investment. Thirdly, it privileges the notion of transparency as central to fair trading relations by giving ASM operators the opportunity to witness the measurement of the gold’s purity at the FTGCs. Finally, but perhaps most importantly for the ASM operators interviewed, ‘fairness’ means the
promise of a price in line with the global market rate and at a superior rate to anything available locally. Each of these areas is now considered critically in turn.

5.4.1 ‘Fairness’ as Improved Communication

Upon the construction of the first of the four FTGCs in Nyarugusu, APM made it a priority to communicate how its model of ‘fairly’ purchased gold was different from the interventions that had hitherto been seen in the area. One of the major ways to do this was to professionalize ASM through the aim to ‘treat the miners like equals, like trading partners’ (Key Informant 9). In this regard, the APM business model was premised rhetorically on aspects of the same social and environment justice framework that proponents of Fairtrade gold hold as important, as analysed in chapter four. In order to express this desire for recognition and status equality in their trading relationship vis-à-vis ASM operators, the management of APM strategized that ‘a tangible means of trust needed to established’ (Key Informant 9). The chairman of the company explained one such example of this strategy:

The board decided that a good way to win the hearts and minds of the miners was to give them something that they could use, that they could see that was serious and wanted to engage with as equal partners. The way we decided to do this was through the provision of computers with an internet facility. This was to be provided for free with the idea that they could check the global price of gold, check it against ours and see that we were for real. (Key Informant 9)

The clear business logic displayed through the attempt to build trust with ASM is lauded by erstwhile academic research too. Indeed, in spite of Imperato’s study of APM as a particular example of the effectiveness of public-private partnership, a critical reading of APM is still largely absent. For Imperato, APM’s provision of internet research facilities is a major advance for effective governance in ASM because, in concurring with the company view above, ‘a miner can also exchange email with his associates about market activity in other areas or in the major transport city, Dar es Salaam, or London to get a sense of market trends’ (Imperato 2009: 466). That there is ‘the expectation that the miners and traders who visit APM’s offices are business people worthy of the same tools available to urban entrepreneurs in the formal economy’
The public here were allowed to access it, for those who did not have, at that time, the mobiles with internet. They would come here, open up the internet, find out what is the LME – for free. Well, they messed it up you know. I have not been here all the time and in-between they have allowed a whole range of young boys and girls to come and in the process the computer was broken. (Key Informant 12)

This feeling of disappointment was usurped, however, by a condemnation of ASM operators’ identity and a reaffirmation of their ‘status injury’. The manager continued to state that, ‘they are like animals you know. They need constant supervision and training’ (Key Informant 12). Even cognisant of the frustrations made evident here, this strong paternalistic imagery reduces ASM operators to an inferior, even sub-human level, which contradicts the aim to treat miners as ‘equal’ partners. This familiar stereotype of backwardness amongst ASM operators also paralleled the representation of ‘miners-as-irrational’ described in chapter four. The manager of the FTGC at Ushirombo, who also reported the misuse of internet facilities by miners, expounded that,

We had the internet here but it was abused. I mean, it is quite a big deal to have it here in the first place and yet these people would just use the computers for anything — you know — pictures of women, anything. I don’t think they realized what they could do with these computers. (Key Informant 14)
Despite its grounding in the discourse of irrationality, the idea expressed here that ASM operators ‘didn’t understand’ or that APM was ‘naïve to think that they would only be used to check for gold prices’ (Key Informant 14) was contradicted by the narratives from those same ASM operators who claimed to have access to the facilities.

There was an overwhelming sense expressed by the miners who had tried to use the internet facilities that APM’s purpose of ‘trust building’ was misguided. A female ore crusher from a Ruamgasa ASM site summarized the problem:

APM said that they were going to give us free use of the internet as a sign of respect or something. What a joke! When the first computer was there, they would not let anyone use it for anything other than to check the gold price in London on one particular page. But this was ridiculous because they already show us on a board what the London gold price actually is! (Interview 24)

The ‘board’ mentioned by the miner refers to the practice by APM to advertise at each individual buying centre both the global price (the London ‘spot’ price) and the indicative gold price at which APM will buy. The prices are advertised in the local units for purchasing gold, a simple means of translating global gold prices to local ASM buyers in readily identifiable quantities. These units are summarized in table 5.1 below.

### Table 5.1: Local Units for the Purchase of Gold in Geita Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit name</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tbla</td>
<td>12g (6 razor blades)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapa</td>
<td>2g (1 razor blade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wembi</td>
<td>1g (1/2 razor blade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reli</td>
<td>0.5g (1/4 razor blade)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference between the global and local indicative prices was always significant and often usurped the advertised ‘5% processing fee’ deducted by APM from the global rate in order to calculate the locally available rate (Key Informant 9). For example, the London spot prices on the 18 June and 22 June 2009 were $33.16 per gram of gold and $32.45 p/g respectively, whilst their APM equivalents being offered to ASM operators...
in Geita on those same days were $30.17 p/g and $28.88 p/g (Kitco 2011). A Fairtrade gold researcher commented during a private interview that, during their research conducted in November 2008, the global and local prices advertised in the centres were $25.82 and $22.98 per gram of gold, respectively. Basic mathematical calculations reveal the price differential between global and local conditions to be 9% and 11% in the 2009 examples and 11% in the 2008 example. In short, the prices differ sometimes by double the 5% processing fee stipulated by APM.

The extent to which these prices compared to the local marketing opportunities available to ASM operators in the region varied and the specifics of these dynamics is examined below in section 5.4.4. However, damage to the attempted ‘trust building’ exercise was inadvertently revealed to local operators though the provision of the internet:

It was very difficult to trust the bank after this. They made promises that the computers would be ours to use. However, they soon took this promise away. But even when the computers were there, it was very difficult to trust them. It showed us the world price — yes, that is true. But it also showed that their prices were not so good. (Interview 23)

This example represents an initial example of the disconnect between the rhetorical promises of status equality and the substantive realities expressed by the life histories of ASM operators. It raises questions concerning transparency (that are further developed in section 5.4.3), as well as the difficultly in defining what constitutes a fair price. Finally, APM’s lack of formative research prior to their development intervention served to underplay the technological dynamism found in ASM communities. For example, the narratives conveyed by ASM operators in the surrounding area revealed how there was usually daily access to the global market price prior to APM’s provision of internet facilities. This was done through access to an internet-enabled mobile telephone that, although owned by a small minority of operators, would allow price information to be shared with mining colleagues and friends. This notion of pooling information and responsibility for mobile phones in Tanzania and other developing states in Africa has been examined by several empirical studies. Samuel et al.’s (2007) analysis highlighted how several phones from a Tanzania village were pooled before being taken to an electricity point in a neighbouring town for recharging. Likewise,
miners in Nyaragusu who collected phones together for recharging in Geita, 45 minutes away by minibus, also carried out this practice.

APM’s ignorance of the ground conditions and levels of access to technology at the FTGC sites was not shared by all employees of the company, however. Indeed, a manager at the centre in Nyarugusu displayed a strong understanding of these local dynamics. The following exchange highlighted his conception of the issue:

*Manager:* Luckily or unluckily enough, most of the miners walk around with mobile phones with internet connections. So there is no way that you can cheat them about the world market price. Every morning they would know what is the price per ounce.

*Q:* So you would say that most miners have this internet connection?

*Manager:* Most. The big ones. Not everybody. If 10 people have the internet, then the others will get the news of the price. The first question that these small-scale miners would ask every morning is ‘has the price gone up?’ Once they know it, they would ask the second question: ‘how much are these people, APM, offering today? Is it high, low, how much?’ If it is too much below they would not come to our centre here, they would seek out alternatives. (Key Informant 12)

Whilst implying the correlation between access to mobile phone technology and an increase in social capital, a link that has been convincingly argued with reference to rural communities in Tanzania (Goodman 2005), the Nyarugusu FTGC manager went further. By inverting the notion of ‘fairness’, it was suggested that, ‘actually I could go as far as saying it could be unfair trading to us’ (Key Informant 12). In this conceptualization, ‘fairness’ for ASM communities had as its counterpoint the idea that trading relations were somehow ‘unfair’ for APM. Thus it is that the slippery nature of the discourse of ‘fairness’ is revealed, being a recurring theme throughout the study of APM. Indeed, the multiple dimensions of what constitutes ‘fair’ can be witnessed in the following section concerning APM’s failed micro-credit loan facility.

5.4.2 ‘Fairness’ as Access to Financial Support

One of the most widely anticipated aspects of APM’s entry into local marketing arrangements for ASM operators was the promise of small-scale loans for the direct
investment into mining equipment and the improvement of mining safety. Throughout the life histories conducted with ASM operators, the most recurrent themes regarding the problems faced by ASM were the lack of investment for capital and the uncertainty over the price level received for their gold. One interviewee’s narrative was typical of the prevailing feeling in the ASM communities studied and stated that ‘with suitable capital, I’d stay right here and invest in the mine’ (interview 19). Against this expressed viewpoint, APM’s promise of a loan facility was ‘a really exciting opportunity to have someone believe in ASM’ and a ‘chance to improve the productivity of [ASM] concessions’ (interview 23).

The provision of the pre-financing arrangements to ASM operators from APM were enabled in partnership with SELFINA, a micro-leasing company that has provided around 8000 women with TZS 7 billion (£2.6 million) between its inception in 2002 and 2010 (Daily News 2010). SELFINA’s experience in the supply of financial support for the most economically marginalized in Tanzanian society, including ‘widows and young girls who cannot be provided with a loan due to lack of collateral’ (ibid), should have led to a well-designed loan system for local miners. However, despite APM’s ‘unique partnership’ (Key Informant 9), initial problems in the recovery of loan payments from ASM operators resulted in the collaboration being cancelled. Thus, at the time of research a vastly reduced loan service was provided through staged financing under the oversight of APM’s own mining engineer. Moreover, according to one FTGC manager at Ushirombo, there was ‘no prospect of any more loans going out that aren’t going to come to back’ (Key Informant 14).

The reasons behind the default on loan repayments from ASM operators varied depending on the particular narrative analysed, but in all cases they were framed with reference to the discourse of ‘fairness’. For example, whilst APM officials felt that ‘fairness’ should be inclusive of the notions of trust and transparency (see section 5.4.2.1), ASM operators felt that it required a lack of corruption (see section 5.4.2.2) and locally realized mining unions maintained that ‘fairness’ needed to have a commitment to adequate financial support for investment in their productive arrangements (see section 5.4.2.3). Each of these narratives of ‘fairness’ will now be analysed in turn.
5.4.2.1 APM officials and ‘fairness’

The majority of loans provided to ASM operators in the region were directed towards leading members of the Mwanza Regional Miners Association (MwaReMA). Under a partnership between the Tanzanian government and leading donors (such as the World Bank and DfID), MwaReMA, as typical of a Regional Miners’ Association, are responsible for ‘indirectly assisting regional mines offices in overseeing the smooth functioning of the [ASM] sub-sector’ (Mwaipopo et al. 2004: 29). However, the success of their establishment has been compromised by widespread allegations of corruption within MwaReMA by the state, the national press and by academic enquiry, who assert that, as a result of ‘a decline in membership and hence contributions, most associations are facing financial problems’ (Mwaipopo et al. 2004: 29). These REMAs were denigrated as ‘merely politicians’ and ‘full of corruption’ during interviews with senior government officials (Key Informant 5; Key Informant 8). Moreover, it was specifically the leadership of MwaReMA that attracted the strongest range of criticism from both APM and ASM operators with regards to the failure of the micro-loan programme initiated by APM.

Despite the bank’s desire ‘to facilitate, to ease, to make a connection’ with ASM operators in the Mwanza region, APM’s view of the loan failure was split between those in senior management positions, who saw it as a symptom of ‘corrupt miners who did not have the same view of fairness as we did’ (Key Informant 9), and the managers of the individual FTGCs, who felt that too insufficient a level of financial support was made available for distribution to the local operators. In the former case, the breakdown in loan repayments represented a break in trust and, hence, transparency and provided a firm rebuttal to the version of fairness implied by the bank. As the CEO of APM made explicit, ‘how can you foster transparency when the people you are trying to help are not playing by the same rules as you are?’ (Key Informant 9).

However, this alleged ideological disconnect was not echoed by workers for APM at the FTGCs. Indeed, for one manager in Nyarugusu, the breakdown in the enactment of ‘fairness’ could be seen to be the failure of senior management who did not have a full understanding of local conditions.
When the loans were being dished out — I was not here at that particular moment, there were employees then that have now quit their jobs — one of the mistakes that they did was to try to please as many residents as possible. The head management, they thought it was big money, but it in mining terms it was not big. It was peanuts. So the mistake they did was to slice and to dish out loans to everybody, we are talking 5 million. Everybody had something. In mining, 5, 10, 20 — it’s nothing. So when they got the money and you buy the generator, the money is gone. You are remaining with only a few hundred, you haven’t paid their labourers, there is no money to operate, you only have one part of the machinery. You don’t have the other part of the machines which are able to make it make sense. So that’s where it went wrong and the process had to be stopped. (Key Informant 12)

Research into the dynamics and level of loan support was conducted and revealed that the average size of the 36 loan payments made to local PML holders was TZS 4 million (about $2,500). This figure was inflated to a great extent, however, by three separate loans of TZS 15 million (about $9,375) to senior officials in the MwaReMA union. This financial disparity that privileged the mining union was not only restricted to the size of the loans being provided, but also to the qualification criteria for loan acquisition. For example, a representative of ARM/FLO conducting preliminary studies into potential pilot projects for Fairtrade certification in the area stated that, ‘APM requires miners to sell gold to them for three consecutive months before they will give a loan’ (Key Informant 3). However, it was alleged by both MwaReMA and APM that loans were facilitated ‘from day one’ to MwaReMA as a ‘marker of trust’ and in order to ‘set a positive example in the local area’ (Interview 21; Key Informant 9). The preferential treatment of MwaReMA reflected on the ways that participants subsequently understood the enacting of ‘fairness’ found in the discourse of ‘Fair Trade gold’. A MwaReMA spokesperson viewed the loan arrangements, perhaps unsurprisingly, as ‘fundamentally fair’ whilst APM recognized that there ‘are questions remaining about what we make fairness look like’ (Interview 21: Key Informant 9).

5.4.2.2 ASM operators and ‘fairness’

However, ASM operators unable to secure the same level of support framed the rhetoric of fairness in entirely different ways. With only two exceptions out of the forty life
histories recorded, ASM operators felt that transparency and a ‘lack of corruption’ (interview 24) were key modalities in the discourse of ‘fairness’. Working contrapuntally with the representation of them as ‘irresponsible’ (analysed in section 4.4), this perspective was emphasized during discussions about the micro-loans in particular. The failure of these loans was seen to be an example of ‘extremely unfair practice’ (interview 25) and struck a discordant note with the fairness stipulated in the company branding. The following exchange highlights this position:

*Q*: It says that it’s a ‘Fair Trade’ company. What does fairness mean to you?

**ASM operator**: What is on the gate is not in any way true. When APM first came in they said that they would provide loans for miners, that they would provide loans for women’s empowerment, that they would provide loans for associated businesses. But in fact, what they ended up doing was selecting specifically the mining industry, and not providing loans for other people. And they were even selective when it came to selecting loanees amongst the mining community! Fair should mean that they shouldn’t choose one over the other — it just creates problems! When there are problems with repayments, it simply affects everyone. (Interview 16)

The ‘unfair’ privileging of one group of people (MwaReMA) over another (ASM operators) casts light upon the asymmetries of power found in the everyday interactions at a local level. In doing so, it politicizes the provision of loans and foregrounds the need for redistribution at the heart of struggles over recognition. In short, MwaReMA was ‘chosen over’ ASM operators who defined themselves often in negative contrast to the union representatives ‘who are better [...] more educated and can talk better’ (interview 26).

This lack of belief in their personal attributes can be seen as one means in which their poverty can be understood. Certainly, such a view resonates strongly with Sen’s influential work on justice, in which poverty is drawn ‘as capability deprivation’ (Sen 2010: 254). In this schema, Sen argues that the idea that ‘the kind of life that someone can lead’ is influenced not only by income, but also by ‘variations in social climate’ (Sen 2010: 255). ‘Social climate’ is, in turn, strongly influenced by personal capabilities, for example, in terms of ‘educational arrangements’ (ibid). Here, ASM operators understand there to be ‘real barriers for us to negotiate loans’ (interview 19), such as a lack of education (‘we can’t speak English’) or a break down in community
relationships within the union itself (‘they [MwaReMA] don’t trust us and we don’t trust them’) (interviews 21 and 19). The following excerpt from one female miner’s narrative further illustrates this notion of ‘capability deprivation’. After APM’s intervention, the miner stated,

They began to cater more towards people who could speak English. We had been told initially with ten different sites. That was the plan. One of my sites was one of those selected. But some English-speaking people came and confused everything. They managed to sell to APM the idea of a place that didn’t already have a site on it. It was just a piece of unexcavated land and people were convinced by smooth talkers. This is why the idea bounced. (Interview 20)

The ‘smooth talking’ was associated with ‘English speaking’ not only in the above example, but also in the case of all respondents who recorded the loan failure in their life histories. Moreover, the ability to speak English often had negative connotations among the ASM operators who did not have this capability. English speaking was variously described as ‘the language of the big men’, ‘something for people with money’ and ‘words that can be said in secret’ (interviews 19 and 23). There was also a sense throughout these narratives that English was in some way the very language of development intervention, its usage associated with opportunity for those fortunate enough to speak it. For the ASM operators recorded in this research, the idea of ‘English speaking’ acted as a trope for the idea of development itself and there was a strong sense of marginalization from the major policy decisions being taken, such as APM’s loan acquisition. One PML holder went so far as to assert that ‘if you don’t speak English, you don’t make money. It’s as simple as that’ (interview 22).

In this light, MwaReMA were often simply referred to as ‘the English speakers’ and it was towards the mining union, and not APM itself, that anger was articulated. One miner, active in the region for 30 years, alleged how the decision-making process operated.

These English speakers are MwaReMA. Within the union there were people who managed to deceive APM because APM based their decision-making on MwaReMA’s advice. There were examples, like a mine nearby who got TZS 8million [$5,000], got all the machinery he could need and then decided that he was going to try to mine a place
that still hadn’t been surveyed. They then did the survey and found that there was nothing there. That man died and APM immediately repossessed the machinery. If they had taken more care in their selection then they probably would have been all right because APM themselves had good intentions. They just happened to be misled. Should they give it another shot, then MwaReMA is a serious problem because it will just fail again if it goes to them. (Interview 24)

The officers of MwaReMA, as is their institutional remit, often acted on behalf of ASM operators during loan negotiations, but, in doing so, it was alleged that they deliberately misinterpreted the needs of their union members in order to secure loans for themselves. Two narratives from miners in Ruamgasa indicated that this turn of events was held to be a social fact amongst their co-operative. The first maintained that,

It was a language thing. At that time it was foreigners who were here sorting this out and there were a few people from the union who functioned as translators. During this point in time, during the translation, it turned out that the people who needed the assistance were being translated for. It went to the translators. A way to make it more open and to ensure that the money finds its way to the right people, is for APM to have its own experts. (Interview 27)

The second, more personal, narrative emphasized a complete fracture in the trust between the mining union and its members. This story told of duplicity and corruption.

The people who were accepted as an APM mine site handed in applications for the money — I put in one for 10 million for equipment, salaries and so on. I received my report and the reply was that I could have 7 million. I went back to explain that with that I wouldn’t be able to meet the repayments. We sat down, redid the calculations and they said ‘ah yes, that’s true’ and so I was asked to apply again. Unfortunately some of the educated folk from MwaReMA said ‘don’t give this man money — he’ll just spend it on alcohol. We know him.’ And so, because of that, it all evaporated. This is where I am today. (Interview 22)

In both of the above narratives, access to financial support was precluded by a failure by societal relations to reflect the needs of the marginalized partner. Thus we can see that ASM operators reliant on a ‘fair’ representation by their union leaders as
mouthpieces for their claims to a loan were instead deliberately misinterpreted and remained circumscribed as marginalized. Notwithstanding its rhetorical ‘faddism’ noted by Harriss (2005), these events can be seen as having a direct and deleterious impact upon the ‘social capital’ of the miners in question. As Sen has noted, the importance of trust to community relationships is a central source of variation in poverty levels (Sen 2010: 255). In so far as trust between individuals can be seen to be a measurement of social capital (Putnam 1993), here the dissolution of trust between ASM operators and MwaReMA and, by extension, APM can be seen to not only reduce one’s social capital but also to question the homogeneity of the notion of fairness.

5.4.2.3 MwaReMA and ‘fairness’

The loan failure was interpreted differently by MwaReMA themselves. Here, the blame for their stoppage was apportioned to APM for the dual inability to provide the necessary technical expertise and support, and the suitable level of financial support. During interviews with both the chairman and the treasurer of MwaReMA, it was contended that there are long-standing structural barriers to ASM, such as a lack of expertise amongst ASM operators. It was their view that APM’s role should go beyond the facilitating of loan payments and additionally to provide basic training programmes to augment the long-term sustainability of the activity and to increase the productive output of mine sites, such that loan repayments could be honoured more easily. As the treasurer of MwaReMA iterated,

Right now, I’m not selling to APM. It’s me and the chairperson who signed the agreement on behalf of the miners, but when we came here I think there was some conflicts between the management of APM and the miners. Because to give a miner some money, without assisting him with technology, they will not get gold. They lent money to small-scale miners, they left them as they are. There were some trust issues [...] We said, ‘look here friend, give money and then offer assistance’. Also ‘you have to employ people who are having technology for the mining’. For instance, we have mining engineering here — we have people from the university at Dar es Salaam, so employ these people who have this talent for mining, so that they can advise you and support to small-scale miners. (Interview 18)
The call for not only easier access to finance, but also for an increase in technical support evokes early calls within the field of environment and development in the early 1990s for a more participatory approach to sustainable development projects. Adams, recalling the then influential IUCN publication *Caring for the Earth*, notes how in addition to ‘security of resource tenure’, sustainable development requires as central pillars ‘enhanced participation in [...] development processes, more effective local government and better financial and technical support’ (Adams 2006: 116). Notwithstanding the numerous critiques of participatory approaches to development (which were identified in chapter 3), the treasurer of MwaReMA can be seen to privilege such a research methodology. However, as he later explained, poor communication with APM rendered such an ethos hard to maintain. For example, in describing the current state of negotiations with the CEO of APM, he alleged that,

He is is Dar es Salaam and still he hasn’t been here. He doesn’t see the picture. What things should be needed here in Nyarugusu. What support should small-scale miners need? We wrote a letter as an organization because we know that small-scale miners have got your money and are not paying back. We need to stick together to find out why; which miners are the problem? But it has been two years! Two years since I wrote it. And I have a copy of that letter in my office in Nyarugusu. People are not giving you gold as you intended. Why?! We have to stick together to talk but Dr Manfred is saying, ‘no need of having many, many meetings’. No. There is a problem and we need to stick together to solve the problem. (Interview 18)

The other key figure in the MwaReMA union, its secretary, supported this line of argument and went further by suggesting that it was APM’s lack of direct expertise within ASM that provided the biggest barrier to successful intervention. Indeed, this was a common theme amongst the narratives of ASM operators who addressed APM as a ‘bank’ or as a ‘company’, rather than as a mining-specific institution. This shortfall in expertise is outlined below.

Another issue with APM is that they don’t really have experienced, skilled people who are skilled in this field when they came into this. If you are going to farm, it is going to be difficult to farm a new crop without actually consulting an expert in the particular industry. And so, they didn’t have anybody who could help with costing, with the
preparations of deciding what would be an appropriate loan, what are the logistical side of things. That is a problem that APM has had as well that I have noticed. (Interview 19)

Even allowing, however, for the discrepancies in the recorded narratives, and the multifarious versions of blame over the reasons for the loan programme failure, both ASM operators and MwaReMA insisted that the level of financial support forward was insufficient. A definitive figure over what constitutes a ‘fair’ amount of investment was hard to obtain and competing narratives ranged between ‘a need for a minimum of TZS 10 million [$6,250]’ to ‘TZS 20 million [$12,500] at the least’ in order to even get to a point of production. Certainly, as world gold prices have increased in recent times, there has been a noticeable rise in the prices of processing equipment available for purchase. Moreover, the recent proliferation of dedicated foreign companies (usually Lebanese, Chinese or South African) selling such machinery (often of dubious quality) has failed to lead to any reduction in price. Many mines visited during this research were stalling on their production as a direct result of elevated water levels in mine shafts and the high costs of acquiring a pump to remove it (the cheapest pump available was TZS 5 million ($3,125)). As a result, there is strong evidence to support the notion that the level of financing provided through the loans is truly insufficient to bring a mine to production.

We can see below how the secretary of MwaReMA succinctly outlined the costs involved.

APM would, for instance, give out loans — for instance in the sum of 5 million shillings — the only problem is that 5 million shillings would buy you a pump but you would have very little money left over. You haven’t paid salaries for the people that are going to be working for you, you haven’t bought a generator yet. There are other costs that you will not be able to cover, which means that the miner to whom the loan is given will be in a situation where they are almost at their goal of being able to produce enough to produce for them as well as to pay off the loan. But they cannot without further assistance and if APM doesn’t do that then the miner is left in the middle. They are not quite at the bottom because they have some basic pieces of machinery in the set-up. However, they don’t have the capital to run it and they are not where APM wants them to be. So this is the difficult situation that has been happening. (Nsangano 2009: personal communication)

The failure of the micro-loan facility to substantively impact on ASM in the affected areas is thus seen as the second example of the analytical lacuna between the ways in
which ‘fairness’ is understood and realized. APM’s iteration of ‘Fair Trade gold’ includes the implicit desire to ‘sustainably develop the ASM sector in order to prove that profitable business can work hand in hand with key development goals’ (Key Informant 9). However, in assuming the developmental potential of loans to reduce poverty and inspire economic growth among the ASM community of the Geita district, there has been an oversight of the ‘broader, more structural patterns of injustice’ (Hickey and Mohan 2004: 9). This inequality, as we have seen, has been a symptom of who says and who is allowed to express their preferences (Mosse 1993), here in terms of loan applications. Further, even in answering the calls of MwaReMA for a more participatory approach to development interventions, such as the one by APM, those people within the union that are most familiar with the language of development are also the most powerful (Mosse 2001) and can, therefore, simultaneously enhance their levels of participation whilst further marginalizing those whose voice is not heard. In this example, the marginalized are precisely the same ASM operators whom APM was seeking to empower. APM’s rebuttal is that it is the lack of transparency within the broader ASM community that prevents ‘fair’ conditions from existing, a issue that they attempt to address thorough the scientific, and assumedly, more accurate means of measuring gold.

5.4.3 ‘Fairness’ as Transparency

The idea that ‘fair trade’ gold should be more transparent was a prevalent one. However, APM and the ASM operators failed to reach agreement over the way that transparent business was conducted. One of APM’s primary means of communicating ‘fair’ practice to ASM operators is through the use of chemically rigorous measures for assaying the weight and purity of the marketable gold. It aims both to improve the accuracy of the measurement of the gold’s purity and attract miners through the promise of a ‘fair’ and ‘scientifically proven’ weight (Key Informant 12). In practice, this is enacted through a technologically advanced set of instrumentation in place at each FTGC that can assay the gold, check its provenance (through so-called ‘fingerprinting’ technology) in addition to providing an accurate measure of its weight. This means that, in theory, APM’s technology has the potential to determine the gold’s purity (where 70% purity would equate to 70% of the price), as well as being able to assess whether the gold was mined on an illegal site or not. The laboratories are positioned near the
entrance of each FTGC and are in close proximity to the buying counter in order that sellers have unobstructed access to their gold being weighed, assayed and ‘fingerprinted’. This was a key component of APM’s marketing strategy for the ‘fair’ component of its business strategy and was considered by its management to be its ‘USP’ (unique selling point) (Key Informant 9). This modality of fairness was a source of visible pride in all four managers of the FTGCs and a recognisable way in which to demonstrate APM’s commitment to a new marketing opportunity for ASM operators. As the manager at the Ruamgasa FTGC asserted:

When you say ‘fair’, you are talking about being open. The client can view this and know that the purity, testing and smelting of the gold is done right before their eyes. This is fair. Some other dealers use scales that are fixed. Our scales our checked by the Tanzanian bureau. (Key Informant 13)

However, despite the presentation of these methods as transparent, there was a widespread reluctance amongst miners to believe the results presented by the chemical-based processing. As has been argued in a previous paper, many of the interviewed ASM operators either claimed not to understand how the measuring process worked or simply signified a preference to use the hand-held scales used by the makota despite allegations that the scales that these buyers used were both fixed and inaccurate (Childs 2010). Narratives from APM staff and ASM operators that highlighted this seeming anomaly evoked the longstanding debate in development studies between the relative merits of scientific or traditional knowledge. On the one hand, APM’s idea of a ‘fair’ means of weighing gold foregrounds the centrality of a scientifically derived truth through its processing facilities, whilst on the other ASM operators not only rejected its claims to truth, but also privileged the more traditional methods of using scales and, as such, may be understood as an example of indigenous knowledge.

The rejection of APM’s (western-centric) scientific approach by ASM operators was anathema to the managers of the FTGCs and was often met by incredulity. As the manager of the Ushirombo centre asked rhetorically: ‘we have the best equipment, used in London, but they don’t trust it! I don’t understand’ (Key Informant 14). Moreover, the head of refining at the central APM refinery in Mwanza added that,
When you say ‘fair’, you are talking about being open. The client can view this and know that the purity testing and smelting of the gold is done right before their eyes. This is fair. Some other dealers use scales that are fixed. Our scales are checked by the Tanzanian bureau. When you go to the other dealers, they can steal from you when they smelt […]. We use fire assaying, but they use fixed scales. The fairness comes from the whole process. (Key Informant 11)

This faith in western scientific methods to provide answers to a multi-faceted ‘development’ problem reverts back to a historical privileging of the ‘almost unquestioned validity of science and Western knowledge’ (Briggs and Sharp 2004: 662). Indeed, there was an implicit suggestion in the interviews with APM staff that ASM operators, in rejecting ‘a fully proven science of gold assaying’, are ‘cheating themselves’ and are irrationally ‘choosing the unfair option over and above the fair one’ (Key Informant 12).

Determining the reasons behind the general rejection of the scientific methods in favour of the traditional practices employed by the makota and other informal buyers revealed two major strands. First, choices made as a symptom of the rejection of, and subsequent call for, greater incorporation of indigenous knowledges were recorded by certain miners, a theme that will be addressed below, but second it was also evident that this scientific mode of fairness overlooked other, more important structural dynamics in pre-existing ASM gold selling arrangements. For example, the relative centrality of price to the decision-making processes of ASM operators when selling gold was notable in many life histories. One miner from Ruamgasa explained that,

The scales that the makota use might be more reliable, they might not be. It doesn’t really matter. At least I can see my gold measured in a way that I understand. At the end of the day you have to go with the way that is best for you, best for your family, financially. (Interview 27)

Not only can we see in the above quotation the mistrust of a processing method that is outside of the conceptual framework of the miner, but there is also an explicit privileging of economic considerations within the livelihood strategy outlined here. This highlights both the importance of price to understanding ASM gold trading relations (a theme that is addressed in section 5.4.4) and the extent to which APM failed to determine what ASM operators desire in practice from a ‘fair’ trading relationship. A
Nyarugusu *mzee*, retired from his previous employment as a PML holder, made clear that, ‘if APM had come and asked us what we wanted from a relationship rather than telling us what they thought we need, maybe we would have trusted them’ (Interview 16). He continued that, ‘if they had asked me, for example, I would have told them that we want a fair price, number one, and I believe that this is the case for anyone around here that you will ask’ (*ibid*).

The call to ask ‘anyone around here’ introduces the idea of involving ‘local people’ in processes of technological development and should be understood as the demand for bringing discourses of scientific and indigenous knowledge into conversation with one another (Thomson 1996). It follows development scholarship and, to a large extent, practice over the last three decades that has increasingly sought to promote the contribution of indigenous knowledge to development challenges ‘as part of a liberal and populist reaction to the unsuccessful technological triumphalism of rural development’ (Key Informant 12). As a digger from a mining co-operative in Ushirombo explained, ‘why do they [APM] think that their methods are better than what we already have?’ (interview 31).

The traditional methods used by the *makota* to determine the weight of gold are notoriously inaccurate and their results are nearly always dubious. As the leader of the Katente mining co-operative in Usirombo explained, ‘On one side you put the value of the money and on the other the gold. If the scale is in the middle, then that is the weight’ (interview 32). In spite of such methods being understood by ASM operators to be an example of arbitrary price setting on the part of the *makota*, the feeling nonetheless prevailed that the APM system failed to move beyond the sense that the measuring processes are *always* fixed ‘no matter if we use science or what we already have with these buyers’ (interview 25). At the time of research, however, these perspectives from the ASM communities did force the management of APM to question their erstwhile epistemology and research methodology. The CEO conceded that, ‘perhaps we made some mistakes. I think we just assumed that of course our scientific approach was fairer, I mean, why wouldn’t you prefer it? Perhaps if we’d sought to find out what miners trusted and had done some prior research we would have had a better take-up on our processing techniques’ (Key Informant 9).

However, notwithstanding the recognition of the need for a more balanced research design, one that includes an acknowledgement of the important role that indigenous knowledges can play in policy design, caveats must be made to the ‘over-
privileging’ of the strength of culturally appropriate viewpoints. The manager of the Nyarugusu FTGC proposed, for example, that ‘you need to listen to the local community — I think that they know best what is best for them even if it doesn’t make sense to us’ (Key Informant 12). The problem is that the sense that ‘they know best’ is often relegated behind the nature of social conditions in which ASM operators live. The assumption in the call for greater participatory decision-making, inclusive of indigenous knowledge, is that it is the research design that has failed to reveal the needs of the marginalized ASM operators in the area. However, such approaches also ‘presume a community of legitimate people who have rights’ (Baviskar 2003: 5054). ASM, as we have seen in chapter 4, is not always considered legitimate and is marginalized as illegal, irrational and irresponsible. In short, rights for many ASM operators, as a miner from Ruamgasa lamented, ‘are not there for us’ (interview 23). Without recognition of this peripheral position, APM’s vision of ‘fair trade’ is rendered guilty of underestimating ‘the significance of material conditions which influence the need for different knowledges’ (Briggs and Sharp 2004: 673–674). As Briggs and Sharp continue, ‘indigenous knowledge cannot ever be understood in isolation of the critical analysis of economic, social, cultural and political conditions’ (ibid).

To return to the specifics of APM scientific measuring systems then, it becomes clear that the question of how best to communicate ‘fairness’ to ASM communities could never be answered through the determination of appropriately transparent methods. Scientifically ‘proven’ methods of measuring gold weight and purity are a fine example of a technical development intervention, but they fail to consider the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the ASM operators being targeted. A priori assumptions that the new methods would be more transparent and thus ‘fair’, do not for example, take note of ASM’s negative representation, the mistrust of development intervention based on a history of failure (as seen in section 5.2), or the significance of price in determining where miners choose to sell their gold. Indeed, it is this final point to which we shall turn now; namely the critical examination of how APM’s price setting, based on claims of fairness, are understood by ASM communities. There, as here, the ‘fair’ option is rejected in favour of an alternative means of trading.
5.4.4 ‘Fairness’ as ‘best price’

The promise of a ‘fair’ price formed a centrepiece of APM’s outreach to small-scale miners in Mwanza region. As an APM official clarified, the Fair Trade buying centres ‘offer the same price as any seller would get if he was in London or New York, the world market price. It is fair. Every morning they would know what is the price per ounce’ (Key Informant 9). For the management of APM, the success of their ‘fair trade’ model resolutely depended upon ‘the need for the APM price received by miners [to] be the equal or better than prices received under local conditions’ (Key Informant 9). This notion was supported fully by the narratives of ASM operators who confirmed variously that, ‘I’ll sell my gold where I can get the best price’ and ‘the only way that I’ll use APM is if they start to offer me a fair price’ (interviews 27 and 25). In short, APM’s model of ‘fairness’ echoed the historical emphasis of appropriate levels of price setting in the extant Fairtrade movement more generally.

However, during this research, it was revealed through their life histories that this ‘fair’ price did not, in most cases, equate to a better price for ASM operators in the Geita district. Instead, miners would enter either contractual or ad hoc buying relationships with the area’s makota. Moreover, the price obtained by selling gold to these people varied depending on the nature of the transaction. In the case of those miners who had a contractual relationship, the price, and indeed the very production, of gold was determined largely by a programme of money lending for investment in mining equipment. The makota act, therefore, as de facto sponsors to ASM operators in exchange for exclusive rights on the purchase of any gold produced. The dynamics of the makota/ASM operator relationship echo the finding of other research on ASM in Ghana, where Banchirigah recorded how informal miners ‘must secure funds through informal channels — principally, gold buyers, who sponsor activities in exchange for gold at below-market prices’ (Banchirigah 2008: 35). Further, just as the ASM operators researched here relied on the makota’s financial capital to facilitate their gold production, so too in Ghana were the ‘individuals who had secured loans to develop sites […] heavily indebted to buyers, convinced that the only means of eliminating this debt quickly was through mining’ (Banchirigah 2008: 35).

These informal contractual relationships can be seen to have strong theoretical parallels with other fields of commerce, notably the informal agricultural trading sector where the important role played by financial intermediaries has been examined (Harris
1990; Conning 2005). Barbara Harriss for example, accurately theorized the links between the capital of informal food merchants in India with that of usurers or ‘finance capital’ (Harriss 1990: 93). Though the research is over two decades old, it is still salient in describing the ways in which ‘moneylending capital’ can ‘control the reproduction of producers via money advances and crop pledges’ (ibid). Likewise, here it can be seen how the *makota* serve to control local gold marketing arrangements through a system of micro-loans replete with economic rights to exclusivity. The contractual aspect of the *makota* miner relationship invoked competing discourses of content and discontent from ASM operators, who saw it as either an example of ‘financial assistance’ or as ‘unfair practice’ respectively (interviews 29 and 31). For the Kerezia mining co-operative in Ushirombo, the *makota* were an example of the latter:

> Initially we sold to the *makota*, who would support us with the condition that we would then sell to us. However, we do it in line with the law and taxes so we now work with APM. The *makota* buy the gold at an unreasonable price and they try to con you. Initially that was okay as they would support you and there was no alternative. In contrast, working with APM has been beneficial because we have been supported by APM to get equipment and they also buy it at a fair price. This is how it should be done. (Interview 33)

This account remained, however, an exception to the research findings and was one of only two examples of ASM operators viewing APM’s ‘fair trade’ price as the best price. Rather, APM’s intervention has had the effect of increasing the prevailing rates offered by the *makota*, such that they are buying gold at rates 5% to 10% *higher* than the world market price. For miners, ‘fairness’, in the context of securing the best price available for their gold, resulted from selling to the unlicensed *makota* rather than to APM. One operator reflected this dominant narrative to emerge from the miners: ‘I know there is the bank in Ruamgasa, but I’ll always go for the best price. And in my experience, it is the *makota* that offer the best prices. This, to me, is fair’ (interview 26).

Unsurprisingly, both governmental and APM officials refuted the legitimacy of transactions with the *makota*, alleging that either the scales that are used to weigh the gold are fixed, or that the *makota* are part of a money laundering exercise from unnamed master buyers, known locally as *tajiri*, who are above them in the supply chain (see figure 2 in section 5.3). Additionally the government’s district mining officer
for Geita contended that the *makota* were only able to buy at such high rates because they were seeking to export gold in exchange for highly valued goods for import. The mechanics of this pseudo-mercantilism were alleged in some detail:

The gold will find its way to someone of an Indian business in Nairobi. The next day, that Indian sends that gold to Dubai. In Dubai, what they will do, they will exchange the gold with commodities; someone will go there with 10kg of gold and say ‘I need to have these mobile phones.’ So they will be given these mobile phones when you bring them to Tanzania or Kenya and sell them — you can get maybe three times what they cost over the price of the gold. Now you find that someone in Nairobi is buying gold at a price maybe two times what is the official price in the London metal market. Because at Dubai, they are not exchanging by dollars, they are exchanging with commodities. So now those commodities you get by using a kilogram of gold, if you bring them to Tanzania or to Kenya […] you end up getting three or four times. That is why it is a problem even with APM explaining to the people that this is the real price. (Mremi 2009: personal communication)

APM also accused the *makota* of smearing their name. A manager of one of the FTGCs argued that:

They started spreading malicious propoganda against us, about prices. If anyone offers above our price, then you don’t know how they will steal from you. But they do. They have to. So they started spreading rumours that we were not offering the best price. The miners just believe at the tip [sic.] of whatever information they come across without researching the truth. In a way, they [the *makota*] did quite a good job by swaying those doubters from bringing their gold here and selling it instead to them. So in terms of buying, our graph started shooting down over a period of time. (Key Informant 12)

This profoundly negative representation of the *makota* was not shared by all ASM operators, many of whom saw them as an essential part of both credit provision and as providers of a rudimentary form of social security, even describing them in one case as ‘like family’ (interview 20). This is in marked contrast to existing academic and policy-driven thought that has hitherto assumed that miners were receiving a below-market rate for their gold. Because these transactions are enacted through informal channels it is difficult to quantify the ways in which the *makota* profit from the transactions.
However, it was made clear that the arrival of APM did not have a damaging effect on the frequency of such informal relationships.

The further study of the ways in which the makota and other informal buyers interact with ASM supply chains is a particularly fertile ground for research. During this research however, it was only possible to record the life history of one such makota largely owing to the elevated levels of security that surrounds a group of people that are actively seen as criminals by the state. Nonetheless, this narrative did reveal further evidence that the ‘fair’ price offered by APM is not the best price. As the makota stated,

I am aware of the bank, APM in Ushirombo. I don’t feel particularly threatened by it because their prices are no better than mine and, what’s more they don’t provide loans to the miners when they do like I do. Some people do sell their gold there, like Kerezia co-operative, because they don’t need advances on a day-to-day basis. The bank gets its money from them. Having said that, I still get the same amount of miners coming to me as I did before the bank arrived. (Interview 35)

It was suggested by all respondents who did not understand APM to be offering ‘fair’ prices that unless APM had a radical change in business strategy, there was no prospect that ASM operators would sell gold through ‘fair’ channels. ‘Fairness’ was seen not only as merely a rhetorical marketing strategy but also as untrustworthy and duplicitous. A former employee of APM in Nyarugusu emphasized the gap between rhetoric and his personal reality by noting, in relation to the large signs on the walls of the FTGCs promoting ‘FAIR TRADE’ that ‘the writing on the wall is writing. It can shine with fancy paint but essentially it is there to lure. It is there to bring people in. This is my perspective. When you get there it is not what you think it is’ (interview 16).

It could be argued that APM’s failure to communicate ‘fairness’ successfully to the ASM communities in Mwanza region was the result, in part, of a cumulative erosion of trust through the failure to deliver on the promises made by the various initiatives analysed earlier in section 5.4. Certainly trust was a key component of transparency, which in turn was identified as a central tenet of ‘fair trade’ practice. However, there were also specific barriers to APM ‘fair’ pricing strategy, not least the requirement that there is a need for a minimum sale, in weight terms, of three chapa (6g) of gold. This criteria was considered to be an unrealistically high quantity to hold by miners either owing to fears over opportunistic looting or because mine productivity was not high
enough, resulting in a large percentage of PML holders being unable to meet the conditions and thus to sell to APM.

Thus, once again the biggest barrier to participation from ASM operators in a ‘fair trade gold’ system is the failure to understand the pre-existing social and economic conditions. The *makota* are, in short, far more pervasive and influential in managing local gold markets than APM had understood them to be prior to its intervention. The bank did, to a large degree, identify key aspects of ‘fairness’, but failed to implement them appropriately, a sentiment expressed by MwaReMA union secretary:

*Q:* What do you think APM means by ‘Fair Trade Gold?’

*MwaReMA union secretary:* It’s one of the things we have been asking ourselves since they came. When you say ‘Fair Trade’, it means it is a good price. But if you compare it to brokers, it is a big mistake by APM. If you look at the price being traded by brokers in the surrounding villages, it is quite different from the price that APM are buying at. The price of APM is below. The price of brokers is high. When we ask APM about this they say, ‘no, we have got some things to run, costs and so on’ […] and that is one of the reasons why people do not sell gold there. It is one thing to say, ‘we know what you want — a better price. But it is another to do it! They didn’t do any research. If they had, they would have found out that it is the *makota* that control things around here. (Hainga 2009)

To summarize this chapter, it has been argued how ‘fair trade’ gold is materially enacted in Tanzania, albeit through a private institution. APM’s conceptualization of fairness often mirrored that of the ASM communities that it was targeting. Notions of transparency, better price and the need for financial support were all identified by the bank as tenets of fairness that would encourage ‘responsibility and professionalism to the sub-sector’ (Key Informant 9). However, as it has been argued, these aspects were not substantively realized due to the existing cultural and socio-economic conditions found in the district. Moreover, and by way of an open-ended conclusion to this chapter, the discursive positioning of ‘fair trade’ failed to dissociate itself from the historical failure of ASM projects experienced by interviewees. Many miners felt that ‘fair trade gold’ was little more than a rhetorical device and failed to separate it from its profit motives, which, as a private bank, it was assumed to have. One female cook at an ASM site in Nyarugusu outlined this perceived paradox; namely that the profit maximization
imperatives of private institutions preclude trading relations from being considered ‘fair’. In her own words, she concluded that,

It is difficult to say what fairness should mean because we are talking about a business […]. When it comes to a business, it is difficult to say what fair is because the business only wants to be viable. There is no such thing as fairness in small-scale mining — with the exception of market price and honesty, the concept does not apply. (Interview 16)

It is with this closing statement that the FLO/ARM model of FT/FM gold must directly engage in Tanzania, as elsewhere. In other words, in seeking a more just ASM sector featuring increased recognition and economic opportunity for its participants, it must prove that artisanal and small-scale mining can be considered to be ‘fair’ for all actors in the supply chain. Cognisant of the failures of this aforementioned private institution’s attempts to market ‘Fair Trade’ gold, the next chapter critically analyses the prospects and challenges to the successful implementation of the ARM/FLO model of FT/FM gold in Tanzania.
The prospects for the successful enactment of the FT/FM model in Tanzania appear to have arisen at a politically and economically expedient time. It is, on the one hand, an apparently politically germane initiative because it has emerged at a moment when all other development interventions in the ASM sector have either failed or been insufficiently researched or funded. FT/FM gold carries with it the promises of both a well-conceived research strategy and the necessary level of economic support to make its intervention viable for ASM operators in Tanzania. On the other hand, it is economically attractive because ASM (and gold mining in general) has, as its incentive, the motivation of a historically high demand and, hence, price for gold. More people are attracted by the ‘opportunity to try one’s luck for the chance of gold that has a high price’ (interview 26). FT/FM gold would aim to usurp that historical high global market rate by including its premium in exchange for gold mined on an artisanal and small-scale in a certifiably ‘responsible’ way.

However, it is argued here that there remain several key constraints to the efficacy of gold mined in such a way. In doing so, it directly addresses the thesis’s final research question and analyses ‘what are the prospects and challenges to a FLO ratified programme of Fairtrade and Fairmined gold in Tanzania?’ As will be explained, in order for FT/FM gold to be successful in Tanzania and realize its development aims of a fairer ASM sector, it must overcome a multitude of issues that include the need for ‘cross institutional’ thinking, successful integration with locally realized political organization, a concern over its scalability, and a deeply rooted mistrust of development writ large. Moreover, there remains a need to overcome extant barriers to legalized mining such as the insecurity of land tenure for ASM operators as well as ideological constraints relating to a lack of agency for miners and an overemphasis on the strength of ‘community’ to surmount the problems presented by ASM. Each of these issues are expanded upon and analysed respectively in section 6.2.

Preceding this section however, this chapter will expand upon figures 5.1 and 5.2 in chapter five and map out a re-imagined supply chain for FT/FM ASM gold in Tanzania and, in doing so, explain the ways in which the FLO/ARM collaboration attempts to simplify gold marketing. Finally, following this explication and the subsequent research-derived identification of problems presented by this model, the
chapter concludes by suggesting two ASM organizations encountered during the research that present the strongest examples of ‘responsible’ mining practice. This is done not so much in order to propose their adoption as pilot projects for FT/FM gold, but in order to illustrate the substantive ways in which the issues outlined in 6.2 can be applied to a pair of case studies most closely resembling the type of mining organization targeted by proponents of gold certified as Fairtrade and Fairmined. It is concluded that in spite of the fact that many of the certification criteria have already, or could easily be, adopted by these organizations, Fairtrade’s intervention into the ASM sector would fail to drastically alter their working practices or the price gained through the sale of gold along the new FT/FM supply chain. Notwithstanding the positive approach to a more ‘just’ representation of ASM operators made by the Fairtrade literature, unless the challenges analysed in section 6.2 can be overcome, the capacity for FT/FM gold to inspire widespread improvements in the livelihoods of the sector’s participants will be limited.

6.1 A Fairtrade and Fairmined Gold Supply Chain for ASM in Tanzania

ASM gold, certified under the terms of FT/FM, would be changed in terms of how the supply chain operates. It is representative of one of three possible chains of custody, offering an alternative to the existing chains that are either characterized by large numbers of buyers before the gold is exported (in the case of the normative and most dominant mode of marketing), or by APM’s FTGCs which effectively replace those buyers. Both of these possibilities were examined and developed in figures 5.1 and 5.2 in chapter five.
Figure 6.1: Possible Routes for FT/FM-Certified Gold in Tanzania

- **Deposit Type**
  - Hard rock (HR)
  - Alluvial sedimentary (AS)

- **Mining**
  - Ore brokers (HR)
  - Diggers, miners, carriers (AS)
  - Cooks, foremen, runners (HR, AS)
  - Washers, Refiners (HR, AS)

- **Processing**
  - Claim holder
  - Primary Mining License (PML) holder

- **Trading**
  - African Precious Metals Fair Trade Gold Centres
  - FT/FM Gold Buyers

- **Exporting**
  - Overseas Importer
  - Master Dealer
  - Gold Dealers
  - Gold brokers, *Makota*
As can be seen in figure 6.1 above, a newly conceptualized chain of custody marked by the presence of FT/FM buyers and represented in the diagram by the green colouration, would take the place of those FTGCs that formed the case studies of Fairtrade in practice in chapter five. In this re-imagined model, FT/FM buyers can buy from a number of sources. Assuming that the producer groups meet FT/FM standards, including their organization into coherent cooperatives, ASM produced gold could therefore be sold variously at either the point of production (by diggers, ore brokers, washers etc.), directly from claim holders or PML holders, or even from dealers themselves.

Thus, it can be argued that, depending on the chain of custody followed, Fairtrade gold does little to reduce the number of stages of production, rather providing an alternative buyer at the point of sale for the gold ore itself. Indeed, if one of the goals of Fairtrade is ‘to establish a more direct connection in the commercial chain between the grower and the consumer’ (Barratt Brown 2007: 270), then in the example of ASM where the ‘grower’ is replaced by the ‘miner’ it can be seen that this goal is not met. ASM gold’s division of labour is, even under the rubric of ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’, still characterized by a large number of stages of production. Rather, the FT/FM model reduces the number of buyers before final export offering an alternative point of sale for the appropriately certified ASM operators.

6.2 The Challenges of Implementing FT/FM Gold in Tanzania

As iterated earlier, the Fairtrade movement faces challenges in negotiating the gap between a commitment to social justice and the implementation of effective policy. With specific reference to ASM, a plethora of barriers were made evident to such efficacy during the course of this research. These are critically analysed in what follows along with some formative recommendations into ways to alleviate them.

6.2.1 The Need for Integrated Thinking and Understanding

Part of ARM’s vision for FT/FM gold to be enacted on a global scale is to ensure that ‘the sector's development takes place within a framework of good governance’ (ARM 2010: 4). This framework is assumed to include transparent channels of communication
and understanding between the key actors in formulating ASM policy. A senior official from ARM argued that it is essential that ‘we [the FT/FM gold movement] are not going at this alone. Ultimately, Fairtrade gold needs everyone on board. This means that large scale mining companies need to be as aware of what we are about as the state is, or as civil society is’ (Key Informant 1).

Certainly, there is a need for Fairtrade to carefully define itself, whilst at the same time creating and expanding upon extant networks of policy making. Part of this requirement is fulfilled by its commitment to more bottom-up participatory approaches to its practices, but as the official above emphasized, FT/FM gold must remain inclusive of other parties responsible for developing ASM policy. As Adams (2006) has argued such development ‘from below’ must include ‘new alliances, new ways of cutting through the conservatism of industry’s ingrained destructive practices and environmentalism’s knee-jerk oppositionism’ (361).

One example of environmentalism’s inadvertently deleterious impact upon ASM communities was illustrated by the life history of one miner recalling his experience of NGO intervention at a previous mine site in a different region. Recollecting his experience as an unlicensed miner in North Mara, he narrated how an environmental NGO, campaigning for a change in the negatively perceived practices of large-scale mining, actually created a further problem for ASM operators in the area. He stated:

There was always these problems with the big mining company – AngloGold. In fact there are still many problems with them now. But one of the problems back then was that the amount of heavy machinery and trucks that they use to transport the ore everywhere throw up a great deal of dust. Then this European NGO came into the area and told this company that this was not right – that they had to do something about the dust pollution. After some time, the company responded by spraying the roads with a load of water to stop the dust. The only problem was that this was the same water that we were using to grow our crops! As a result of their campaigns, our crops actually died! This is what I mean when I say that you need to think everything through even if you say it is ‘fair’. (Interview 28)

Whilst representing another example of failure for ASM policy in Tanzania, similar narratives actually acted as a point of inspiration for senior policy makers in the FT/FM movement. A leading figure in the movement was cognisant for example that ‘stories of
environmentalism for environmentalism’s sake are all too familiar and they are bound by one outcome. They fail’ (Key Informant 1). In the light of these shortcomings, the solution and blueprint for Fairtrade was, it was hence argued, self-explanatory: ‘we can learn from these mistakes, however. Fairtrade gold has a strong environmental element to it but it has to be developed in partnership with the full range of actors so that we can avoid mistakes like those in the past’ (Key Informant 1).

ARM’s commitment that FT/FM gold be advanced with full communication with and support of the state, business and civil society was echoed by the developmental efforts made by APM. One leading strategist for APM noted that without the full support of other policy actors, gold marketed as ethical or ‘fair’ would not be feasible. For her, ‘the only way it will work is if we expand our scope of outreach and our collaboration with ARM, the government. In the absence of strategic partnerships, I don’t think that APM or Fairtrade gold will succeed’ (Key Informant 10).

However, despite the strong rhetoric of partnerships, enacting these strategic alliances at a policy level may prove problematic, at least in the short term where the terms of ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’ remain poorly understood. For example, inefficient bureaucratic procedures were held to be a reason for the breakdown in relationship between APM and the Tanzanian government. Indeed, the chairman of APM asserted that the lack of what he termed ‘joined-up thinking’ was actually the major reason behind a lack of expansion in the business strategy for further FTGCs to be built. According to this line of enquiry, APM’s ASM policy was disconnected from other actors and ‘feels alone in the efforts to formalize the mining sector’ (Key Informant 9). Evident throughout narratives elicited from the APM leaders, officials and staff interviewed was a consistent degree of frustration expressed at the state’s perceived gap between rhetoric and reality in implementing new forms of fair practice for ASM operators. One key employee of APM alleged that:

Plans for an expanded programme of Fair Trade gold have been discussed with the ministry who are aware what’s going on. However they can’t do anything about it. What is needed is a solution but the ministry just seem to love to talk about it but in practice provide no capacity for the miners. (Key Informant 9)

The relationship between the management of APM and the Ministry of Energy and Minerals was strained, even described as ‘combative’ by the business strategist for
APM (Key Informant 10). This breakdown in communication between the two parties was expanded upon by this important member of the organisation:

I think they misunderstand each other and they don’t communicate properly. There was one particular issue where he felt that the commissioner was trying to make life as difficult as possible. That wasn’t the case but rather a misunderstanding of the bureaucratic procedures that go on here. Any country has these and out of due respect we should go along with them. (Key Informant 10)

The fragmentation of the relationship between APM and the Ministry has serious implications for any potential enactment of an official version of Fairtrade gold. It was made clear, for example, during interviews with all but one government official, that there was a high degree of confusion over a differentiation between APM’s version of ‘Fair Trade gold’ and the potential for FLO ratified FT/FM gold. This means that the relational damage between the government and APM is likely to be transferred to future interaction between the Ministry and representatives from FLO/ARM.

At the very least there was an evident lack of knowledge regarding the prospect of FT/FM gold being piloted in Tanzania at all levels of government. For example, asked whether he thought that Fairtrade gold would bring to Tanzania, the minerals commissioner admitted that he couldn’t ‘remember the concept itself’ (Key Informant 8) whilst another senior figure in the Ministry thought that it ‘should [sic] be something to do with international treaties or agreements’ (Key Informant 6). In all cases where ignorance of Fairtrade gold was noted, the research participants blamed this on a lack of provided information by the proponents of the FT/FM initiative. As the official noted above continued:

If the Government of Tanzania is not a member of those kind of associations, probably that could be one of the reasons. But secondly it might be because we don’t have enough information, you know. We don’t really know what Fairtrade is all about. (Key Informant 6)

In short, without an educative turn from Fairtrade gold’s proponents, ASM policy is likely to remain disconnected and the prospect for its success diminished.
6.2.2 Issues of Scalability

The Fairtrade and Fairmined movement has as its ambition the aim ‘of capturing 5% of the gold jewellery market over the next 15 years’ (Fairtrade 2011c). However, in order to achieve such exponential growth in a manner similar to that witnessed in the agri-food sector, the movement must overcome certain barriers. Perhaps most prominent amongst these is the requirement that FT/FM certification is premised upon an ASMO (artisanal and small scale mining organization) being legalized. According to the FT/FM standards, ‘The origin of Fairtrade gold and associated precious metals is exclusively from areas for which the ASMO possesses the mining rights (mining concessions, mining lease, exploitation contract, or equivalent denominations according to national legislation), owns or has agreed the land use rights with the land owner, and has applied for certification for those areas’ (ARM 2010: 7).

In practice however, this places serious limitations upon the number of potential participants in the scheme as the majority of ASM operators in Tanzania and elsewhere in mineral rich sub-Saharan African countries, operate without a license. This issue, one that is referred to here as a *problem of scalability*, though unrecognized at the initiative’s inception, is increasingly being understood by policy makers within ARM to be of critical importance to the movement’s success in sub-Saharan Africa. In this light they have drafted a ‘Legalization guide for artisanal and small scale mining’, which, published only months before this study, aims to ‘provide support to national governments to promote better policies for ASM organizations that are interested to commit to the standards of fair trade’ (ARM 2011a: 4).

The guide is explicit in its recognition of the limitations of a Fairtrade gold programme that only engages with legalized ASM operators. As the document asserts:

Legalization, as a process to obtain the necessary regulatory authorizations to conduct a mining operation, is a precondition for the legitimacy and stability of ASM. Without it no real progress can be achieved because the right of an ASM mining operation to exist can always be questioned. (ARM 2011a: 3)

Moreover this critical awareness, framed with consistent reference to social and environmental rights, extends to an understanding that the ASM sector in the areas of proposed operation is still a predominately unlicensed, and hence, illegal activity. As
they acknowledge:

If it is true that legalization is a fundamental condition towards an environmentally and socially responsible ASM sector, it is also true that the majority of ASM operations are still in a state of illegality despite their economic and social contributions at the local level in the majority of developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. (ARM 2011a: 3)

This recognition, and its policy response to ‘provide support to national governments to promote better policies for ASM organizations that are interested to commit to the standards of fair trade’ (ARM 2011: 4), is a preliminary step in addressing the barrier to FT/FM gold’s wider adoption on a wider scale.

However, there is another dimension to the problem of scalability that Fairtrade fails to address. This is the need to address poverty at all levels of an ASMO’s network of dependents. To clarify, there is an assumption made that Fairtrade can both ‘add to development’ and ‘make a difference in development and quality of life for artisanal and small-scale miners and the communities where they live’ (ARM 2010: 17). This is premised on the fact that the inclusion of a ‘Fair Trade premium’ should, in the context of a Fairtrade ASMO, lead to the ‘sustainable development of the organization, its members and Production Partners and through them, their families, workers and surrounding community’ (ARM 2010: 19).

The first hand narratives recorded during this research also support this contention. For example, during an interview with a board member of ARM it was iterated that, ‘what we are doing is providing a premium for the ASMO leaders. Then, because they are responsible, they can distribute the increased value down the ladder as it were to those people in their organization below them, and they to their families and hence improve the lives of the poorest’ (Key Informant 2). However, such a view can be read as a microcosm of the now debunked myth of trickle-down economics, that the benefits of economic growth inevitably find their way to the poorest in society. So entrenched is the rebuttal of this belief that even the most mainstream political economy concedes that it was never more than ‘an article of faith’ (Stiglitz 2002: 78).

Likewise, this research revealed that such conviction by ARM in the development potential of the Fairtrade premium to ‘trickle down’ to the families and dependents of certified ASMOs is misplaced. Many ASM operators who gave their life
histories spoke of a disconnection from systems of supposed economic solidarity and rejected the idea that miners could organize in such a way that the economic benefits of Fair Trade initiatives could be felt. An ore digger in Ruamgasa spoke passionately of the prevailing situation:

You talk about this so-called Fair Trade coming in and giving the leaders of these new co-operatives control over the handing out of extra money or whatever. But you have to understand this is not how it works around here! If you give money to someone at the top, it will never find its way to people like me at the bottom, the workers. I have mined in Mara, Mbeya and now here in Mwanza and it’s always the same – the wealth never finds it way to the bottom. (Interview 24)

The inability to have a positive impact on the poorest ASM operators echoes broader criticism of the limitations of voluntary initiatives more generally. As Sciavi and Solomon (2007) summarize, ‘weaknesses of voluntary initiatives are said to include lack of sanctions, limited enforcement, lack of specificity of standards and objectives, and failure to attract the poorer performers within a sector’ (29, emphasis added). Based on this research’s findings, the reasons for the lack of faith that FT/FM gold would benefit the poorest members can be distilled into three distinct discursive strands. These are 1) a result of the alleged self-interest of ASM license holders in the area, 2) a function of gender inequality and 3) a feeling of deeply rooted lack of agency amongst ASM operators to influence the distribution of the premium.

Considering each of these in turn, the most recurring theme that was contended by ASM operators as a barrier to equitable distribution of the Fairtrade premium was the notion that the potential leaders or spokespeople of a FT/FM ASMO would be self-interested. A PML holder with 30 years experience of gold mining in the Mwanza region stated that,

The problem with the trust in co-operative groups of miners is that there are always those who are on the take. Listen – when you talk about small-scale mining around here you are talking about a small group of people who control everything. Everyone that does this job does it for themselves. There is no way that things would change with Fairtrade because all the people with power don’t share what they have. (Interview 17)
Another PML holder from the same area, and friends with the above speaker expanded upon this lack of faith:

You see, when you talk about this fair price, you need to ask who is it fair for? The money I get now is not for me, you see. When I get a price for my gold, I give that price to my family, to my children for their schooling and so on. But say I joined a co-operative with my friend here – that is fine, I can trust him. But I would have to bring in other people as well and who knows what sort of people they would be. What’s more, they would all have their own ideas about the best way to hand out the money and in my experience, when there are too many people involved all wanting something for themselves, it is impossible to get anything done. (Interview 20)

There is the suggestion both here and throughout the life histories that the culture of mistrust that was analysed in section 5.4.2 with reference to MwaReMA and the failed microfinance programme, actually permeates across the entire ASM sub-sector in the region. Interestingly, those ASM operators who described other miners in the area as self-interested or untrustworthy reinforced the normative and pejorative worldview of ASM that was analysed in chapter 4. Whilst this view was not universal amongst all miners, FT/FM gold must be aware that where there is such a socially and culturally inscribed grammar of mistrust, the number of ASMOs in the region is likely to be limited.

The second reason that limits the amount of people that a FT/FM gold programme can reach is the extant discrimination against women in the sector. With one notable exception of a female PML holder in Nyarugusu, women were employed at a very low level of the ASM gold supply chain. Typical jobs that were carried out included ore crushing, gold panning, on-site cooking or mercury amalgamation. These tasks, though equally as arduous as those of their male counterparts were, according to one female miner in Ruamgasa, ‘underpaid compared with what the men get’ (Interview 29), a notion that is congruous with the academic research of other sectors of Fairtrade (Imhof and Lee 2007). As Le Mare (2008) has argued ‘additional research is needed to uncover the wider circumstance and position of women, including the gendered nature of most economies, where women are only allowed or thought able to do certain types of paid work’ (1935). Withstanding the example of David Liundi 28 in Nyaragusu (a case

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28 This name is anonymized.
study examined at the end of this chapter), all sites visited during this research had at least some female representation. Where they were present, their relative marginalization on the mining sites could not only be explained by their familiar, patronising representation as ‘not built for mining’ or ‘too weak to do a man’s work’ (interview 23, interview 28) but also by a range of specific cultural beliefs. Moreover, their continuing marginalization echoes research into Fairtrade coffee cooperatives that has argued that even where women were accepted members of the broader group, which in itself has been shown to be unusual, they have not been placed in positions of importance or leadership (Taylor 2002).

At one site in Ushirombo, for example, women were prohibited from going near the mineshafts, or even handling gold, because according to local customs it was believed that women bring bad luck. The foreman of that site explained this superstition by asserting that,

Women cannot go near the shafts because we believe that they bring evil spirits onto our site. If this happens then it can affect the quantity and quality of the gold that we can get. This is why you don’t see many of them around. (Interview 31)

It should be noted that in one case, women even became analogous with wachawi (witches) and, as such, were banned altogether from entering the vicinity of ASM activity. Indeed, barriers to entry for women were contrary to the standards set out in the FT/FM criteria for certification. As part of Fairtrade’s commitment to ‘freedom from discrimination’, it is stipulated that ‘the spirit of this requirement seeks to protect people who are vulnerable due to their physical, cultural, social or economic characteristics, especially women miners’ (ARM 2010: 25). This is in line with academic research which has urged Fairtrade organizations to privilege gender inequality more fully (Hopkins 2000). In order to be registered as a ‘Fairtrade Miner’ it is necessary that:

The ASMO will provide the same opportunities to men, women, and disadvantaged individuals regardless of their provenance or origin in all areas of mining activity, as a worker, member or entrepreneur, through the recognition of their specific capabilities and need. (ARM 2010: 25)

Thus, it can be strongly argued that without widespread changes in cultural beliefs
across the region, there are few operations that can fulfill this obligation of FT/FM gold, thus reducing the scale of any potential intervention. Certainly, ARM’s explicit writing of the issue into its standards for Fairtrade gold goes some way to addressing the gender inequality but it must also counter claims that the focus is a result of western-oriented pressures and is not considered an ‘important internal issue’ in its own right (Taylor 2002: 4). However, as Le Mare’s (2008) review of the Fairtrade literature concluded this may be difficult to achieve in practice and there are many examples that illustrate that gender equality is difficult to achieve in the developing world (1935).

The third discursive strand that was revealed in explaining this problem of scalability was a reported loss of self-esteem, and thus agency, by the poorest participants on the studied mine sites. Many ASM operators who recounted their life histories felt defeated by an activity that had brought them few benefits to their standard of living. A PML holder from Ushiroombo asked rhetorically:

What’s the point in all these new ideas anyway? They all end up the same. As I said, I have been mining for many years and I have seen many people try their hand at mining – most of them have either given up or are like me, still working for little profit. Sometimes I wonder what’s the point of continuing with it? (Interview 32)

Evident here, as well as in other recorded narratives, was the sense that self-esteem had been eroded from many ASM operators. This led some respondents to variously consider ‘giving up’, ‘trying something else’, ‘saving up for a piki piki [motorbike] and leaving all this behind’ (Interview 27, interview 20 and interview 29). In short there was the suggestion that the ASM sector in Mwanza was not only a trap for people in terms of the material aspects of poverty, but also in terms of its deleterious impact on psychological characteristics.

There is, however, an opportunity for FT/FM gold in sub-Saharan Africa to replicate the revelations of erstwhile academic study that has shown how Fairtrade can benefit the social capital and self-esteem of its members (Robbins et al. 2000). It has also been argued that Fairtrade can contribute to an increase in ‘independence and control over one’s life’ or, in the case of female artisans, ‘no matter what market they enter, inevitably find a broader social purpose’ (Littrell and Dickson 1999: 37-38).

29 Though comprehensive, this review fails to note the emergence of gold as a newly certifiable product for Fairtrade.
However, whilst Fairtrade gold may bring with it the promise of improvements to miners’ self-esteem, it is asserted here that such gains are not inevitable. Indeed, the reasons given by the ASM operators whose narratives expressed a lack of *amour propre*, were revealed to be either symptoms of a history of failure by development intervention or a feeling that the improvements required to become certified as a Fairtrade producer were unattainable. It is to this point that this research turns its attention in the following section.

6.2.3 Certification and its Discontents

Current understanding of ASM, as was argued in chapter two, posits that it is a sector that is characterized by low levels of mechanization. Moreover, ASM in Tanzania is, not without exception, marked by the use of even more rudimentary tools than in the South American context where FT/FM gold is currently operational. As Fisher et al. have shown in Tanzania (2009), ‘the majority of gold and diamond miners rely on hand tools and manual labour’ (33). This view was broadly supported by the experiences of this research where formalized ASM operators, even in possession of a PML, often related the need for more advanced equipment in order to improve the output of the mine site. As a result, meeting the demands of the FT/FM process in order to gain certification was an unrealistic condition for the majority of respondents.

Indeed, the notion of ‘fairness’ was thought to be the privilege of the powerful and untenable for those operators working with basic equipment. An experienced miner from Ruamgasa made clear that making the transition to a ‘fair’ mode of mining was a choice that was not available to those workers operating with rudimentary forms of mining equipment. He specifically questioned,

> What am I supposed to do? I don’t want to be mining like this. I mean, look at these conditions – flooded mineshafts, broken bits of wood – it’s not safe! So, it’s not a choice that I want to make but I actually have no choice. I have no money to invest in my operations. If I did, then maybe you can start to talk about being ‘fair’ (Interview 26)

It is argued here, however that there is a quite different and often underplayed dynamic which serves to marginalize worker empowerment for ASM operators in the region. This concerns the role of auditing in the certification process for Fairtrade and the
notion that, despite claims to the precise antithesis by the Fairtrade movement, there is a real danger that the workers themselves have a restricted voice in the formation of both standard setting and its continuing auditing process. Indeed, according to normative academic understandings, ‘the negotiation of Fair Trade conventions is a complex, but essentially transparent one involving give and take, in which participants find a suitable compromise between divergent national and sectoral interests, technical requirements and realities, commercial imperatives and civic norms’ (Kruger and du Toit 2007: 215).

However, as has been argued throughout this thesis, ‘fairness’ is a highly malleable and contested term with a number of conceptual divergences. The way that it is inscribed in institutionalized standard setting and auditing processes reduces these complex dynamics to a single definition. In doing so, there is the threat that it is the auditor rather than the audited that constitutes the monitoring criteria. Because, as Dolan (2008) has argued, the convention setting process can not only ‘validate fair and ethical practice but also to define and naturalize it’ (286), it is imperative that the auditors of Fairtrade gold are self-critical in being aware of potential divergences in the understanding of what is required of the audit.

The principal means by which ARM and FLO audit certified gold are enacted through a ‘Chain of Custody’ toolkit that is defined as ‘the set of measures which is designed to guarantee that the labelled product [gold] put on the market is really a product coming from the certified mine or producing unit concerned’ (ARM 2007: 7). Whilst remaining cognisant of the need to establish a genuinely negotiated understanding on how Fairtrade is conceptualized by both ASM operators and Fairtrade monitoring officers, the specific use of checklists as a means of auditing compliance with the standards still requires close scrutiny. One miner in Nyaragusu, upon being asked whether or not he was in favour of Fairtrade’s proposed auditing approach highlighted some issues with the ideology of certification through auditing.

Does it make any difference how they check how [sic] I mine my gold? They have their views on what they want from my gold, about how it is mined, is it environmentally aware, and all these things. The thing is that even if they ask us what do we think is ‘fair’ gold, or whatever it’s called, they won’t listen to our answers. You should know that they make up their minds depending on what the people they are selling it to want. (Interview 20)
It is evident in this quotation that the miner feels marginalized from the policy discourse, in a system where the demands of one group of people (consumers in the global North) dictate the composition of voices that in heard in creating the appropriate standards documents. This line of argument clearly resonates with the claims made by Fairtrade’s calls for social and environmental justice in ASM analysed in chapter four, a movement that foregrounded the importance of understanding the way that power flows in the discourse of ASM policy. Notably, Fairtrade gold must be alert to the possibility that its means of auditing miners can be considered contradictory by denying a voice to ASM operators in the auditing process whilst at the same time campaigning for their more active voice in ASM policy discourses. As Kruger and Du Toit (2007) caution, ‘FLO’s ability to expand into new markets while still presenting its operations as ‘fair’ depends on a hidden infrastructure: a spatially distributed social technology of power and knowledge which allows for the backstage and onstage creation of consensus around the rearticulation of principles such as fairness’ (216, emphasis in original).

Notwithstanding this, there seems little doubt that following the success of Fairtrade’s growth and its mainstream proliferation that along with ‘the evident desire to extend this further…the central premises of the standard system remain unchallenged’ (Tallontire 2009: 1012). In this light, the tracking of gold along the Fairtrade supply chain would seem to be an inculcated and unmoving mode of guaranteeing both the transparency and efficacy of the gold’s ‘ethical credentials’, inclusive of economic, labour, social and environmental standards. Perhaps the biggest point of conceptual divergence between miners and the ARM/FLO collaboration concerned the relative ‘fairness’ of mercury in the processing of gold.

This can be illustrated by two examples of this understanding from the two respective parties; on the one hand, a senior official in ARM, and on the other a PML holder in Mwanza with two years experience of selling to APM. First, the representative of Fairtrade explained its position on the centrality of mercury to the understanding of gold as fair:

Let’s be clear on one thing – we know that mercury amalgamation is commonplace in mining in Tanzania, in Africa, worldwide in fact. But that is not to say that it is an acceptable part of what constitutes fairness. It is a core aim of Fairtrade and Fairmined gold to work towards the complete elimination of mercury from the processing phase. We know that it is dangerous, and I’m pretty certain that our partners in all this – the miners –
known as well so writing its elimination into the standards seems to be a logical end point when you are talking about establishing a responsibly mined form of gold. (Key Informant 2)

It can be seen how the above Fairtrade gold spokesperson conceptualizes the trading relationship along lines of partnership characterized by a shared vision and set of values regarding the elimination of mercury. However, the extent to which partnership is substantively enacted depends on the extent to which ASM operators contribute to the formulation of Fairtrade’s environmental standards on mercury reduction. In short, the question that needs to be asked of Fairtrade is: ‘whether the values, meanings, and forms of knowledge inculcated in Fairtrade are ‘owned’ by producers in these commodity networks and to what extent producers frame their participation through similar idioms of solidarity and partnership’ (Dolan 2008: 280)? As will be shown in the miner’s narrative below, ‘producers’ (or in this case, ASM operators) expressed an opposing vision of fairness but one that included mercury. In doing so, it attempts to counter the sense that in the case of some Fairtrade Organisations ‘what is good for the other has already been defined by the benevolent self’ (Giri and van Ufford 2003: 254).

A mzebi miner from Ushiroombo, respected as a village leader with over 40 years of experience in ASM, expressed the widely held views of the local population’s stance on the use of mercury.

We know that mercury is dangerous – I have seen many friends be marked physically by using it. If we didn’t know, then we should because the government and various foreign agencies have made many workshops in Shinyanga and in Geita to educate us about its dangers. But these people who want to set up Fairtrade gold here – they need to understand one thing. That, for us, it is a necessity. Without it we cannot mine properly as other ways are too expensive. What we can do - and I know many people that do this – is use it responsibly. This can be done by using retorts and then reusing it. This is clean and this is fair. If they say, ‘you cannot use mercury if you want to sell to us’, well that is not fair, so I don’t know how you say they can be called Fairtrade. (Interview 37)

The above quotation illustrates well the discordant beliefs of the ASM operator and the so-called Fairtrade ‘partner’. Whilst the elimination of mercury is, for the ARM representative ‘a logical end point’, here the miner sees it as ‘a necessity’. Notwithstanding the fact that Fairtrade’s ‘governance structures have evolved to permit
greater producer participation’ (Tallontire 2009: 1012), it is still the case that it is the ‘politically powerful brokers’ who dictate the terms of standards setting (Kruger and du Toit 2007: 217). In this way, ARM’s position to ‘actively promote mercury-free artisanal mining as the best available technology’ (ARM 2011d) means that mercury’s elimination is the goal for premium Fairtrade gold and the voices of the miners are marginalized.

The setting of standards, even when developed through a participatory methodology also distil the concerns that workers identify into an aesthetic form that is amenable to Fairtrade marketing channels in the global north (Dolan 2008: 288). As has been argued elsewhere, this approach has been enacted with reference to a framework which provides a discourse of ethics that is written not by the producer so much as for the consumer (Childs 2009). As Dolan concludes, it ‘translates the nuanced and highly particularistic experiences of Fairtrade producers and workers into an ethical artefact that reflects the regulatory lingua franca of best practice’ (Dolan 2008: 288). To conclude this section, ‘Fair Trade’s biggest challenge in mitigating mercury use in ASM may not be through changing current practices per se, but rather it is by understanding more fully the ways in which its vision of responsible mercury use is echoed by ASM operators. If such consensus can be reached, the possibilities for a successful anti-mercury policy will become apparent’ (Childs 2009: 268). Put another way, to what extent can more genuinely participatory approaches at an institutional level ‘counter-act the disempowering effects of some forms of Fairtrade value chain or, more positively, is there potential for institutional governance changes to bolster forms of value chain governance that are more empowering for producers’ (Tallontire 2009: 1012)?

6.2.4 Access to Land and Security of Tenure is Poor

Following the analysis of barriers to the potential for FT/FM gold in Tanzania, including the lack of institutional ‘joined-up thinking’, issues of scalability, and problems with developing genuinely participatory conventions on certification, this thesis now considers another challenge: access to land for ASM operators. For many of the miners who recorded their life histories, access to land was increasingly becoming threatened by rises in medium and large-scale mining investment. Moreover, this was framed variously in terms of an ‘invasion’, an ‘attack’, or a violation over their rights. Perhaps the strongest voice on this issue came from the preeminent environmental
rights lawyer in Tanzania who claimed that the awarding of traditionally ASM land to large-scale (foreign) mining companies by the Tanzanian government was a form of violence. During an interview, he stated,

If you put the small-scale miner at the centre of these processes, what does it mean in practice? In practice, it means protecting them from corporate encroachment, it also means dealing with the power of the state to alienate resources. We go back to the central question that I posed earlier, the question of democracy, the question of limiting the government power to expropriate the communities. If you don’t do that, you cannot have Fairtrade, you cannot have Fairtrade in a situation where artisans [sic] are being driven out of their areas. Not by economic means as I say, not by economic processes but by the use of diplomatic pressure, economic blackmail and state violence and that has been the case for 10 years. (Key Informant 15)

Such sentiment, though belligerent in tone, was echoed by the ASM operators’ narratives whose land could be considered as a form of social security. A female miner from Ruamgasa highlighted the conceptual convergence between the notion of a mining concession and a livelihood:

When a company is given my land by the government and I am told to move, what they are actually doing is throwing me out of my own house. Mining is how I feed my family. What gives them the right to take something which is not theirs? (Interview 22)

Also expressed was the notion that foreign companies dedicated to prospecting are speculatively appropriating concessions of land not claimed by ASM operators. This has led to a cramping of existing ASM sites and a reduction in quality of the gold available to miners. A former soldier of the Tanzanian army who began mining 20 years ago following his discharge due to injury noted this shift:

Back then, it was so much better! The gold was easy to find – you could dig the height of a man and find gold. It was not as difficult as now because it was freer. You could go where you pleased. Now the land has been apportioned to subcontractors – they get the best parts. (Interview 19)
This has somewhat obvious implications for the intervention of FT/FM gold, in so far as the movement only aims to work with those at the small scale. A reduction in available land results in fewer opportunities to be legally registered with a Primary Mining License and hence the opportunity to be certified as a Fairtrade ASMO. There is legal recourse to challenge this increasingly prevalent phenomenon through it does require the support of not only ARM and FLO but also the Tanzanian government itself. In an article arguing for the possibility of sustainable development in ASM through environmental and human rights law, MacDonald (2006) proposes the potential application of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Through this law, it is posited that ‘with a recognized legal right to self-determination, the form of subsistence that prevails in ASM communities could be protected and that it would ‘endow communities with responsibility for their land and can go some way towards advancing environmental stewardship’ (MacDonald 2006: 90).

Certainly, there are strong parallels with the rhetoric of ARM and FLO’s FT/FM standard but, as MacDonald (2006) herself concedes, ‘a convincing desire to implement the right to self-determination is needed on the part of governments, as the ASM community cannot fulfil its right to self determination unilaterally’ (90). It is at this point, however, that a further barrier to Fairtrade’s efficacy emerges. Not only is the Tanzanian government likely to continue its policy of privileging FDI, but also many ASM operators encountered during this research failed to display the requisite sense of self-determination.

For example, a miner in Ushirombo, felt that the recent emergence of foreign land prospectors made his choice of mining as a livelihood strategy untenable:

There are days now where I just think, ‘what will I do?’ There is less and less good land to mine on. The price of gold is high right now but it is very difficult to find land that has lots of it. All that land is gone. Maybe, mining is not for me anymore. ‘Nobody likes life in the holes! We are not mongooses or pigs! Everyone lives in the hope that we can get enough money to get out of this. But I have no hope left. (Interview 34)

Whilst this lack of psychological will can be read as a specific agent of poverty, it should be noted that this view was more common amongst the more experienced miners. Indeed, for those new to ASM it may be the case that ‘people focus first on basic material needs, then material security, and then less tangible objectives such as
affinity, recognition and self-actualisation’ (Moore et al, 1998, in Camfield, 2006: 7). An exchange during a focus group in Nyarugusu between a father and his son, both working on the same concession, highlighted this dynamic.

FATHER: One of the biggest problems that I have seen in recent years is the amount of outsiders coming in and taking the land. And I’m not just talking about AngloGold either! Now we are finding that people buy up the land that we could use for mining and then not even using it! It just stays there doing nothing. But if we try and use it then someone is there to move us off.

SON: But that is not the point…

FATHER: Of course it is the point! It is unfair. In fact, all mining around here is more and more of a struggle these days. There are many days when we get no gold, for example, and I think that I am going to quit. It is actually quite demoralising.

SON: You can’t feel like that because we have to try to make some money. If you stop because the mining is too hard then you are giving up. We have to get food first, that is the most important thing – so, of course we will continue mining. (Interview 23)

This exchange cannot, of course, be used to make generalizable comments on the differences in how all young miners and old miners conceptualize fairness. However, it does illustrate some of the themes that emerged implicitly in the discourse of the ASM narratives and does serve to show that the reduction in land availability and the decreased security of tenure were perceived to have had not only negative material effects upon ASM operators in Mwanza region but also detrimental psychological consequences. These factors do render more complicated the fabric of the ASM sector and, in returning to this chapter’s research question, present a significant challenge to FT/FM’s potential efficacy in the area.

6.2.5 ‘Here we go again’: FT/FM Gold and the Failure of Development Intervention

The epigraph in the title to this subsection refers to another element in determining the way in which FT/FM gold will be adopted into ASM policy in Tanzania. This is the
notion that the perceived failure of development intervention in the past is something likely to be replicated by future interventions such as that proposed by ARM and FLO. This view, common to the narratives of ASM operators and echoing the research of Green (2000), is, to be yet more specific, a particular mistrust of development intervention from the outside. To expand and contextualize the aforementioned epigraph, it was contended by the treasurer of MwaReMA and de facto representative of PML holders in Mwanza region that,

Always we are seeing new people from outside coming in and offering new ideas about how we should mine. We had Meremeta, we had the Bank of Tanzania, and you can see now in the village we have APM. But the thing that people really want to know, when you ask me what I think about Fairtrade gold, is how is this going to be different. All those people that I mentioned failed to bring change to our lives. Why should this ‘Fairtrade gold’ be any different to them. Of course, I am open minded but I think there is still a sense when we see a new initiative like the one you mentioned [FT/FM gold] coming in, there is still a sense of ‘here we go again’. (Interview 11)

In this example, it is made evident that FT/FM is generalized as being part of a broader package of (failed) development interventions. This notion has theoretical support from Crewe and Harrison (1998) whose ethnography of development in practice illustrates how the way in which previous development interventions are perceived have direct influence over the views of future ones. Here, regarding the specificities of ASM, miners’ views of development do not exist in a political vacuum, rather they are informed by a series of institutional failure, broken promises and marginalization. A member of a mining co-operative in Ushirombo was sceptical that FT/FM would deliver solutions to the problems of ASM because, ‘A good many organisations have come here and said ‘we will empower you’ or ‘improve your productivity’ but it is always the case that when they leave, they are gone’ (Interview 31).

The resolution that ‘they are gone’ indicates a firm belief that development works in a short-termist, extractive manner whereby research participants, such as the miner in question are ‘used in the name of science’ (interview 31). It also reduces all development initiatives to a single entity (‘they’) whereby potential differences in research methodology and aims are lost. In this way, FT/FM gold, despite its ideology
of participation, is seen as operating in the same way as, for example, foreign LSM companies whose reputation is severely damaged.

This is not to say that ASM operators who, in spite a history of economic marginalization, and despite their suspicion of the benefits of new ASM policies, still expressed commitment to a programme of self-improvement and economic progress, necessarily reject development out of hand. After being asked about his hopes for FT/FM gold, a gold panner from Nyaragusu shared his position:

I am unsure whether Fairtrade gold will work. After all there has been so much disappointment with broken promises. The thing is, I will always try to make the most money that I can depending on my options for selling. If it means that I need to sell to Fairtrade then I will. (Interview 15)

This resonates with previous academic study in Tanzania, notably Marsland’s (2006) exposition of ‘how local actors must view new projects through the lens of past experience’ (78). The paper’s conclusion that ‘memories of project failures and corruption have led to cynicism and withdrawal from participation’ is one that has parallels with ASM operators studied here (ibid.). Also supported is the economic imperative to continue in spite of the mistrust of development, a suspicion that ‘should not be construed as indicating that local people do not want development. On the contrary, many (although not all) are highly desirous of the commodities that come with development’ (ibid).

The will to achieve greater economic security on the part of the ASM operators results in the searching for the best available price for their gold. But as was shown in section 5.4.4 this is not likely to be the Fairtrade price when the makota are able to buy at prices higher than the global market rate. This complexity it terms of price setting can be read as an example of what Tallontire (2009) has termed ‘a delicate balance of commercial objectives and developmental objectives [that] is wrought with difficulties’ (1011). In short, it may be that price may usurp developmental reputation as the most important factor in assessing the potential for FT/FM’s success in Tanzania. However, the suspicion with which development intervention is held, most pertinently illustrated by the general disregard that has been the legacy of APM’s erstwhile intervention, is certain to have a lasting impact. Indeed, there was some confusion over differentiating between the ‘Fair Trade’ written on the outside of APM FTGCs and the ‘Fair Trade’
being propounded by ARM and FLO. One miner encapsulated the problem that FLO/ARM most overcome by simply asking, ‘what’s the difference between the two’ (interview 33)?

6.2.6 Problems with Developing ‘Community’

Building upon the background literature reviewed in chapter two, this section problematizes the notion of ‘community’ with particular reference to FT/FM’s understanding of the term. Notably, it argues that there is a need to avoid a reductive conceptualization that ignores group difference in such a way that the complexities found on the ground in Tanzania are not sufficiently accounted for in the policy design of its standards. For example, where community is a central pillar of fairness for FT/FM gold, for ASM operators that was not always found to be the case. Following Walton (2007), the FT/FM standard itself is a text ‘where “community” is woven into texts with apparently minor attention to the complexity of the term’ (24)\textsuperscript{30}. It is of central importance to the ethos of the initiative, premised on the development potential of the formation of cooperatives and organized groups.

The narratives recorded during this research revealed a multifarious range of approaches concerning how best to organize ASM activity. There was a general trend amongst older miners, for example that this was best achieved through a process of cooperation where a fixed idea of community was implicit. As a miner in his late 50s iterated:

If people want to get things done around here, we should form cooperatives. If Fairtrade encourages us to do this then I think it’s a good idea. Everything becomes easier when there are more of you. You can share the costs of equipment, mine deeper and get more gold. (Interview 16)

The commitment to the benefits of cooperation are perhaps not surprising in Tanzania amongst the older generation who grew up under the leadership of Nyerere whose commitment to \textit{ujamaa} emphasized the ‘recognition of “society” as an extension of the basic family unit’ (Nyerere, 1962: 170). The miner’s above faith in the notion of

\textsuperscript{30} The term ‘community features in the ARM/FLO standard for FT/FM gold on 40 different occasions (ARM 2010).
community can be considered functionalist is so far as involves people coming together for a common purpose. However, academic enquiry has entreated contemporary understanding of this approach to be more self-critical and to emphasize the ‘socially constructed nature of community…[which] involves recognising the heterogeneous aspects of community and looking for silences, marginalisations, and gaps, as well as common goals and understandings’ (Walton 2007: 180).

Indeed, a more dominant narrative emerged from ASM operators, one which rejected the emancipatory power of community and promoted the idea of development as an exercise in individual progress. A miner from Ruangasa spoke for example of the need for self-determination in promoting development in ASM:

If you want to achieve something here, you need to do it yourself. These people talk about us like we are some sort of community. But this is not true because people are always coming and going. Mining is not an activity that can ever be fair because everyone tries to do what they can for themselves. For example, I might think it is fair to divide profits up in this way, but my partner, if I had one might not. Do you see? It can never be fair. (Interview 26)

In this example, fairness is rendered impossible precisely because of the perceived transient nature of ASM. Notwithstanding the large numbers of PML holders in the Mwanza region who have a fixed sense of place and been operational at the same mine site, there are an increasing number of young people with little or no mining experience attracted by the promise of historically high gold prices. This, for a PML holder in Ushirombo has led to the dissolution of community:

Once upon a time it might have been the case that we had a common togetherness but not any more. This is because of a combination of things. First, the government seem to move people on all the time and secondly there are so many people trying their luck at mining now because there is nothing else for them to do here. Maybe Fairtrade could encourage people to get back and work together. (Interview 37)

There is recognition that Fairtrade has an opportunity of redemption to provide a sense of community, not of the reductive homogenising type that has been outlined in chapter 2, but one which is cognisant that ‘there are significant differences between people’s
experiences of Fairtrade within a community, as well as between communities and localities’ (Arce 2009: 1039). Rejecting the assumption that Tanzanians are predisposed to a way of life characterized by traditional collectivist values (Green 2000: 81), ARM/FLO have taken rhetorical steps to include diversity within their understanding of community. Indeed, not written into original draft versions of the standard for FT/FM gold, the updated and official version now includes the explicit recognition that, ‘this STANDARD is directed at community based Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners’ Organizations (ASMOs) comprising all possible forms of organizations that they constitute’ (ARM 2010: 17, emphasis added).

In concluding this section, which has identified six major ideological and substantive barriers to the adoption of FT/FM gold, it is perhaps appropriate to end with a tone of opportunity and not of constraint. The appropriation of this model into the Tanzanian ASM sector appears, despite the challenges identified here, ‘inevitable’ according to ARM’s secretary (Echavarria 2010: personal communication). Even in light of the damage that APM has done to the rhetoric of ‘Fair Trade’ through its misguided policies, many narratives did still express openness to a newly organized way of mining. The movement’s biggest challenge however will be to synthesize its understanding of what fairness with that of ASM operators.

6.3 FT/FM Gold in Practice: Two Case Studies

The final section of this chapter evaluates the hitherto identified barriers in an empirical context by investigating how FT/FM gold could be applied to two potential pilot organizations. The selection of both ASMOs (to employ the terminology of the FT/FM standard) was determined by the results of a preliminary scoping exercise conducted by ARM in 2009 to identify potential pilot projects in Tanzania. Though the written results of this study were unavailable during this research, an interview with the chief investigator revealed that the two selected sites examined below were ‘the stand out examples of potential Fair Trade partners’ (Key Informant 3). Both operations were visited separately during this research. The first ASMO studied is the Kerezia Cooperative in Ushirombo, an organization comprising around 100 workers. The second is a single entrepreneur, PML holder and pit owner who has been awarded a UN prize for best practice in ASM on account of his exemplary environmental record.
The purpose of this section is not to conduct a feasibility study so much as to assess the ways in which the notion of ‘fairness’ is conceptually shared with two sites identified as ‘potentially fair’ by ARM management (Key Informant 1). Following a brief description of each in turn, it then considers how this conceptual framing is substantively enacted by considering each major area of the FT/FM standard in detail. These areas are thus analysed according to their social, economic, labour and environmental practices. They are supported by the findings of a focus group in the case of the Ushirombo cooperative and life history in the case of the entrepreneur.

6.3.1 Case Study 1: Kerezia Cooperative (Ushirombo)

The Kerezia co-operative consisted of eight male partners and was led by an 87-year-old mzee who was also the leader of the local village. Though they were uncertain of the exact number, they claimed to employ over one hundred workers. The mine was logistically well organized and comprised well defined and separated zones for mining, crushing, sluicing, washing, and an area for the storage and safe dumping of chemical waste. It was the largest example of an ASM site encountered during this research.

In terms of its application to the FT/FM model, the focus group conducted revealed some interesting dynamics regarding the initial encounter with the concept of fairness. As a member of the cooperative recounted:

I remember when I first heard about this idea of Fairtrade gold. It was a woman who came here and introduced the idea. I thought that it sounded like a very interesting opportunity, as the things that they were talking about seemed to fit with the things that we are trying to do here. They did sound different from the other Europeans because they said that they would consult us throughout the set-up period and that they were here long term. I was quite impressed. (Focus group 2)

However, following this, the promise of a participatory approach to policy formation, one that was congruous with FT/FM’s commitment to environmental and social justice, included new claims for redistribution and recognition began to be questioned. This was

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31 This actually is a literal translation of the Kiswahili word ‘wazungu’ which actually has come to be defined racially in terms of whiteness. Hence the implication in this quotation is that FT/FM gold was different from previous outside development intervention.
largely owing to the lack of communication with ARM after this initial meeting. Another one of the cooperative’s partners furthered that:

Yes but that changed didn’t it. I remember that first meeting as well – they were talking about giving us better representation, letting what we wanted be heard. They said that this would lead to more money for our gold. Maybe they are right. The problem is that the first meeting was also the last meeting. We haven’t heard from them since and that was six months ago. I guess they are like the others. (Focus group 2)

In this way ARM’s failure to maintain communication with the cooperative, effectively reneging on their imperative of participation, highlights one of the problems analysed above: namely, that it unwittingly reinforces the cynicism of development intervention and aligns itself with the failure and poor reputation of APM’s version of ‘Fair Trade’. As the cooperative member continued, ‘they explained how they were different to APM Fair Trade centres, but so far we can’t say how they are different’ (focus group 2).

This case study now turns its attention to how fairness is articulated by the Kerezia cooperative and compares them to the FT/FM standards in the respective sections of social, economic and trading practices, labour, environmental (ARM 2010). In each case, it seeks both divergences and commonalities in how fairness is expressed by both parties.

6.3.1.1 Social Practices

Kerezia cooperative has a well-defined charter that outlines in a detail a ‘democratic structure with all the relevant paperwork in order’ (Interview 31). In doing so it resonates with the FT/FM minimum requirement that the ‘ASMO has membership criteria as defined in its own stated rules and regulations’ (ARM 2010: 17). The cooperative also was involved in small and medium scale infrastructural projects such as the construction of a local school and dispensary. This was, according to their leader, an essential part of their vision of a ‘responsible’ mine site:

My vision for a responsible mine site is one that produces a significant amount of gold, whilst at the same time enabling its surrounding community as well as caring for the environment at the same time. Also, it is about providing opportunities for the youth in
the area. We have already done one thing, namely building a primary school – we provided 80% of the funds for the school. (Interview 31)

The holistic ideology of empowerment for the local community is evident and in doing so evokes the requirement for progress that ‘the ASMO plays an active role in planning and promoting local sustainable development (2010: 18). It should be noted that this was a view that was not echoed by some PML holders in Ushirombo, but rather external to the activities of the cooperative. One such miner commented that:

They are not very popular around here because they are very superior. They control the local gold markets around here and don’t leave room for other miners like me. It is also difficult to work with them as they choose who their friends are and who they work with. It doesn’t surprise me that Fair Trade goes to see them – the big men always go to other big men. The little people are always left to do it for themselves. (Interview 36)

Thus it is that the problem of scalability detailed in section 6.2.2 re-emerges. The allegation that the Fairtrade mechanism bypasses the most marginalized members of society is re-established and brings into question the power dynamics that are hidden from an uncritical reading of community development.

6.3.1.2 Economic and Trading Practices

Kerezia cooperative is a fully registered and legalized organization that ‘keeps records of everything we do. We are registered with the government and pay all our taxes. This is fair for us and for them’ (Interview 32). However, during this research it was revealed that their trading practices present a significant barrier to FT/FM certification. Currently, they ‘have a dependency on the dealer who pre-finances our gold’ (Interview 31). This recalls the analysis of section 5.3 which highlighted the role of the makota in shaping local marketing arrangements. Not only would this existing arrangement preclude Kerezia’s partnership with ARM and FLO on the grounds of needing economic exclusivity, but it also requires the FT/FM price to be higher than the makota price in order to be an attractive proposition for the cooperative.

Moreover, as Kerezia has already had a negative experience stemming from APM’s in ability to provide capital investment for their mine, there was deeply rooted
suspicion that FT/FM would be able to deliver on their proposed package of pre-finance. The focus group discussion summarized this misgiving:

You know, we would probably sell to APM if we didn’t have these relationships [with the makota] already. Mind you having said that, they let us down in the past when we asked for a loan. We have asked many times for one and even though they say they are fair they will not give us one because of bad experiences with other miners around here. Now we have this new Fairtrade woman saying that they will give us investment for our mine, but I am not so sure. (Focus Group 2)

As the partner in the cooperative reaffirms, the need for capital is a priority for ASM operators. However, despite FT/FM gold’s ability to perform this function, a confusion over how APM’s ‘Fair Trade’ and FLO/ARM’s ‘Fairtrade’ differ may render their partnership difficult to enact in practice.

6.3.1.3 Labour Practices

In terms of meeting the required FT/FM standards, there is no forced labour at the mine and the partners, Kerezia asserts that ‘everyone was equal’ and that ‘everyone has the same opportunity, man or woman, young or old’ (Focus Group 2). However, local cultural beliefs regarding women were counterposed to the FT/FM standards on labour discrimination and supported the analysis in section 6.2.2 that highlighted this contradictory relationship. For example, the standards stipulate that:

The ASMO provides support to pregnant and breast-feeding women (women miners, women mineral selectors, or contracted women miners), so that they can pass to lighter, non dangerous work, access health services, have access to childcare facilities where they can breastfeed their infants and receive benefits of social security where applicable. (ARM 2010: 25)

However during the course of the fieldwork it was observed that heavily pregnant women were regularly on site and children, including two young babies were present near to the openings of mineshafts. The cooperative also employs armed askari (guards) to monitor trespassers and take appropriate action if looting is suspected. Asked about
how the presence of armed protection might negotiate the demands of national legislation with FT/FM’s standards, one of the partners responsible for mine security elucidated that, ‘it is not fair that people can come and steal from us, so if you ask me ‘is it fair for us to remove this people with force?’ then I say ‘yes’’ (Interview 33). This conceptualization of fairness is also aligned with the FT/FM standards which state that a ‘fair’ ASMO is one at which ‘workplace dangers have been identified and are managed and monitored’ (ARM 2010: 29).

6.3.1.4 Environmental Practices

Kerezia cooperative claimed to ‘pay particular attention to the environmental impacts of mining’ (Interview 31). Environmental protection measures were enacted through an alleged programme of forestry management although this could not be verified by the research. When asked to elaborate on what the programme entailed, the mining partner simply replied ‘they just are’ (Interview 31). It was also the case that mercury was used and disposed of in a managed fashion, including the use of retorts for its capture and recycling. This is done at a specified location called a mwalo separate from the mining site. In short, the environmental dangers of ASM were both well understood and mitigated against by Kerezia. Indeed, according to one member, even though the negative effects of mining were inevitable, a programme of responsible environmental management was required in order to be ‘fair to us and fair to the environment’ (Interview 33). As he continued,

In almost every mine, the environment has to suffer in one way or another. Even in the fact that to simply have the mine, you are removing soil from deep down in the earth and bringing it to the surface. It is however a rule here, that we refill the shaft once we are satisfied that there is no more gold in it. We need to use trees – that is inevitable. However, it is better today because if you can’t find gold, you don’t just leave it behind. (Interview 32)

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the various social, economic, labour and environmental, practices employed by Kerezia outlined above, is that they were established independently of the emergence of both APM and ARM. That they were developed before its exposure to ‘Fair Trade’ suggests that the concept of ‘fairness’ is
neither universally conceived or original to ARM’s standards alone. It illustrates that where there is overlap between the practices of organizations such as Kerezia and the demands of the FT/FM protocol, there are examples of ‘fair’ mining happening in parts of Tanzania. In this light, and to return to the ARM researcher’s conclusion reached in the introduction to section 6.3.1, it is perhaps not surprising that the ASMO was recommended as a pilot project when the APM/FLO initiative begins in earnest.

6.3.2 Case Study 2: David Liundi (Nyarugusu)

The second case study that seeks to see how FT/FM gold might be substantively enacted in Tanzania concerns a small-scale entrepreneur and treasurer of MwaReMA. The concession itself is centred around a former colonial mineshaft that has, he believes, a large amount of hitherto unrecovered ore remaining. His extensive narrative32 was a story of investment and hard work, which featured at its heart, a theme of self-improvement was emphasized throughout:

At the moment, here I hold three licences in Nyarugusu. Very near to Nyarugusu, two in Ibondo and two in another location nearby. Initially I did not have a single tool to work with – no machinery. I didn’t have compressors, explosives, pumps and so I used my own strength and the little gold that I managed to extract to slowly buy one piece of machinery at a time. In 1995, when I was registered, I was given my licences and that was a point in time that I felt I had a broader opportunity with which to work in the mining industry. (Interview 19)

Following his formalization, David iterated a desire ‘right from the start to do a responsible type of mining where issues like the environment were looked after. In my mind, if you do this then you look after your profits’. This ethos, with the theme of responsibility at its heart, can be mapped onto the key aspects of the FT/FM gold discourse. As he noted, ‘when Fairtrade came here to see how mining was, I realized that there were many things I was doing that they were looking for’. In this light, the key aspects of the standards are analysed below.

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32 This was the longest life history recorded during this research and he spoke continuously for over two hours.
6.3.2.1 Social Practices

David actively used his concession as a place of education and he was committed to the idea that ASM, if properly managed could be a viable and responsible livelihood for young people. ‘I open up my mine for other people to learn the trade. In my mind, there are so many young people here so why not make them learn mining in a responsible way.’ It was interesting to note that following his first encounter with APM and the notion of FT/FM gold, he formulated much of his narrative in terms of the discourse of Fairtrade. For example, in expostulating a commitment to training programmes, he noted that it was an approach informed by ‘community, responsibility and fairness.

Now I even have people coming down from the university in Dar [es Salaam] to see what I am doing here. This, to me is very important because it is important that people know what responsible mining looks like. I also realize that this is a fair thing to do. It makes sense that it is fair because it involves all the community, we get the best prices and the environment is cared for. This is what I have learnt. (Interview 19)

Not only are the familiar rhetorical devices of the FT/FM discourse repeated, but there is also a sense of imposition and paternalism implicit in the miner’s reading of his interaction with Fairtrade. David represents himself as a ‘learner’ who has come to ‘realize…what responsible mining looks like’. There is thus a sense of paternalism in the potential partnership (Eriksson Baaz 2005) with the Fairtrade partner where, FT/FM is reified into a position of trusteeship (Cowen and Shenton 1996). In doing so it raises questions of how power is distributed in the networks of Fairtrade governance.

6.3.2.2 Economic Practices

The mine site’s impressive growth has been a result of investment made possible by a combination of David’s self-denial and an advanced understanding of local market conditions for gold. As he explained,

The key was to deny myself. I would literally put everything back into the business into those early years and I never made enough money in the beginning to warrant buying something. So I got second hand equipment which I worked with mechanics to
recondition and put them into a working condition. On a different note, apart from saving money, what I used to do was to withhold some gold with the prospect of the market getting better based on the news. If the market got better, then it increases the value of what I can get out of the gold. (Interview 19)

The above described practice of stockpiling gold actually mirrors the practices of many LSM extraction companies. For example, Le Billon (2006) has shown how, in the case of the global diamond industry, de Beers have had a history of stockpiling diamonds before they are ‘sold at fixed prices to select clients’.

However, it should also be noted that as treasurer of MwaReMA, David is also privileged in a position of relative local power. As was analysed in section 5.4.2, the widespread allegations of corruption by the leadership of the mining union would seem to implicate David. Certainly, it was revealed during his life history that not only was he one of the few ASM operators to have secured a microcredit loan, but it was also, he alleged ‘in the region of $10,000’. This is, by some degree, the largest loan forwarded and FT/FM gold would need to be aware of the pre-existing local political arrangements in any potential partnership.

Nonetheless, he is no exception to the negative impacts of the subsequent cessation of APM’s loan programme and was frustrated that without further investment he could not maximize his mine productivity.

If I were to get assistance in terms of equipment, and some capital to go with it, then it would be extremely profitable because my claims are extremely prosperous. I have five veins and the third one is the best one because it has a width of three metres so I am very confident that if I had some sort of assistance, then it would undoubtedly yield a significant profit. (Interview 19)

There is a possibility for FT/FM gold to work with David in this regard, and the extension of pre-financing by ARM/FLO would serve to address the need articulated.

6.3.2.3 Labour Practices
The labour practices at the mine resonated strongly with the requirements of the FT/FM standards. For example, all explosives were stored in a clearly marked building and were isolated from other populated parts of the mine. Moreover, the mineshafts onsite clearly demonstrate a full awareness of the safety issues involved by detailing contact telephone numbers of the shaft owner, as well as an indication of the number of people underground. This concern is a symptom of his desire to develop a more ‘responsible’ form of ASM:

I can help make a lot of people are aware of how to use them [mineshafts], but don’t because of profits. So you find people ignoring basic safety things that require money such as boots, beams for tunnelling. For example if you happen to see gold above then a lot of accidents will happen because someone will just begin to mine there. Also, even though a lot of the miners have been to these seminars, a lot of them have only got primary school education. A very few have been to secondary school. This is why it is important for me to help out and make mining more responsible. (Interview 19)

This is further evidence of not only his understanding of the major issues that affect ASM, but also reconfirm his commitment to a ‘responsible’ form of mining, one that he concluded is ‘exactly the same thing that Fairtrade was talking about’. The conflation of the terms ‘responsible’ and ‘fair’ was a common theme throughout his narrative, none more so than when he delineated the ways in which he monitored the environmental impact of his mining activities.

6.3.2.4 Environmental Practices

It is in the area of environmental practices that David’s mine most closely matched the vision of a FT/FM gold site. As the author of the ARM feasibility study confirmed during an interview before this research’s fieldwork, ‘you should definitely go and see David, he is an example of exactly the sort of thing we are looking for. If you want to know what a Fairtrade mine looks like, go and see this one’ (Key Informant 3).

The environmental performance witnessed during this research was clearly impressive, especially in relation to other ASM sites nearby in Nyarugusu. As he described,
Along the years in my work, I have tried to make the land in which I was mining a little bit more sustainable in terms of environmental pursuits and so I started first by planting trees and by encouraging the people I was working with and in the surrounding area to take care of the environment. And so, I decided to take it a step further after that; keeping bees - right now I have two sizeable hives. Following that I decided to try to raise fish because when we dig pits there is ground water and when they remove the water with the pumps it doesn’t have any chemicals or anything – it is just fresh ground water. So I thought, ‘we need to have a way to use this’. So right now I have Tilapia and Catfish.

(Interview 19)

As a result of his resourceful and innovative record in environmental practice, he was recognized by the UN on World Environmental Day in 2005 where he was presented with ‘an award as the leading person in Tanzania for [his] endeavours’. Such recognition, though impressive, does represent an exception and the award was an unusual example of ‘status recognition’ (Fraser 2003). Indeed, the concession itself represents a practical example of FT/FM’s theoretical aim of redistributive justice that was analysed in chapter 4, and mitigates against the ‘institutionalized subordination’ that faces other miners in the area (Fraser 2003: 32).

However, despite being the best example encountered during this research of an ASM site aligning itself substantively with FT/FM’s conceptual understanding of fairness, major caveats must be raised. It is above all, an exception to the prevailing conditions found in Geita District, where the major barriers to FT/FM gold’s efficacy are regularly evidenced. For example, his position at MwaReMA made him familiar with power arrangements at the local political level, where, through APM’s loan, he was a beneficiary of development. This meant that he did not share a suspicion of future interventions described in section 6.2.5, and was rather ‘excited by the prospect of Fairtrade’. Likewise, his land rights were secure (he stated that ‘I will be here for the rest of my life’) which contrasts with the experiences of most ASM operators (analysed in section 6.2.4). Finally, being in a position of relative privilege, he is made more visibility and thus has a greater degree of immunity from the problems of scalability outlined in section 6.2.2.

In fact, it could be argued that, so relatively advanced was his site that the mine was no longer an example of an ASM site, but rather was a medium scale operation. For all of FT/FM gold’s commitment to work exclusively with ASM operators and,
according to the secretary of ARM, its ‘absolute lack of plans to ever work with large scale business’ (Key Informant 1), the interest in a medium scale mine does highlight certain ambiguities. Notably, in the light of the critical literature that has analysed the ‘mainstreaming’ of Fairtrade in other product lines, it is the case that ARM/FLO need to clarify their potential ‘partners’ with greater surety. This need, coupled with the requirement to address the barriers identified in this chapter, would seem to determine the efficacy of FT/FM gold in the ASM sector in Tanzania.

Taking the central findings of this chapter and aligning them conceptually with the key arguments presented in the previous two chapters, this thesis will now demonstrate the convergences between them. In moving towards a summary of the principal outcomes, the following chapter will also address possible new avenues of investigation towards the achievement of a ‘fair future’ for ASM operators in Tanzania.
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION: A FAIR FUTURE FOR ASM?

‘The quarrel over natural resources is thus associated with the striving for self-affirmation and participation[...]the main issue is justice as recognition; In so far as the possession of natural resources plays a role, it is often seen as the material expression of recognition.’ (Sachs and Santarius 2007: 127)

Fairtrade gold promises a new solution to the problems that have marked global ASM practices. Indeed, in exchange for the employment of environmental responsible, mercury-free techniques, and social standards based on the virtues of democratic organisation, it promises a better (and ‘fairer’) price, for ASM operators. However, as has been illustrated through the analysis presented in this thesis, it remains of central importance to question the ways in which ‘fairness’ is (or can be) applied to ASM in Tanzania. For example, chapter four revealed the hidden, fundamentally political dimensions to the representation of ASM operators whether that is in a negative discourse of criminality (propounded by the GSF) or a positive counter-discourse of responsibility (by Fairtrade). Through a case study of APM’s deployment of ‘Fair Trade Gold’, chapter five demonstrated the lacuna between the discourse of fairness and its substantive realities as recorded through life histories by ASM operators. Finally, Chapter six highlighted the prospects and challenges for the FLO and ARM ratified version of FT/FM gold’s implementation in Tanzania.

This concluding chapter, not only assesses the extent to which the research aims and questions were answered, but it also expands the discussion to a more open ended consideration of the ways in which struggles for recognition and redistribution in ASM present a unique case, distinct from conventional readings of environmental and social justice. First, it is distinctive because it is an example of ‘a marginalized group creating its own injustices for which they are accused and criminalized’ (Tschakert 2009b: 708). Secondly, it is unusual in so far as the claims for redistributive justice are written and spoken by the institutional apparatus of their Fairtrade ‘partners’ and not by the ASM operators themselves. Paradoxically, in seeking greater agency for ASM operators in Tanzania and elsewhere, it actually runs the risks of speaking for this group and hence denying them that same agency.
Following the critical summary of the research’s main findings arranged according to the three respective research aims, section 7.4 identifies future areas of research for the contemporary study of Fairtrade gold, whilst reflecting upon the limitations of this research.

7.1 Assessing the politics of representing ASM operators in Tanzania

Research Questions

1. How have ASM operators been represented by Tanzanian media and policy makers?
2. How does the Fairtrade movement recast their identity?

This thesis has argued that the Fairtrade gold initiative has taken place within a framework of environmental and social justice. It has been, as Sachs and Santarius (2007) have argued, an attempt to demonstrate that ‘the interests of profit and justice can be made compatible’ (p.224). This struggle for the recognition of ASM operators as valued, equal members of society, free of ‘status subordination’ has taken place on both a discursive and a material level. Discursively, the Fairtrade movement has made a strategic effort to overturn the prevailing, negative representations of ASM operators with a counter-discourse characterised by opportunity, partnership and responsibility. In this discourse, ASM now has a new descriptor; no longer is it ‘irresponsible’, ‘criminal’ or ‘irrational’, but it is also ‘fair’. Redistributive justice, according to this line of argument begins with the recognition that ASM operators are valued and fully formalised economic members of society who have the potential to contribute, for example, to host countries tax regimes.

However, it has been shown that the introduction of fairness into the vocabulary of ASM policy in Tanzania has been an uncertain and complex process. Deconstructing the sheer variety of negative discourse that has characterised ASM in Tanzania has meant that the Fairtrade movement has had to adopt a carefully crafted focus on the reconstruction of ASM identity. However, it is argued that Fairtrade’s efficacy in terms of radically changing livelihood opportunities for ASM operators is seriously compromised if it evokes the above epigraph and views recognition for miners as ‘the
main issue’ of justice. Rather FT/FM gold, in campaigning for a radical transformation of the ASM sector, must embrace a pluralistic notion of justice and one that includes not only recognition, but also ‘capabilities, agency and participation’ (Tschakert 2009b: 708). This is, rhetorically factored in to the Fairtrade modus operandi that privileges partnership and capabilities for ASM operators as analysed in section 5.4.2.

However, the success of the struggle for environmental, social and economic justice in ASM is limited by two distinct factors. First, ASM operators are unique amongst groups that make claims for greater recognition in so far as their mining activity actually creates many of the environmental problems from which the misrecognition and negative representations emerge. ASM is a sector in which its operators have been culturally dislocated through conflict with LSM, lack of alternative livelihood opportunities (section 2.3) and through insecurity of land tenure (section 6.2.4). In short, ASM operators have, to an extent, been forced into and, thus, have created their ‘own environmental and social “bads” for which they are accused and marginalized’ (Tshahkert 2009: 712).

Secondly, the Fairtrade gold movement’s counter-discourse of recognition is articulated on behalf of ASM operators and not by artisanal and small-scale miners themselves. Counter-intuitively it can be argued that in trying to give voice to its Fairtrade ‘partners’, it is simultaneously removing that voice by ventriloquizing them. This is not deliberate – the calls by Fairtrade for partnership and responsibility in ASM are not part of a will to maintain a status quo of the inequality in power relations that have marked the ASM sector and development policy more generally. Rather, as Eriksson Baaz (2005) contends, while development policy has ‘a normative, moral, dimension, it also serves an instrumental purpose’ (p. 7). In other words, in addressing the question of recasting the identity of ASM operators, the Fairtrade gold movement’s emphasis on responsibility (as a particular mode of fairness) should be read as a particular strategy that facilitates transparency and efficiency in a largely unregulated sector, and not as a fundamental challenge to the existing marginalization that marks the sector’s participants. It is, above all, a new discursive strategy that creates a great deal of ambiguity and tension in terms of the ways that is understood by the different parties; by the GSF, by APM and among ASM operators themselves. Some of the ways that these discursive tensions are substantively realized in Tanzania are concluded in the following section.
7.2 Critically analysing ‘Fair Trade’ in practice

Research Questions

3. How is APM’s version of ‘fairness’ substantively enacted?

4. How does the rhetoric of APM’s ‘Fair Trade’ differ from the realities understood by ASM operators in the Mwanza region?

As this research has shown, the material realities of fairness for ASM operators in Tanzania have a multifarious, contradictory and discordant relationship with the discursive effects propounded by the Fairtrade gold movement analysed above in section 7.1. Through a case study approach, critically analysed in chapter five, it has been illustrated that fairness can come to be enacted in ways which are contrary to the official ARM and FLO version of ‘Fairtrade’. Indeed, the emergence of APM as a paradoxically separate but also intertwined example of fairness in practice has had important political consequences for ASM operators in the Mwanza and Shinyanga regions.

The story of APM’s promotion of ‘Fair Trade’ (rather than ‘Fairtrade’) can be viewed as something of a microcosm for that of development intervention in ASM more broadly. It is a narrative of broken promises, false hopes, methodological insufficiency, and substantive failure to achieve its (developmental) aims. In short, ‘Fair Trade gold’ was explicitly stated to be ‘not fair’ or ‘just writing on the wall’ by a range of ASM operators whose life histories recorded a fundamental recognition that this was another example of ‘empty speak’, rhetorically strong but substantively hollow policy.

The failures that it oversaw (and oversees) were (are) defined by the inability to communicate its particular vision of fairness to ASM operators in a coherent manner. Thus, those people whose narratives were expressed during this research rejected APM’s enacting of fairness through the themes of transparency, institutional and financial support and the guarantee of best price. Rather, there was a denial of fairness through a rejection of western science (APM’s way of measuring gold), because of selectivity (preferential treatment of ‘English-speakers’), and perhaps most significantly for the future prospects of FT/FM gold, because the ‘best price’ was found, not to be available with APM, but locally (and informally) at a level above the global market rate.
The securing of best price was a function of fairness for ASM operators in all cases, however this was revealed to be primarily through the *makota*, informal buyers who through a possible combination of money laundering and corruption of the gold measurement process, could offer a superior price to the ‘fair’ one. Notwithstanding the inequity in power relations, what was made clear during the analysis of the miner/*makota* relationship was that the *makota* provide an informal version of social security to ASM operators, filling a financial void and thus enabling a basic form of investment. The ways in which ASM gold flows along this informal supply chain are obscure and ASM policy would benefit from a better understanding of the processes that drive them.

The problems that beset the introduction of its ‘Fair Trade Gold Centres’ into local governance structures in Northern Tanzania have also highlighted a range of ideological barriers to the potential adoption of the ‘Fairtrade’ model in the area, as illustrated in chapter six.

### 7.3 Identifying the prospects and challenges for ‘Fairtrade’ gold in Tanzania

*Research Questions*

5. What are the prospects and challenges for Fairtrade and Fairmined gold in Tanzania?

The above research question, perhaps a logical end point for this analysis of fairness in ASM, raises as many ideological constraints to FT/FM’s adoption in Tanzania as it provides new ways to enact ASM governance. There can be little doubt that the negative experiences of ASM operators *vis-à-vis* APM have seriously damaged the rhetorical strength of the ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’ labels. Fairness, because of APM deployment of ‘Fair Trade’, has become a byword for empty promises and substantive hollowness in the areas studied. However, it would be facile to conclude that the mistrust forwarded to the discourse of ‘Fairtrade’ gold is *only* a result of APM’s failed intervention. Rather, as has been revealed by the oral narratives described in this thesis, there is a suspicion of a deeper-rooted, historically grounded trajectory of development intervention.
ASM, in the stories of its operators, has been a laboratory of developmental ‘faddism’ (Harriss 2005). From this viewpoint, policy makers have long attempted to redefine it as part of a ‘sustainable development’ framework, as ‘participatory’, and as a ‘livelihood opportunity’. The grounded realities for those people who have lived through the effects of these policy interventions have remained the same. The ongoing policy failure in ASM by the development apparatus has ensured that the FT/FM gold movement is merely seen as part of that same trajectory. There is a sense that, as argued in chapter six by one ASM operator, FT/FM is a case of ‘here we go again’ (Interview 29). The questions that must be asked of the Fairtrade movement relates to the extent of its claims to a radical new direction for ASM; namely, ‘how new is Fairtrade gold?’ and ‘is fairness just another rhetorical “fad” of development policy?’

7.4 Directions for a Fair Future in ASM

Having expanded upon the major conclusions reached in this thesis, there are a plethora of possible directions for the future of ASM governance in Tanzania especially in the light of the forthcoming introduction of the FT/FM initiative. If, as seems certain to happen, it is adopted in 2012, there is a crucial need to further evaluate the divergent understandings of fairness between Fairtrade and ASM operators. There is clearly much work to be done in this regard. However, this is not the sole employ of academia but rather the duty of the Fairtrade movement itself. The aim should not be the imposition of a particular version of justice, of ‘fairness’ onto ASM operators – for that the risks of paternalism are too great. On the contrary, the move towards a genuine framework of environmental and social justice must be one that understands meaning as negotiated and embraces its plurality. In other words, defining ‘fairness’ through a process of shared experience whereby the voices of ASM operators are not only heard but also acted upon is the essential starting point for the FT/FM intervention.

The Fairtrade movement does have a range of substantive experience to guide its future practice in Tanzania. Its pilot projects in Latin America certainly present a body of empirical data from which lessons can be learnt. The ability to draw upon this would also have benefited this research and a comparative approach would have brought new
light on the ways in which ASM differs between different geographies, cultures and socio-economic realities.

Finally, in the light of the historical failure to redress the problems besetting ASM communities, Fairtrade gold’s recent emergence is both intriguing and opportune. It approaches this not inconsiderable challenge, however, having to negotiate between Fairtrade’s moral purpose and its relationship to the market. Indeed, while the discourse of Fairtrade is based on the assumption that the move towards responsible ASM is, in the Socratic tradition of ethics, what ‘should be done’ (Williams 2006: 1), it must be sufficiently cognisant of the myriad motivations and desires presented by a burgeoning and ever diverse body of ASM operators. Do ethics grounded in Western philosophical thought have any resonance with the daily livelihood struggles of ASM operators? The findings of this research would suggest that there is overlap but there is also significant discord. The challenge remains then for Fairtrade to critically engage with the ways in which ASM operators (both formal and informal) come to understand not only the terms of Fairtrade, but the assumptions on which it is based. A genuinely participatory model of fairness based on equitable partnership would seem to depend on it.

7.5 Implications for the Fairtrade Movement

It is also necessary to reflect upon the implications of this study for the Fairtrade movement more generally. As was demonstrated in section 2.4, the movement stands at something of a crossroads relating to its possible future direction, a notion that is best captured in the academic debate over mainstreaming. In short, should Fairtrade’s aim be to access the largest distribution channels, and to be aggressive in its pursuit of new products, retailers and market opportunity even if this means confronting the problems of unequal power relations that emerge? Or conversely, is the need to be aware of both the imperatives and limitations of market-based solutions to development problems and to reassert the movement’s original emphasis on social justice (Fridell 2007)? In terms of the findings presented in this thesis, the implication is that it is the latter side of the mainstreaming debate that should be privileged. As was shown in chapter six, the issues of scalability and low prospects for formalization of the ASM sector in Tanzania mean that the mainstreaming of the movement would do more to strengthen the reputations of large-scale companies, than it would to substantively answer any specific development
challenges. As Reed contends, ‘fair trade needs to find effective ways to combat the efforts of conventional business to “fair wash,”’ that is, attempts to portray themselves as participating in fair trade (e.g., by adopting the language of Fair Trade, developing rival CSR initiatives, etc.) while not living up to fair trade standards’ (Reed, A and D. Reed 2009: 15, c.f. Jaffee 2007; Renard and Perez-Grovas 2007). It is clear, in this study, how APM’s intervention in Mwanza can be read as one such example.

However, even at the time of writing, this debate has already created not only academic debate but also substantive division in terms of contemporary Fairtrade policy. Fair Trade USA, the leading advocate of the Fairtrade movement in the United States has recently announced that it will be separating itself from FLO in order to facilitate an increase in Fairtrade volume. Such moves include, most controversially, the certification of large-scale coffee plantations as ‘Fairtrade’ even in the light of minimal commitment to Fairtrade standards (products with as little as 10% of ‘Fairtrade’ ingredients can still be certified as fair trade under the proposal). Such a departure from FLO conventions has caused huge rifts in the movement with many actors in Fairtrade coffee supply chains abandoning its US Fairtrade partner (Neuman 2011). This policy development clearly echoes the mainstreaming debate but it also acts as a warning for Fairtrade gold’s potential to be realized more globally. This thesis has shown that Fairtrade’s greatest contribution to altering the dynamics of the ASM sector in Tanzania (and elsewhere) may lie in the drive for a social and environmental justice framework that privileges not only redistributive equity but also increased recognition for small-scale gold miners in the global South. Its potential success would appear to depend on the maintenance and hardening of this stance.
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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

Detailed below are a list of the anonymized key informants who were interviewed along with a brief description of their respective professional standing and salience to the research.

Key informant 1 – The executive director and secretary general of ARM

Key informant 2 – Co-founder of ARM and central to building the partnership between FLO and ARM that led to ‘Fairtrade’ and ‘Fairmined’ gold.

Key informant 3 – Independent development consultant who led ARM’s feasibility study of ‘Fairtrade’ gold in Tanzania, Mozambique and Uganda.

Key informant 4 – Country director for the World Bank in Tanzania. Specializes in ASM.

Key informant 5 – Assistant Commissioner for ASM in Tanzania, Ministry of Energy and Minerals.


Key informant 7 – Geita District Mines Officer.

Key informant 8 – Chief Commissioner of Mines in Tanzania, Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

Key informant 9 – Chief Executive Officer of African Precious Metals (APM) Ltd.

Key informant 10 – Chief Strategic Officer for APM.

Key informant 11 – Manager of APM’s Fair Trade Gold Centre (FTGC) in Mwanza.

Key informant 12 – Manager of APM’s FTGC in Nyarugusu.

Key informant 13 – Manager of APM’s FTGC in Ruamgasa.

Key informant 14 – Manager of APM’s FTGC in Ushirombo.

Key informant 15 – Leading environmental and human rights lawyer in Tanzania. Globally published authority on ASM.
APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe and analyse challenges faced by ASM operators in Tanzania.

What, for ARM, are the main challenges faced by small-scale gold miners today? What aspects of small-scale gold mining do you consider to be ‘unfair’?

ARM’s ‘Standard Zero’ protocol outlines various criteria that need to be met by mining co-operatives in order to gain Fair Trade certification (for example, in the areas of environmental, social, and economic development). Is there a particular area of development that Fair Trade gold places most emphasis on? Why?

Successes have been seen in the pilot projects in Latin America. How transferable do you think the model of Fair Trade gold is to other African countries, such as Tanzania?

Up to now, all of the pilot projects undertaken by ARM have taken place outside of African countries. Why do you think this is?

2. Analyse the conceptualisation of ‘Fair Trade’ (inclusive of the tropes of ‘partnership/community’, ‘formal/informal’ and ‘responsible/irresponsible’) in gold producing countries in Tanzania.

Much of the Fair Trade gold literature asserts a move towards ‘responsible’ gold mining. What, for you, must a mining co-operative do (and must not do) in order to be considered ‘responsible’?

Do you feel that other institutions (such as host country governments and the world bank) working with small-scale miners in gold-rich countries share this vision of ‘responsible’? If yes, how? If not, does Fair Trade gold need to negotiate a consensus on its vision with these parties?

A majority of artisanal and small-scale miners operating in Tanzania (and elsewhere) are doing so without a license or land rights. In terms of Fair Trade gold’s scope, how does ARM view these people? Does it play an advocacy role in working with governments to increase the levels of formalized mining in mineral rich countries?

The notion of partnership is central to the Fair Trade ethos. What are the challenges with reaching agreement over Fair Trade’s aims with potential partners in gold producing countries? How does ARM communicate the Fair Trade message to potential partners?

3. Investigate the ways in which particular discourses of key stakeholders in Fair Trade gold influence the formation of policies and practices formulated in ASM.

How is Fair Trade gold received by other key stakeholders in small-scale gold governance (e.g. large business, multilateral organisations and governments)?

How does Fair Trade differ in its outlook towards the small-scale gold miner from these other institutions?