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Contested Extractivism in Jamaica: Protests against Bauxite Mining in Cockpit Country

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Abstract

Jamaica, an island nation in the Caribbean, has historically ranked among the world's leading bauxite and alumina producers. Despite facing significant challenges, particularly during the economic crises of 1973 and 2008, the Jamaican bauxite and alumina industry has undergone economic revitalization and spatial expansion into previously untapped regions. This expansion has sparked protests, particularly concerning plans to mine in Cockpit Country, a region characterized by dense rainforests in the northwest of Jamaica which is inhabited by the autonomous indigenous community of the Maroons. Various stakeholders, including environmental activists, NGOs, scientific organizations from different fields (e. g. botany, geology, ornithology), tourism agencies, caving organizations, concerned individuals, and the Maroons, have protested against mining in Cockpit Country since the early 2000s. This master's thesis explores the conflict surrounding extractivism in Jamaica through a political-ecological lens. Further, it examines the protest activities, the context, and the dynamics that either facilitated or hindered activist mobilization with the analytical concepts from the contentious politics framework. More specifically, it explores the collaborative relations between the Maroons and other activists. The *Cockpit Country Stakeholders Group* (CCSG), a loose coalition of many diverse stakeholders, ran a protest campaign with a range of different activities to create awareness that Cockpit Country needs to be protected from bauxite mining. While the CCSG exemplifies that collaboration happened among different activist groups, this collaboration was rather led by the local *epistemic community* and did not unfold with equal participation. Distrust from the Maroons towards other Jamaicans, coupled with an epistemic power imbalance and skepticism by scientific actors towards Maroon narratives, may have impeded deeper collaboration. The Maroons pursued separate activities, emphasizing their indigeneity, and asserting that mining expansion is linked to (post-)colonialism. This thesis suggests that a more interdisciplinary engagement with the topic of extractivism in Jamaica from traditionally scientific actors could foster increased collaboration with the Maroons.

Kurzfassung

Jamaika, ein Inselstaat in der Karibik, gehörte historisch zu den weltweit führenden Produzenten von Bauxit- und Aluminiumoxid. Insbesondere während der Wirtschaftskrisen von 1973 und 2008 wurde die jamaikanische Bauxit- und Aluminiumoxid-Industrie mit erheblichen Herausforderungen konfrontiert. Seitdem erfährt sie eine Wiederbelebung und expandiert derzeit in bislang unerschlossene Regionen, was Proteste auslöste. Insbesondere die Pläne zum Bauxitabbau in Cockpit Country, einer Region mit dichten Regenwäldern im Nordwesten Jamaikas, die von der autonomen indigenen Gemeinschaft der Maroons bewohnt wird, haben zu Protesten geführt. Verschiedene Interessengruppen, darunter Umweltaktivist:innen, Nichtregierungsorganisationen, wissenschaftliche Organisationen aus verschiedenen Bereichen (z. B. Botanik, Geologie, Ornithologie), Tourismusagenturen, Höhlenforscher:innen, besorgte Einzelpersonen und die Maroons haben seit Anfang der 2000er Jahre gegen den Bergbau im Cockpit Country protestiert. Diese Masterarbeit untersucht den Konflikt um Extraktivismus in Jamaika aus einer politisch-ökologischen Perspektive. Zudem untersucht sie mithilfe der analytischen Konzepte des Contentious-Politics-Theoriewerks die Protestaktivitäten, den politischen Kontext und andere Dynamiken, welche die Mobilisierung von Aktivist:innen in diesem Konflikt entweder verstärkt oder behindert haben. Insbesondere werden dabei die kooperativen Beziehungen zwischen den Maroons und anderen Aktivist:innen untersucht. Die *Cockpit Country Stakeholders Group* (CCSG), ein loser Zusammenschluss vieler verschiedener Interessengruppen, führte eine Protestkampagne mit einer Reihe unterschiedlicher Aktivitäten durch, um Aufmerksamkeit dafür zu erregen, dass Cockpit Country vor dem Bauxitabbau geschützt werden muss. Die CCSG ist zwar ein Beispiel dafür, dass verschiedene Aktivist:innengruppen kooperieren, doch diese Zusammenarbeit wurde eher von der lokalen *epistemic community* geführt und fand nicht auf einer gleichberechtigten Basis statt. Misstrauen der Maroons gegenüber anderen Jamaikaner:innen im Zusammenspiel mit einem epistemischen Machtungleichgewicht und der Skepsis wissenschaftlicher Akteur:innen gegenüber den Narrativen der Maroons haben Kooperation möglicherweise behindert. Die Maroons betrieben ihre eigenen Protestaktivitäten, betonten ihre Indigenität und verknüpften die Expansion der Bauxitindustrie mit (post-)kolonialen Strukturen. Diese Arbeit schlägt vor, dass eine verstärkt interdisziplinärere Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema Extraktivismus in Jamaika seitens wissenschaftlicher Akteur:innen eine stärkere Zusammenarbeit mit den Maroons fördern würde.

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List of Abbreviations

ATI ..... Access to Information (refferring to act by the GoJ)
BATCO ..... Bauxite Alumina Trading Company Limited
CCPA ..... Cockpit Country Protected Area
CCSG ..... Cockpit Country Stakeholders Group
CERD ..... Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (United Nations)
ELAW ..... Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide
GDP ..... Gross Domestic Product
GoJ ..... Government of Jamaica
IACHR ..... Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
IACtHR ..... Inter-American Court on Human Rights
JBI ..... Jamaica Bauxite Institute
JBM ..... Jamaica Bauxite Mining Limited
JET ..... Jamaica Environment Trust
JLP ..... Jamaica Labour Party
JNHT ..... Jamaica National Heritage Trust
MNC ..... Multinational Corporation
NCRA ..... Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act
NEGAR ..... National Ecological Gap Assessment Report
NEPA ..... National Environment and Planning Agency
NGO ..... Non-Governmental Organization
PNP ..... People's National Party
PPP ..... Public-private partnership
SCC ..... Save Cockpit Country (campaign)
SML ..... Special Mining Lease
STEA ..... Southern Trelawney Environmental Agency
UN ..... United Nations
UNESCO ..... United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UWI ..... University of the West Indies
WRC ..... Windsor Research Center

1. Introduction and Research Questions

Figure 1: Cockpit Country (own photography).

Jamaica, an island nation in the Caribbean, well known as a tourist destination, has historically been among the world's top producers of bauxite. Bauxite is an ore that is needed to produce aluminium, which is a metal that is essential for various global industries. The Jamaican bauxite industry experienced major setbacks, especially during the economic crises in 1973 and 2008 (cf. Barclay & Girvan 2013). However, since then, it has been revitalizing economically and expanding spatially into yet untapped regions (cf. Drakapoulos 2018).

The newest area of particular interest for mining companies, owing to its substantial bauxite deposits, is Cockpit Country (see figure 1), located in northwestern Jamaica (cf. ibid.: 79). This region, largely untouched by tourism development, is characterized by its dense rainforests and unique limestone formations which function as water reservoirs (cf. Koenig 2020: 144). Furthermore, it is home to several endemic flora and fauna species (cf. Fuentes George 2016). The region's name (*cockpits*) derives from the pits between to the terrain's characteristic hills, which are reminiscent of cockfighting pits (ibid.: 3). Cockpit Country is inhabited by the Maroons, descendants of slaves that escaped from captivity in the 17th century. As small communities, they managed to resist the British colonialists and signed a treaty with them in 1739, which

granted them the right to live independently and to preserve their distinct ethno-cultural practices. Since then, they have been living in Cockpit-Country as an autonomous agricultural community (cf. Moulton 2020: Ch.1). The expansion of the mining sector into this region has sparked conflict and contention.

The bauxite industry, due to its history in Jamaica, is seen as a cornerstone of the country's economy. Bauxite accounts for nearly 30% of Jamaica's export value (cf. OEC 2021) and is regarded as an important component for the nation's economic development (cf. IGF 2020: 6f.). The Jamaica Information Service (JIS), a Jamaican government agency, described the bauxite industry as "a vital contributor to the Jamaican Economy", as it is "the country's third highest earner of foreign exchange, with approximately US$1 billion in annual gross earnings […]" (JIS 2007). The Jamaican state holds significant stakes in bauxite ventures, and thus reaps profits from the export of this commodity. From a purely economic perspective, further expansion of the extractive sector is certainly desirable for the Jamaican government.

However, this perspective clashes with the views of ecology experts, environmentalists, the Maroons, and other stakeholders who want to prevent mining in Cockpit Country. Protest activities against bauxite mining have emerged, which are driven by different motivations, strategies, and objectives. This thesis investigates these protest activities, their actors, and the interplay between them. While doing this, it particularly examines how well collaboration between the Maroons and other environmental activists has worked so far. As this conflict revolves around extractivism, its various implications, and the envisioned trajectory of economic development in Jamaica, it is a highly relevant subject for my field of studies (Development Studies).

Research gaps and research questions

As the bauxite industry has existed in Jamaica for many decades, is responsible for a considerable portion of government revenues, and contributes significantly to GDP, it is considered as a cornerstone of the Jamaican economy (see section 2.1). Stakeholders from the mining industry in Jamaica are generally backed by the GoJ, which itself is not only partly dependent on, but also active in the sector. The negative impacts and the externalizations of bauxite mining and alumina processing in general are relatively well studied and widely undisputed (see section 2.2). Concerning the Jamaican industry in particular, monitoring and documentation is officially done by different agencies of the GoJ (ibid.). According to critics, however, the GoJ-institutions are either weak, and/ or biased due to ties to the industry. Environmental regulation of the bauxite-alumina industry in Jamaica therefore remains feeble (ibid.). Research regarding

the conflict over bauxite mining in Cockpit-country mostly refers to the achievements of the Cockpit Country Stakeholders Group (CCSG) until 2017 under the guidance of the local epistemic community (cf. Fuentes George 2016: 40). Maroons are often mentioned as members of the CCSG, but their role in it is not discussed in depth.

Apart from the contemporary conflict though, the Maroons are well-known research subjects, especially in terms of their cultural history and ethnology, and for their historical resistance against colonization. Their philosophy and ecology have been extensively excerpted from historical texts and explored through ethnological research. However, these studies often focus more on the Maroons in a rather metaphysical, symbolic way. The Maroons as contemporary (environmental) activists are rather sparsely researched, especially in light of the recent and current protest activities against mining in Cockpit Country. Connell (cf. 2020: 232), whose works also examine the political ecology of the Maroons in Cockpit-Country, pointed out that further research in this direction is still needed.

Therefore, the research gaps that currently remain are the following:

- An investigation of the contemporary Maroons as environmental activists
- An investigation of the collaboration between Maroons and other actors within the conflict
- An investigation of the ongoing protest activity after the 2017 designation of Cockpit Country as a supposedly protected area

Filling these gaps can be achieved with a political-ecological investigation of the conflict and its actors with contentious politics as an analytic concept, while especially focusing on the Maroons. The framing of the case as a contention over extractivism allows for an investigation comparable to studies done by other scholars, such as Dietz/ Engels (2020) and Prause (2018).

To address these research gaps, I developed the following research questions:

a. What are the *repertoires* of the (Maroon) activists and how have they *performed* their protests?
b. What kind of mechanisms of *mobilization* and *demobilization* occurred for the (Maroon) activists?
c. Which *political opportunity structures* played an important role for (Maroon) activism against bauxite mining?

d. How (well) has collaboration between the Maroons and other actors in this contention worked and why?

These sub-questions draw directly from the terminology of the theoretical framework (contentious politics; see section 4.2.). This should allow for a more systematic examination of the various structures and mechanisms that have been involved in the specific development of this protest movement.

The structure of this thesis

In the next section (2), I review relevant literature on the subject matter. While doing so, I do not only offer insights into the current state of knowledge but also provide a topical overview as a basis for the later analyses. In section 3, I present my chosen methodological approach, and introduce the thematic analysis method. Here, I also provide insight into my positionality as a researcher and the epistemological perspective in my work. Section 4 outlines the theoretical basis for my research. Here, I introduce political ecology as the overarching framework, while also incorporating concepts from the contentious politics framework by Tilly and Tarrow. Section 5 represents the core of this thesis: the research findings. This part roughly follows the trajectory of my research questions, while my remarks are underpinned with insights made during my research trip to Jamaica. In the final section (6), I summarize the accumulated findings, discuss them, and present prospects.

2. Background and History

2.1. The Jamaican Bauxite-Alumina Industry

Bauxite, alumina, aluminium

Bauxite is a rock that is mined in an open pit, which in practice makes the entire removal of topsoil necessary. It is further processed in two steps, first to alumina (or aluminium oxide), and then to aluminium. The processing has environmental repercussions, as enormous amounts of water are needed, industrial waste is produced, and dust and other emissions are disseminated into the environment. Some value is added to the resource in the first step (processing to alumina), but the most value is added in the second step, when the aluminium is extracted in a very energy-intensive process (cf. Knierzinger 2018: 3). To date, Jamaica does not have the energy-capacities to process alumina to aluminium. The country therefore only produces and exports bauxite and alumina (cf. OEC 2020).

Aluminium is a light metal commonly used for different forms of food-packaging (e.g., tins, foil) but is also used for construction as well as to build various machines such as cars and airplanes. Because of the latter, the demand for aluminium skyrocketed during the Second World War, during which thousands of planes and other war machines were built. Therefore, the access to bauxite has historically been very important for the military-industrial complex of the United States and other industrialized countries (cf. Renier/ Howell 2020: 45).

The history of bauxite-mining in Jamaica

In Jamaica bauxite was discovered in the 1940s, and in 1952 companies from the US and Canada established operations to mine and export the island's resources. Only five years later, Jamaica had become the world's leading producer of bauxite, producing almost 5 million tons per year by the end of the 1950s (cf. Drakapoulos 2018: 77).

While providing an extensive overview over the political developments in Jamaica from the colonial period until the 1980s, Stephens and Stephens (1986) pointed out the continuous importance of the bauxite-alumina industry. The bauxite industry led to swift macroeconomic growth and became an important topic among the two major political parties (ibid.: 22).

The two important political parties in Jamaica are the *Peoples National Party* (PNP), which is rather left and historically leaned towards democratic socialism (nowadays rather social democracy), and the *Jamaica Labour Party* (JLP) which is rather conservative and economically liberal (unlike the name might suggest). The bauxite industry in the 1950s and 1960s in Jamaica was fully owned by foreign corporations. It initially grew under the JLP, which promised national economic growth through the sector (cf. ibid.: 17). Besides tourism, bauxite provided most of Jamaica's gross foreign exchange earnings and stimulated GDP-growth (Stephen & Stephen: 26). The industry mostly contributed to the Jamaican economy through the collection of taxes, which, however, were very low, especially in comparison to the price of the final product (aluminium) (cf. Barclay/ Girvan 2013: 238). While the mining corporations reaped immense profits, unemployment remained high and most Jamaicans hardly benefitted from the sector (cf. Sprague 2015: 83). Social tensions and popular discontent increased during the late 1960s, leading to a political turn to the left, when the PNP attained power under Michael Manley in 1972, who promised to rearrange the bauxite industry for the benefit of all Jamaicans (cf. Boulton 1981).

In order to fund new socialist policies, the PNP intended to increase revenues from the bauxite industry through state ownership and stronger regulation. Bauxite-related taxes were raised and later a production levy was instated (cf. Drakapoulos 2018: 78). Local mining subsidiaries were partially nationalized by purchasing substantial stakes. Furthermore, the GoJ bought lands with bauxite ore reserves (cf. Sprague 2015: 83). These measures led to the government becoming more involved and more intertwined with the industry.

However, the economic crises of the 1970s and the subsequent structural adjustment programs by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) made it difficult for Manley and the PNP to succeed in their efforts (cf. Sprague 2015: 84). Inspired by the *Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries* (OPEC), Manley also tried to collaborate with other bauxite producing states to create a similar producer cartel in order to achieve higher and more stable prices for bauxite. However, these efforts were undermined by the USA and their power in international institutions (cf. NACLA 1978: 25). The Jamaican bauxite-alumina industry could not hold its ground in the face of global competition. In 1980, the JLP attained power again and, in accordance with the neoliberal paradigm shift, many policies and regulations established, including the production levy, were revised and removed under pressure of the *Washington Consensus* (cf. Stephens & Stephens 2017: 200f; 253f.).

Sprague (2015) described the following developments in the 1980s and 1990s as a shift of the mining industry from being international to transnational, which implies that combinations of multinational corporations (MNC's) took over control of the industry. This happened during a time where the mining industry, like many other global industries, started reorganizing along new flows of finance capital and increasingly fluctuating markets. Sprague (ibid. 86) further argued, that "mining companies no longer operate in Jamaica as an extension of U.S. state policies or subsidies. Nor in the interests of a particular fraction of national capitalists*".* Instead, *"*they thrive in a globally competitive and integrated market benefiting transnational capitalists.*"* This development, in connection with volatile commodity markets, resulted in frequent changes in corporate ownership as well as sporadic bankruptcies, closures and re-openings of mines and refineries over the next decades (cf. Sprague 2015: 76; Barclay/ Girvan 2013: 242f.).

In the wake of the global economic crisis in 2008, the Jamaican bauxite and alumina industry was severely hit by the price shocks and several mines and refineries were forced to close. Of all alumina refineries in Jamaica, only a single one managed to permanently continue its operations by making harsh budget cuts (cf. Drakapoulos 2018: 81). Since then, the GoJ once again has started attaining more control over the industry. For instance, the production levy has been reinstated and the GoJ is increasingly active in a new public-private-partnership (PPP) (cf. The Jamaica Observer 2021; Linton 2021). Barclay and Girvan (2013: 260) described these back-and-forth power shifts over the Jamaican bauxite-alumina-industry between corporations and the GoJ as a "swinging pendulum of bargaining power". And since the financial crisis in 2008, the pendulum may have swung back to the GoJ (cf. ibid.: 256).

Bauxite-mining in Jamaica today

Contemporarily, there are four ventures active in bauxite and alumina production:

- *Jamalco* is a PPP that was formed in 1988 and is since then owned by the GoJ by 45%. The other 55% were acquired by an US-based subsidiary of *Glencore* in April 2023 (cf. Jamaica Gleaner 2023).
- *WINDALCO* belongs to *RUSAL*, a leading aluminium producer from Russia. Because of Russia's invasion in Ukraine and the associated sanctions it was discussed whether the GoJ will expropriate the company's assets (cf. The Jamaica Gleaner 2022). Though as of now (2023), it seems like WINDALCO's exports to Russia continue as usual and are untouched by sanctions.

- *JISCO* is a Chinese company that became active in Jamaica in 2017 by buying the islands largest alumina refinery, which closed in 2008. Since then JISCO invested massively for industrial modernization purposes (cf. Minto 2019: 299 f.).
- *Discovery* (formerly *Noranda;* rebranded in 2021*)* is a relatively new PPP (formed in 2016) between a subsidiary of *Atlantic Alumina* and the GoJ. The GoJ is the largest shareholder, as it owns 51% of the venture (cf. Noranda 2017; Atlantic Alumina 2022). The venture has planned to further access until recently untapped reserves, which are located in Cockpit-Country (cf. Jamaica Gleaner 2022a). Atlantic Alumina is owned by Concord Resources, a MNC headquartered in NYC, Hong Kong and Connecticut.

These recent changes show, on the one hand, that there is potential for growth and expansion through new foreign investments (China), and, on the other hand, that there is great government involvement in the Jamaican bauxite and alumina industry. The higher revenue for the GoJ through PPPs as well as the reinvestment of profits for social projects is emphasized and publicly communicated (cf. Noranda 2017; Jamalco 2022; Drakapoulos 2018: 85f.). And, as mentioned before, the GoJ reinstated the production levy (cf. The Jamaica Observer 2021/ Linton 2021). Today, a lot of Jamaican bauxite is processed domestically, and alumina makes up about 30% of Jamaica's entire value of exports (cf. OEC 2021).

The regulatory and legal framework for bauxite-mining in Jamaica

The regulatory framework for mining in Jamaica originally was established under the *Mining Act* in 1947, which set the first legal basis for obtaining mining permits. In his dissertation about environmental law, policy and regulations regarding bauxite mining in Jamaica, Facey (2006) showed along passage for passage, that the contents of the Mining Act (1947) are formulated very vaguely and often have unclear definitions or none at all. This lack of clarity gives mining companies a lot of legal leeway. The Mining Act therefore is important to date, as it still sets the legal grounds for mining and grants companies considerable legal power and only weak constraints.

Further important regulations and institutions for bauxite mining and processing were established when the JLP attained power in the 1970s. As aforementioned, new regulations were intended to raise the economic profits of the industry to finance socialist policies. They only slightly dealt with the environmental impacts of bauxite mining. During this time, the GoJ created the *Jamaica Bauxite Institute* (JBI), as well as the GoJ-owned corporations *Jamaica Bauxite Mining Ltd.* (JBM) and *Bauxite Alumina Trading Company Ltd.* (BATCO) (cf. Greenaway:

67). JBM and BATCO are the official government owned corporations, which are active in the sector. They own stakes in some bauxite-alumina ventures. The JBI on the other hand was established as an institution to operate alongside the industry, by monitoring its performance, making assessments and recommendations, as well as to collaborate with companies for community programs and pollution control. Along with JBM and BATCO, the JBI is an institution providing support to the GoJ's efforts in the bauxite-alumina sector and - despite its (e.g., pollution) monitoring tasks - must by no means be seen as an environmental agency.

Facey (2006: 114) noted, that Jamaican *"*environmental government institutions have been traditionally weak with little capacity for enforcement and the mines were able to operate without the fear of a mass backlash based on what was happening to the community (environmentally).*"* The first substantial act towards environmental regulation was the *Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act* (NCRA), which was established in 1991 but not promulgated until 1996. Since then, new environmental permits are required for bauxite mining and other industrial activities. The NRCA initially only addressed companies that became active after 1996. Preexisting companies were exempt. In addition, the NCRA was de facto not enforced until 2001, when the *National Environment and Planning Agency* (NEPA) was founded to carry out its "technical and administrative mandate" (Greenaway 2020: 67). In 2015, the NRCA was modified, and it now addresses all bauxite-alumina companies, including those already active before 1997. Thus, it took nearly seven decades from the start of the industry in the 1950s until the required environmental permits were introduced.

The NCRA was an important step to environmental regulation of the Jamaican bauxite industry. However, according to observations by Greenaway (2020: 72f.) the actual compliance with the environmental permits is poorly controlled; related reports are often opaque and erroneous.

The ongoing debility of environmental institutions and laws against corporate power in practice can also be seen at the hand of the current situation in Cockpit-Country. Although Cockpit-Country was officially declared protected from mining, so-called *Special Mining Leases* (SMLs) have been granted in areas, which are considered to be part of Cockpit Country (cf. Jamaica Gleaner 2022a).

2.2. The Contestation of the Jamaican Bauxite-Alumina Industry

Negative externalizations of the bauxite-alumina industry

Bauxite mining and alumina processing is harmful to the environment on several dimensions; this is a fact, which has been well known for decades. Coke (1987) summarized the negative effects in his article about the "Environmental Impact of Bauxite Mining and Processing in Jamaica*"*. Most importantly, "the removal of topsoil and vegetation" (ibid. 294), thus also physical relocation of residents, is necessary for quarrying. For Alumina production, deep wells are constructed to ensure the water supply needed in the processing plant (six tons of water per ton of alumina). Alumina-processing leads to pollution by leaving an industrial waste termed "red mud" which can contaminate water reserves (cf. ibid. 296f.). Additionally, the transport and processing disseminate a red dust, which can spread in the area and lead to respirational diseases (cf. Knierzinger 2018: 8f.).

The *Jamaica Environment Trust* (JET) published the probably most comprehensive recent analysis of the negative effects of bauxite mining in Jamaica. In the collective volume "Red Dirt" (2020), a range of scientists from different fields jointly provided an overview over the topic, by shedding light on various aspects of the Jamaican bauxite-alumina industry and its impacts on the Jamaican society, economy and environment. Several of the articles in the publication deal in detail with some of the negative effects of the bauxite-alumina industry for the Jamaican society and environment.

In her contribution, Koenig (2020: 133f.) showed how the destruction of unique karst-limestone structures (as in Cockpit-Country) for bauxite mining can have disastrous short- and long-term effects for proximate wildlife ecosystems. Charles (2020: 95f.) compiled complaints about bad air quality and alleged illnesses in relation to pollution through bauxite processing in Jamaica and underpinned them with a review of conducted studies. Levy/ Baker (2020: 110f.) found, that the relocation of people due to bauxite mining in Jamaica has often negatively affected their well-being. Niemi (2020: 198f.) made a cost-benefit calculation of the Jamaican bauxite-alumina-industry, in which the industry's profits are weighed against the manifold costs it entails for society and the environment. For this kind of approach, which has also already been done in other countries (e.g., Colombia), social and environmental costs are estimated in US-Dollars and set against the profits of the industry. At the hand of his calculations, Niemi (ibid.:

217) concluded, that the long term social and environmental costs on a national scale exceed the industry's profits by far.

As the JET is an environmental NGO explicitly opposing bauxite mining, it comes as no surprise that the publication takes on a very critical perspective towards the industry. It examines many negative externalizations of the industry but does not particularly look at contemporary protests against bauxite mining. However, the revitalization and expansion of the Jamaican bauxite and alumina industry has sparked various protests since the mid-2000s (cf. Figueroa 2019: 116f.).

Protests since the 2000s

Most literature referring to protests against bauxite mining in Jamaica started coming up in the mid-2000s, when campaigns communicated the topic effectively to the public. The Jamaican filmmaker Esther Figueroa was part of the protests and made several films about Cockpit-Country and the threat of bauxite mining in the 2000s. More than a decade later, in the collective volume *From Sit-Ins to #Revolutions* (2019), Figueroa published a retrospective article on the role of her films and other media in the protests against bauxite mining in Cockpit-Country. According to Figueroa (2019: 166f.), a (media-) campaign by the so-called *Cockpit-Country-Stakeholders Group* (CCSG), for which she created films, played a central role in the protest movement against the bauxite industry.

The CCSG appears in seemingly every text about protests against the Jamaican bauxite-alumina industry. In her thesis about "Stakeholder Involvement […] [regarding] the Sustainable Development of Cockpit-Country", Smith (2009: 78) identified the CCSG as a central actor in the protests through various activities, for instance, by running public education campaigns, producing media, and, by contacting representatives. However, it remains quite unclear, what the CCSG is precisely. The CCSG does not have any website, office, nor any official press release or publication. Fuentes-George (2020: 153) describes the CCSG as a "loose coalition" of several NGOs, "[…] Jamaicans in the Diaspora, caving enthusiasts, historians, [and] Maroon organizations". Often mentioned organizations active in the CCSG are especially the JET, the *Southern Trelawney Environmental Agency* (STEA), and the *Windsor Research Center* (WRC).

In July 2017, the CCSG raised awareness through media and started a petition, which demanded for Cockpit-Country to be declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and thus to be protected from mining. The petition garnered over 20,000 online signatures and over 16, 000 paper petitions were delivered to the Prime Minister's office (cf. ibid.: 123). As a reaction to the petition,

in November 2017, Prime Minister Andrew Holness designated, that Cockpit-Country should become a protected area. However, the designated protection was made at the hand of a disputed cartography of Cockpit-Country, and mining operations have continued anyway, due to Special Mining Leases (SML) in the area (cf. Jamaica Gleaner 2022a). Mining is still happening in the region and the protests are ongoing but scientific literature on the protests beyond 2017 is scant.

The epistemic community

In his book about "transnational advocacy networks and conservation in developing countries", Fuentes-George (2016: Chapter 1) the first chapter is about „The Conservation of Globally Important Bird Habitats", looking at the issue of specific bird species in Jamaica's Cockpit-Country and their potential endangerment. Hereby, Fuentes-George showed that there is a so-called "epistemic community" (ibid.: 2), which is pushing the ecological conservation of Cockpit-Country and has identified bauxite mining as the major threat.

Fuentes-George (2011: 11) defines epistemic communities as networks of individuals acknowledged as scientific experts within a particular realm of research. Because as a network they are recognized as such they have the power to make policy recommendations to decision makers. Within such networks, there is a certain consensus across several dimensions: causal beliefs, normative concerns, appropriate policy recommendations, and the assertion of scientific validity claims. Furthermore, epistemic communities share their belief in certain cognitive models for the interpretation of data and problem comprehension. The acknowledgement of consensually validated scientific knowledge sets epistemic communities apart from other advocacy groups. Unlike claims made for other reasons (e.g., personal interests, morals, emotions), epistemic communities focus on scientific reasoning to make policy recommendations sensible (cf. ibid. 11ff.).

Accordingly, the epistemic-community-approach in the study of international environmental politics posits the thesis that networks of scientists capable of establishing consensus on an environmental issue can effectively advocate for states to adopt certain environmental management measures. Hence, epistemic communities are groups of scientists who, by virtue of their epistemic power, can exert influence over national environmental politics. But despite this influence, their power to compel policy makers to adopt their advice is constrained by various other factors. Economic pressures, in particular, often prompt policy leaders to pursue environmentally harmful projects, despite the diverging advice of epistemic communities (cf. Fuentes-George 2009: 142).

Influence through epistemic power

According to Archer et al. (2019: 28f.), epistemic power stems from an individual's capacity as an epistemic agent and involves two distinct abilities. Firstly, it entails the capacity to influence others' beliefs, thoughts, or knowledge. Secondly, it includes the power to validate or discredit the statements made by others. One's level of epistemic power is influenced by one's perceived credibility, which can be reinforced by different factors, such as a position in an organization or the possession of an academic title. The degree to which an individual is considered credible significantly impacts the extent of their epistemic power. Perceived credibility serves as a critical source of epistemic power, and shapes the dynamics of knowledge dissemination and acceptance (cf. ibid.). Epistemic communities are typically formed by individuals and organizations that possess a certain level of epistemic power, granting them credibility, and influence towards political decision makers.

Fuentes-George (2016: 4) names various members of the epistemic community in Jamaica in this context: NGOs, university departments and scientific researchers from biology, ecology, ornithology, botany, and geology. This very same epistemic community was mainly responsible for the creation of the CCSG (cf. ibid.: 40). According to Fuentes-George (cf. 2009: 114), the Maroons are not regarded as part of the epistemic community. Similarly, the CCSG does not qualify as an epistemic community due to the "unscientific base of the broader network" (ibid.: 114). This highlights that being part of an epistemic community is strongly associated with formal scientific knowledge. The Maroons are not part of the epistemic community, as they do not share the aforementioned consensus on scientific reasoning and the affiliated cognitive model of data interpretation. Informal cultural and historical knowledge, which the Maroons may have, does not make them eligible to be considered part of the epistemic community.

The role of the Maroons

In literature about the protests and conservation efforts (e.g., Figueroa 2019; Fuentes-George 2016/ 2020; Douglas 2013) the Maroons are often mentioned, though rather as people affected by potential mining, and not as active agents in this contention. It seems that they only appear on the sidelines of the protests, which are mainly led and organized by the epistemic community. This indicates that the contention around bauxite mining in Jamaica is intertwined in an epistemic power struggle. Formal knowledge of actors from the epistemic community seems to have shaped the publicly communicated narrative of the protests, while the informal, local knowledge of the Maroons rather stands in the background.

In what seems like a follow-up research, Fuentes George (2020: 144) shifted away from his focus on the epistemic community and addressed the role that "local lore" could play for environmental conservation efforts. Drawing from findings by other scholars, he concludes that, "knowledge production and participation in environmental governance is structured in ways that privilege the holders of formal scientific knowledge over others." (ibid.: 145). Fuentes-George further noted that there also are contentious points among protesters. The aforementioned cartography of Cockpit-Country is such a contentious point.

Maroon stakeholders determined their mapping of the area at the hand of historic events, important sites and demography. For many scientific actors, Cockpit Country is considered an ecologically defined region, whereby its borders can be determined through geological examination.In 2008, a scientific working group created by the GoJ and the Geology Department of the *University of the West Indies* (UWI) made a map based on such scientific criteria. However, the map ignores the socio-cultural and historic arguments of the Maroons. Therefore, the boundaries of Cockpit-Country remain contested. The cartography of Cockpit-Country in favor of scientific elites shows how epistemic power imbalances manifest. The ongoing contention about the borders of Cockpit-Country is undermining the chances of the region to be considered as a World Heritage Site, since for such considerations the situation must be stable and unambiguous (cf. ibid.: 156).

Fuentes-George (2020: 160) therefore suggested that the harmonization of local, cultural knowledge and scientific, technocratic knowledge could lead to more effective environmental conservation efforts. However, while Fuentes-George stresses the importance of linking local lore to scientific investigations, he does not elaborate what Maroon local lore is precisely, nor what it could mean for contemporary Maroon activism.

2.3. The Maroons of Cockpit-Country

It is crucial to note that prior to the arrival of Europeans with African slaves and the subsequent establishment of Maroon communities, Jamaica was already populated. Originally (from AD 600)**,** the indigenous Taíno inhabited the island they called *Xaymaca* in their Arawakan language. However, after the second arrival of the Spanish in the Americas under Columbus in 1494, genocidal brutality as well as new diseases from Europe led to the eradication of the Taíno people over the next decades. Early on, the Spanish also started to transport slaves from

Africa to Jamaica. During this time, many Taíno tried to escape into the rainforests and mountains of Jamaica to hide from the European colonizers and some African slaves did the same (Connell 2017: 37f.). The Spanish originally used the word *cimarron* to describe runaway cattle during their early colonial conquest. However, the term changed in meaning when the enslavement of Africans became a large-scale practice there. Henceforth, the term formerly used for animals contemptuously described enslaved human beings that had escaped the plantations of their owners. The English word *Maroon* later was derived from the Spanish *cimarron*. With the intensification of slave trade in the 16th century, the number of runaway-slaves increased to such an extent, that Maroons started to form distinct communities in Latin America and the Caribbean (cf. Moulton 2020: 4). The Maroons of Jamaica consolidated as communities in two geographically distinct areas of the island. In the western, hilly area, in the *Cockpits*, the Leeward Maroons established themselves. In the eastern part of the island, in the much higher John Crow Blue Mountains, the Windward Maroons established themselves. I will deal primarily with the Leeward Maroons of Cockpit Country, since contemporarily only their territory is threatened by bauxite mining.

There is quite extensive scholarly literature on the Maroons (e.g., cf. Agorsah 1994; Price 1996; Zips 1999). In fact, there even is a niche field within ethnology which Connell (2017: 7) describes as "Maroon Studies", which has the goal of "examining historic and contemporary Maroon communities in Jamaica, as well as other areas of the Caribbean, the United States, the mainland areas of Spanish America, and Brazil." However, most literature focuses on historical aspects of "Maroonage" (cf. Moulton 2020), especially in the 16th and 17th history. Scientific literature on the Maroons of the 21st century in Jamaica is rather scarce.

After 1655, Jamaica came under rule of the English, which tried to subjugate the existing Maroon communities. However, the Maroons in the densely vegetated hills of Cockpit-Country (and in the Blue Mountain region) continuously resisted intrusion through superior bush-fighting strategies (cf. Zips 1999: 75).

The folklore of the Leeward Maroons says that they maintained relations with the Taíno when they still existed. Based on oral tradition, today's Maroons claim that their ancestors formed an alliance with the Taíno to fight the white colonialists. Further, they also claim that the African and Taíno peoples intermingled and therefore both are part of the todays Maroon's ancestry. Whether such an alliance between Africans and Taíno actually existed is difficult to prove. Nevertheless, the Maroons most certainly had contact with the Taíno and learned from them

about the topography and ecology of the island in order to retreat into its nature and to survive (Connell 2017: 38f.). After eight decades of continuous losses, the English ended their war with the Leeward Maroons with a treaty in 1738. This treaty granted the Maroons in Cockpit-Country the right to live independently from the colonial state and to preserve their distinct ethnocultural practices (cf. Moulton 2020: 8). Furthermore, they received the right to possess and control their own, clearly defined territory. In return, they agreed to stop any acts of violence against the colonial territory. Furthermore, they agreed to bring any more runaway slaves back to the plantations in exchange for rewards (cf. Zips 1999: 67).

Since then, the Maroons of Cockpit-Country have been living there officially as an autonomous community (cf. Figueroa 2019: 114). From the Maroons' perspective, the treaty is just as binding today, as it was, when it was signed in 1738. The national achievement of independence from Britain in 1962 did not change that. Until today, they understand themselves as culturally autonomous, mainly live from agriculture as subsistence farmers, and further trade with the agricultural products their lands provide (cf. Fuentes-George 2016: 3f.).

In his ethnological research, Zips (1999) described the history of the Maroon struggles and the contributions they made for the development of movements like Pan-Africanism and Rastafarianism. In the course of his research, Zips thereby also empirically researched the cultural practices and the political system (cf. ibid.: 129) which the Maroons preserved. The government of Cockpit Country, which is based in Accompong, is led by a Chief (formerly Colonel) who is elected every five years. The chief has centralist power, is the supreme judge and appoints the members of the council, which is divided into different competences (like a cabinet) (cf. ibid.).

The community of Accompong has developed to be the political center of the Leeward Maroons. Nowadays all the important institutions of their government are located there. In fact, the territory around Cockpit Country often is also referred to as *Sovereign State of Accompong* by the local Maroons. In the most recent election (2021) Richard Currie won and became the youngest leader of Accompong to date. With his election the title of the highest leadership position was changed from *Colonel* to *Chief*. In 2022, Currie officially ratified and further promulgated an official constitution, which was already finalized in 2004 but not yet ratified due to missing signatures (cf. State of Accompong 2022). It nonetheless symbolizes the juridical and political autonomy of Cockpit Country, which the GoJ de facto has been widely tolerating.

Connell (2020: 23) describes the long existing relations between the Maroons and the colonial- and later nation-state as a situation of "oppositional stability" (ibid.) which has manifested itself as a "stalemate" (ibid.), avoiding any overt conflict, but without officially clarifying the exact status of the region. Connell (ibid.) then notes, that, after almost 300 years, this oppositional stability has been disrupted, when plans to mine bauxite in Cockpit-Country became reality. While classic colonialism was resisted for centuries, the ongoing existence of expansive capitalism is threatening to lead to further intrusion into the territory of the Maroons.

Maroon ecology and activism

The Jamaican Maroons have a distinct ecological understanding of their co-existence with nature and maintain a spiritual connection to the lands and flora they consider sacred (cf. Connell 2020: 225f.). Humans for them exist in a spiritual paradox of separation and unity with nature. While using the materials the rain forest and the earth beneath provides, they consider respect and appreciation for natural entities as very important. As Favini (2018) showed, different than in common, western (mainstream) conservationism, the Maroons do not relate to nature as something anonymous and abstract, but as individual entities they are personally connected to. According to these remarks (ibid.: 15f.), common conservationists care for nature from an objective distance, seeing it as something that is best preserved by entirely separating it from humans (e.g. in form of national parks). Maroon care for non-human life, on the other hand, is very personal and specific, rooted in the history, where precisely the non-separation from ecological surroundings saved their ancestors lives. Favini (2018: 22) described this connection to nature as "ecological immersion", which implies a strong connectedness to the inhabited space. This ecological immersion makes it unacceptable for Maroons to simply be relocated to somewhere else. Connell (2017: 23) noted that it is precisely the Maroon understanding of nature, which "enables their stand against methods of hyper-capitalist accumulation."

Most literature on the Maroons deals with their history, cultural ethnology and ecology (cf. Connell 2017: 25) but barely draws on concrete forms of recent activities and contemporary structures. A lot of literature about Maroons rather deals with them on a meta-level and addresses affiliated symbolism. Maroons are often metaphysically exemplified as black heroes because of their historic struggle and successful resistance against subjugation under white colonialism. However, they are barely thoroughly described as actors in the contemporary conflict. Regarding the conflict around bauxite mining, Connell (2020: 219) therefore noted that,

“although they are widely recognized for their historic freedom struggle, Jamaican Maroons have rarely been viewed […] as environmental actors.”

2.4. The Political and Social Context for Environmental Activism in Jamaica

The Jamaican polity

Jamaica is a parliamentary democracy, characterized by regular elections that are widely considered to be fair and peaceful. The country's democratic institutions have developed a tradition of relatively smooth power transitions after elections, indicating the stability of the system. Within this framework, there is political pluralism, with different parties competing and offering diverse ideologies and policies. The freedom of assembly is upheld, allowing citizens to gather peacefully and express their views and concerns. Civil society organizations and activists have the opportunity to engage in political activities and advocate for specific causes without undue restrictions. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a significant role in Jamaica's political landscape, conducting activities such as advocacy and research to promote citizen engagement. The media enjoys press freedom, enabling independent reporting and the dissemination of information to the public, and freedom of opinion expression is granted to all citizens (cf. Freedom House 2023; cf. EIU 2020). These democratic structures have impacted the dynamics of the protest movement against bauxite mining in Jamaica. The openness of the democratic system has allowed the movement to express its grievances peacefully and to engage in relatively constructive dialogue with the GoJ. The participatory nature of governance provided citizens and communities with opportunities to participate in decision-making processes related to their concerns. Overall, the political context in Jamaica has been characterized by a general granting of civil liberties and democratic principles, which have contributed to a more organized and inclusive approach to addressing social and environmental issues related to bauxite mining. While Jamaica in general experiences a significant amount of physical violence, it is essential to note that this violence is predominantly linked to the drug trade and associated gang conflicts, rather than being directed at political protests or activism (cf. Freedom House 2023).

The developmental discourse vs. environmentalism

Since around the 1970s, various politically active groups in Jamaica and across the *Third World* aimed to gain stronger independence from the West. In Jamaica, this perspective was influenced

by ideologies such as Pan-Africanism, Garveyism and black nationalism. They shared the notion that the people should be independent from the former colonial states to live in a self-determined way (cf. Girvan 2006: 339). Economically speaking this meant expropriating and utilizing existing resources (such as bauxite) to enable self-determined modernization (cf. Scheller 2014: 149). Bauxite, therefore, also played a role in their vision of development, albeit distinct from the trajectory propagated by liberal capitalism (cf. Temin 2023). Either way, bauxite has, since is discovery, always played a crucial role for development visions in Jamaica.

During a conversation with Figueroa (interview, 2023), she offered me her insight into the connection between bauxite mining and the dominant development discourse in contemporary Jamaica. Figueroa (interview, 2023) pointed out, that for decades, Jamaica has adhered to a development narrative where the state's primary focus is economic advancement, drawing inspiration from industrialized nations. The extractive sector, primarily bauxite mining, is seen as instrumental in achieving this development path. Such developmental discourses are not limited to Jamaica. They have spread globally and are common in many so-called developing states (cf. Ziai 2010).

As a result, those who oppose bauxite extraction in Jamaica are often viewed as hindering the nation's progress towards prosperity. Figueroa (ibid.) further noted that environmental activists and NGO leaders in Jamaica often come from more privileged backgrounds — often also being brown (as opposed to black), foreign white, or Jamaican-white[1]. But an environmentalist stance is also strongly embraced by Rastafarians and Maroons, groups which do not fit the dominant development narrative. When different narratives clash, as in this case, people are often viewed in the roles of heroes, villains, or victims within the constructed discursive framework. These roles are contingent on their positions and the perspectives from which they are viewed (cf. Mistry et al. 2009: 970). In this case, all these groups — Maroons, Rastafarians, as well as privileged environmentalists — are criticized as being against the developmental progress of the Jamaican nation and its alleged majority. Their efforts to prevent bauxite mining are (mis-)construed as an attack on the *real* (black) Jamaican majority which is depicted as working hard and advancing the country's economic development (cf. Figueroa, interview, 2023; cf. Williams 2023: 81).

Acknowledging this underlying development discourse is crucial to understand the late genesis of a broad movement against bauxite-mining in Jamaica. It seems that historically, there has

[1] Members of the white minority in Jamaica that has lived there for generations (cf. Figueroa, interview, 2023).

been a certain disdain towards anti-bauxite environmentalism, as it was perceived as being against the majority's development goals (cf. ibid.). Exploring the specific intricacies of the discursive dimension in this conflict, however, exceeds the scope of this thesis. Consequently, I defer the exploration through discourse theory to other scholars who may delve deeper into this topic and its implications. But it is noteworthy that the discursive dimension has played a role in the context of the protest movement against bauxite mining, as it may be a political opportunity structure impeding environmental activism, thus leading to latent demobilization within the general public of Jamaica.

3. Research Design and Methods

3.1. Methodology

My research process was open and exploratory, allowing for constant reflection and adaptation as new insights emerged from the data. I remained open to unexpected topics and perspectives emerging from the data. I conducted 9 in-depth, semi-open interviews of different lengths with activists and other stakeholders involved in the protests, made observations at the Accompong Maroon Festival and at bauxite mining sites, and had many conversations with locals to gain a feel and a deeper understanding of the issue. Additionally, I analyzed various sources of documents related to the protests, including social media posts, newspaper articles, documentary films, webinars, and public meeting reports. The data was analyzed using the thematic analysis approach according to Braun and Clarke (2022), which allowed me to identify patterns and themes related to the research questions.

My research approach encompassed both deductive and inductive proceeding. As Proudfoot (2023: 308) pointed out, a mix of inductive and deductive approaches works well with thematic analysis. Prior to my first trip to Jamaica, I lacked specific research questions, resulting in the initial interviews in July adopting a rather inductive approach. Subsequently, after conducting these initial interviews, I crafted the literature review, noticed research gaps, developed more refined research questions and chose contentious politics as a theoretical perspective. The later interviews maintained an open-ended character but leaned towards a more deductive approach, considering the concepts of the theoretical framework.

In addition to conducting interviews and making observations, I supplemented my research with insights from some relevant media materials. Prior to my field trips, I viewed YouTube videos on the topic, such as the two-part documentary by VICE News (cf. VICE 2022/2022a). Through my meeting with activist and filmmaker Esther Figueroa in Kingston, I was granted access to her latest film, *Fly Me to the Moon*, which provided insights into the protest activities. I also drew on documentation from Jamaican news agencies, including the Jamaica Gleaner, the Jamaica Observer, and the Jamaica Information Service. In addition to this, I also looked at social media content related to the protest movement against bauxite mining in Jamaica. I joined several Facebook groups and looked at discussions, as well as at posts on Instagram related to the topic. These materials enabled a more detailed reconstruction of the timeline of important events related to the issue.

3.2. Field Access and Empirical Research

As already mentioned in the literature review, I identified the WRC, JET, and STEA as key actors in the protests against bauxite mining in Jamaica since the early 2000s. In fact, it was the representatives of these three organizations who, together, officially represented the CCSG at public meetings with the GoJ from at least 2006 (cf. JCO 2006). I therefore contacted these organizations via email. Thus, as typical in qualitative research, my sampling was non-random and purposeful.

During a brief family vacation in July 2022, I visited the JET in Kingston and the WRC in Trelawney, where I conducted semi-structured interviews with the leading personnel of the organizations. To augment my initial data set, I did snowball sampling, asking interviewees for referrals to other important stakeholders in the protest movement and recording their contact information for potential follow-up research activities.

After reviewing my preliminary data, I quickly realized that more interviews were necessary to fully understand the research subject. In particular, I recognized a need for greater insight into the perspectives of the Maroons, whose activities were not fully represented in the responses I received from JET and WRC representatives. Consequently, I refined my research question to focus more on the collaboration between Maroons and other activist groups. In early 2023, I returned to Jamaica for a field trip, timed to coincide with the Accompong Maroon Festival on January 6th. This event provided an opportunity for observation and to engage in conversations with local Maroons.

Following the festival, I conducted additional interviews with activists in neighboring villages as well as in Kingston and Albert Town and used snowball sampling to identify additional stakeholders and gain new perspectives on the protest movement. This led me to successfully make contact with Hugh Dixon, the Executive Director of STEA, with whom I had been unable to meet during my first trip. To ensure consistency, I used similar, open-ended questionnaires for each interview, tailored slightly to each specific interviewee. When necessary, I added questions that emerged as relevant during the interview process. Each interview began with a request for the interviewee to introduce themself, followed by a broad conversation about the issue of bauxite mining and the protest movement against it. I maintained a flexible approach to the interview process, allowing it to develop organically and respond to potentially unexpected directions.

To gain a more complete understanding of the situation, I visited the boundaries of Cockpit Country, where mining was already taking place, and made observations in Gibraltar, Madras, and Caledonia, engaging in conversations with locals. I also visited mines and refineries in St. Ann and St. Elizabeth, as well as the Windalco Residue Lake in Manchester. This allowed me to gain a more holistic understanding of the situation around bauxite mining in Jamaica.

3.3. Thematic Analysis

I transcribed all recorded interviews and translated any Patois into English. For the analysis of the data, I utilized the thematic analysis approach according to Braun and Clarke (2022). Thematic analysis is a method that is suited for qualitative research exploring and analyzing patterns and themes within qualitative datasets. It first was developed in the field of psychology but has spread to other fields and is commonly used in social science research (cf. ibid.: xx; 5f.). In the context of qualitative research, it is particularly useful for exploring complex phenomena, such as social movements, as it allows researchers to identify and organize underlying topics linked to the values and beliefs that are driving people's actions and attitudes.

Thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2022: 6) is done in six steps: (1) dataset familiarization; (2) data coding; (3) initial theme generation; (4) theme development; (5) theme refining; and (6) writing up the analysis (cf. ibid: 35). While following all these steps, the researcher continuously reflects during the engagement with the material (cf. ibid.: 13).

As Braun and Clarke suggest (cf. ibid.: 35), I first engaged in the data immersion process. Straight away, from the transcription phase, I committed myself to attentive listening, often replaying interviews during daily routines and travels. The lengthy transcription process itself also deepened my interaction with the data. Subsequently, I printed out all transcripts, enabling me to immerse myself further into the content while reading, making notes as I progressed. Having immersed myself in the data, I started the coding process and used the software *MAXQDA* to organize and code my data. This involved identifying statements of thematic significance and generating initial codes, which I applied to specific text segments. I drew several mind maps, which allowed me to better visualize the diverse themes and discern interconnections between them. I repeatedly refined these codes, categorizing them under specific themes. This iterative approach finally unveiled main themes, which I further honed down until topical redundancies were diminished. Ultimately, this process led to the crystallization of the

following themes: motivation, activities, collaboration, significant events, the enemy, (government & mining company), history and identity. The subject matter encompassed by these themes will resurface consistently throughout the context of my research findings (Chapter 7). However, I will not address them again specifically. Instead, they have functioned as a purposeful guide for orientation, enabling me to maintain an overview and structure the analysis systematically, and ensuring an adequate engagement with my research questions.

3.4. Epistemology, Positionality, and Limitations

Thematic analysis, as a qualitative research method, often faces critique from the quantitative direction, mostly related to concerns about subjectivity, selectiveness, and constructivist assumptions. All research, to some extent, is influenced by personal opinions or perspectives. However, in qualitative research, particularly thematic analysis, this influence is more pronounced due to the active role of the researcher during the entire research process (cf. Riger & Sigurvinsdottir 2015: 36). To address this circumstance, I strived to be transparent and reflexive in my research, following the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2022: 5). In fact, maintaining reflexivity throughout the research is an essential aspect of thematic analysis (cf. ibid.). It entails the researcher's awareness of their own position, presuppositions, and the continuous reflection upon them throughout the research process. This includes the consideration of social markers such as socio-demographic standing, race, gender, and their potential influences on the research process.

Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge that I approached this topic with a degree of subjectivity and bias. I see myself as an environmentalist and maintain a critical perspective on extractive practices due to their impact on both ecosystems and communities. Furthermore, my family on my mother's side is from Jamaica, partly within the bounds of Cockpit Country. I refer to myself as *black*, though I am half German and light skinned. In Jamaica, people referred to me as *brown*, and during my research I became aware that in Jamaica this was affiliated with a certain sense of privilege. Although I rather identify as German, I feel a strong connection to Jamaica and its culture, due to my roots, and I feel as part of the Jamaican diaspora. This personal connection has influenced my research motivations. My research is critical of mining in Jamaica and aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts in support of environmental activism on the island and beyond.

My research was intentionally focused on the perspectives and experiences of those who oppose extractivism in Jamaica. In line with this goal and to limit the scope of my research, I made a deliberate decision not to include *the other side*, such as government institutions or mining companies in my sample. While this approach may not provide a complete picture of all stakeholders involved in the issue, it allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives and experiences of those who are directly affected negatively by bauxite mining and who are actively resisting. Readers may notice that I sometimes adopt a first-person perspective in my writing, especially in the findings chapter. I chose to use the first-person perspective for several reasons. Firstly, it aligns with my personal taste for scholarly texts that incorporate the author's perspective, as it, in my opinion, enhances the clarity of the researchers thought process. Secondly, my use of the first-person perspective serves as a departure from the strict confines of objective linguistics, classically adhered to in academic writing. I intentionally refrain from claiming the production of entirely objective knowledge, a notion often associated with positivist ideals. My epistemology aligns with my chosen method, as Braun and Clarke (2022: 13) stress that "subjectivity is at the heart of reflexive thematic analysis practice". Reflexive research, in this context, also acknowledges that perception and knowledge is always situated and influenced by the practices of the researcher.

Nonetheless, I maintain a critical stance regarding the value of exclusively subjective insights and an overly judgmental relativism. Thus, in general, I choose to operate within the epistemological framework of critical realism, a stance which strikes a balance that is well-suited for critical political (-ecological) research. Critical realism recognizes the impossibility of achieving absolute objectivity while simultaneously avoiding the pitfalls of extreme relativism, ensuring a nuanced and robust analysis. Critical realism seeks to understand the underlying structures and mechanisms behind observable phenomena while acknowledging the limitations of human perception and the complex interplay of reality, interpretation, and social context (cf. Braun & Clarke 2022: 169f.).

As a researcher from the Western academic sphere, I found it more accessible to engage in deeper conversations with individuals in Jamaica who share a similar academic background. This probably has resulted in interviews with more depth with academic participants as compared to non-academic participants. It therefore is important to acknowledge that my remarks may be influenced by a greater exposure to the viewpoints of epistemically privileged groups in the context of the protests.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Political Ecology

Political ecology is a critical perspective that deals with the relations between society and nature. Political ecology thereby distinguishes itself from apolitical, nature-deterministic perspectives and explicitly politicizes nature-society relations. Environmental crises and conflicts are political conflicts from this perspective since the way nature is (re-)organized is connected to power relations (cf. Dorn & Huber 2020: 184f.).

From the perspective of political ecology, nature and society do not simply exist next to each other. Instead, they stand in a dialectical relationship to each other. The political-ecological perspective thus focuses on the reciprocal relationship between nature and society and allows one to critically explore how society deals with nature, how it appropriates, produces, transforms it and how, on the other hand, nature is fundamental for societal structures (cf. Prause 2018: 33). Works on political ecology have originally been influenced by neo-Marxism and, later, also by poststructuralism. Within these intellectual traditions, additional conceptions—for instance, from feminism and post-colonialism – have contributed new perspectives on political ecology (cf. Dietz & Engels 2017: 6; cf. Bridge et al. 2015:7).

In the Marxist tradition, political ecology scrutinizes environmental conflicts and crises through an examination of the underlying social forces, power dynamics, and different modes of production. From a political-ecological perspective, nature is not an entity that exists neutrally alongside society but has always been exposed to social production processes and is therefore also socially produced and mediated. The historical-materialistic foundation of Marxist thought is equally applicable to the understanding of nature. Nature is partly socially produced, but on the other hand it retains its distinct materiality. The social production of nature by humans thus is not arbitrary but constrained by nature's intrinsic material attributes. Nature possesses unique physical properties that dictate our interactions with it. Nature is therefore not arbitrarily modifiable by labor and cannot be changed and exploited without limits. The material characteristics of nature play a significant role in determining the outcomes of human utilization (cf. Prause 2018: 36f.). In the context of Jamaica's bauxite, for instance, the ore's geographical and geological traits necessitate the clearance of the entire topsoil to access it, which obviously has implications for all flora and fauna in the area (cf. Coke et al. 1987: 294).

Poststructuralist political ecological perspectives have criticized and complemented the materialistic focus of neo-Marxist conceptions by emphasizing the importance of discourses, specific constructions of nature, as well entanglements with other categories such as gender, *race* and culture.

The political ecology of extractivism

Extractivism is based on the appropriation and commodification of nature. This process requires the fulfillment of different prerequisites, such as the exploration of assets and the securing of rights for accessing and exploiting these resources (cf. Burchhardt & Dietz 2014: 478). Areas selected for extraction often are not vacant or unused but inhabited or subject to traditional customs of subaltern groups (often indigenous communities). The securing of property rights, land expropriation as well as resource commodification and redistribution entail mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Thereby, extractivism goes beyond its role as a mere economic development strategy and exerts transformative influence on societies and solidifies political power structures. These power structures, henceforth, often are grounded in the control of natural resources (cf. ibid: 479). To look critically at these procedures and circumstances, political-ecological perspectives reveal that extractivism does not only precipitate environmental destruction but – because of the social, political, and cultural dimension of nature – leads to complex conflicts and can bring about sociopolitical transformations. In the political ecology of extractivism in Jamaica, fundamentally different logics of nature can clash against each other. For instance, the capitalist logic of nature as a resource from the perspective of MNCs clashes with the traditional understanding of nature in the maroon ecology (cf. Connell 2020: 221f.). Through such clashes, nature becomes a focal point of political struggles.

Political ecology is a broad perspective and not bound to specific concepts, fields or topics. It rather draws together ideas from different frameworks and fields for new interpretations of nature-society relations. Bridge et al. (2015: 7) therefore describe the coherence of political ecology rather as a "set of commitments". First, as a "theoretical commitment to critical social theory and a post-positivist understanding of nature and the production of knowledge about it". Second, "a methodological commitment to in-depth, direct observation involving qualitative research". And third, a "normative political commitment to social justice" (ibid.).

While I used the critical perspective of political ecology and kept respective commitments in mind, the framework falls short of offering a concrete approach or concept for analysis, especially for social movements. To address this limitation, I combined the critical perspective of political ecology with the analytic concepts of contentious politics.

4.2. Contentious Politics

4.2.1. Analyzing Conflicts around Extractivism with Contentious Politics

Extractivism

Extractivism is a development model and economic strategy, whereby national economic growth is sought by exploiting available natural resources (as through mining) and then exporting the materials (cf. Brand et al. 2016: 129). After post-neoliberal regimes in Latin America established more control over their extractive industries, the term *neoextractivism* was created by scholars, implying the same as the old term, though emphasizing precisely the national control over the industry and appropriation of the related rents, which are purposefully reinvested and used for social programs, e.g., for poverty reduction (cf. ibid: 130).

However, employing extractivist strategies has various socio-political repercussions and is often socially contested. The revenues made in the context of extractivism can highly influence the relations between the state, society, corporations and business elites. When states are dependent on revenues of resource extraction, associated corporations and business elites can hold a lot of power, which can foster clientilistic structures and corruption (cf. Acosta 2013: 63f.).

The spatial expansion of mining often entails the appropriation of land, and the dispossession and displacement of people as well as environmental destruction. In the logic of capitalism, infinite growth is sought in the sector, although the resources are finite and at some point will be depleted. Extractivist development strategies therefore provide a breeding ground for conflicts around various issues, such as territorial claims, revenue distributions, questions of indigenous autonomy, and environmental concerns. Acosta (2013) therefore takes a very critical stance to extractivism, showing that the abundance of minerals in the Global South even can turn out to be a “curse” for societal developments (ibid.: 61).

Many of these conflicts, which mostly (but not exclusively) occur in the Global South, receive a great deal of attention from scholars and activists. In a very insightful collective volume published by Dietz and Engels (2017) about "Contested Extractivism, Society and the State", several authors analyzed conflicts in the context of extractivism through the scope of theoretical concepts, including *contentious politics.*

Contentious politics

Contentious politics is an analytical concept affiliated with social movement studies, which provides tools to examine different groups and interactions within a contention, as well their relations to government institutions and other stakeholders (cf. Tilly/ Tarrow 2015). The concept was originally established by Tilly, Tarrow and McAdam (2001), though has been continuously developed by the authors and other scholars (cf. Tilly/Tarrow 2015; Tarrow 2011). The concept tries to explain outcomes of contention by identifying many different mechanisms and processes within it (cf. Tarrow 2011: Chapter 9). It draws on various so-called *repertoires,* which describe instruments for collective action. It also emphasizes the importance of social and historical context, which leads to ever-changing *political opportunity structures,* which can hinder or enhance possibilities of social action through changing the available *repertoires* on different *scales* (e.g., local, national, global*)* (cf. Tilly/Tarrow 2007: 45f.; 94f.). The contentious politics framework also deals with different mechanisms, which can lead to the *mobilization* or *demobilization* of activists (cf. Tilly/ Tarrow 2015: Chapter 6). At the hand of these different concepts, the contentious politics framework can help examining contention and the relations of different actors involved, in order to better understand how certain protest activity develops, what impact it may have, and why it succeeds or fails.

In the collective volume by Dietz/ Engels (2017), Engels in her contribution (ibid.: 149) looked at conflicts around gold mining in Burkina Faso through the scope of contentious politics and thereby identified the *repertoires* of the protesters and how their movement shifted from the local to the national scale. In the same book, Motta (2017: 171) showed how *political opportunity structures* shaped the way peasant movements were able organize in order to protest against land grabbing and agrarian policy. Prause (2018) in her dissertation did an extensive analysis of land grabbing conflicts caused by industrial agriculture and mining projects in Senegal through the scope of contentious politics. By unraveling the various actors, their interests and their protest strategies in specific cases in Senegal, Prause (cf. ibid: 215) provided perspectives for further potential alliances against the industries' land grabbing practices.

The book by Dietz and Engels (2017) inspired me to search for similar analyses for the case of Jamaica. However, I could not find any such analysis for the contention around bauxite mining in Jamaica. Generally, in literature about extractivism in the Americas, Jamaica is only rarely mentioned. But despite this circumstance, it is quite easy to see at the hand of the historical efforts of the PNP in the 70s, as well as the contemporary public communication of the GoJ, that (neo-) extractivism is an essential part of the national development strategy.

The conflict around bauxite mining in Jamaica entails several facets of the previously mentioned typical issues around extractivism. Among other matters of contention, it includes land appropriation, environmental destruction and the question of indigenous autonomy and territorial claims.

Applicability and limitations

Contentious politics has primarily found resonance among scholars in the field of social movement studies. However, its scope extends beyond this discipline. Contentious politics serves as a theoretical framework with many concepts through which to examine the dynamics that play out among various actors engaged in contention (cf. Tarrow 2015: 86). The framework offers insights into understanding the dynamics of conflict and interaction between different actors in contention, and how transitions from one form of contention to another can take place. The concept of contentious politics has continuously evolved through numerous scholarly contributions, encompassing a wide spectrum of applications for analyzing diverse aspects of social conflicts (cf. McAdam et. al 2009).

In general, dynamics in social movements are very challenging to encapsulate and explain theoretically (cf. Opp 2009: 313). Several aspects of the contentious politics framework are rather unclear when it comes to definitions. For instance, it has been criticized that *mechanisms* are not defined in a very precise way (cf. ibid.: 323). Contentious politics, in its descriptions, rather exhibits an ad hoc nature, which makes it unsuitable as a universal template for comprehensively analyzing social movements (cf. ibid: 16). However, it must be noted that it was not the authors' intention to provide a comprehensive theory on social movements (ibid.: 309). Instead, contentious politics offers a range of different concepts which can be selected separately for specific analyses. In my case, several concepts proved useful in comprehending specific dynamics which took place in the development of the conflict around bauxite mining in Jamaica. But for a more comprehensive understanding of the situation, I rather relied on the critical political ecology perspective (see 4.1).

In the context of this thesis, the focus lies on exploring relational dynamics, modes of participation within contentious interactions and the context in which the contention is embedded. Therefore, this chapter will shed light on these specific concepts from the framework, which I have considered to be particularly relevant for this thesis:

- *Repertoires* of contention which describe the set of activities available for collective action (4.2.2.).
- *Political opportunity structures* which shed light on particular context and how it can influence the trajectory of collective action (4.2.3.).
- *Mechanisms* which emerge out of relational dynamics between actors and can lead to *mobilization* or *demobilization* (4.2.4.)

4.2.2. Repertoires of Contention

In their discussions on contentious action, Tilly and Tarrow employ a notably theatrical language that infuses their observations. Actions undertaken to assert a claim are conceptualized as “performances” (Tilly 2008: 1). The authors introduce this theatrical analogy to capture the situation of actors engaged in contention, metaphorically centering them on a public stage while assuming distinct "costumes" (Tarrow 2011: 32) that represent the framing adapted by themselves.

The realm of performances within contentious politics is diverse, offering an array of ways that groups can be active. These performances are not fixed. They can evolve, adapt, and vary across different groups and contexts over time. Examples of such performances encompass a wide spectrum, for instance, demonstrations, petitions, commemorative events, the establishment of special days (such as May Day, International Women's Day, or Human Rights Day), rituals, fundraisers, flash mobs, riots, squatting, just to name some (cf. Tilly & Tarrow 2007: 17). Further noteworthy repertoires can include the transformation of traditional rituals into instruments of mobilization (e.g., public weddings), and the practice of storytelling. These repertoires can evoke emotions like moral indignation, pride, honor, and courage. They are intertwined with historical narratives and collective memories, acting as a reservoir from which activists can strengthen collective identity, rationalize specific actions, or define adversaries (cf. Alimi 2015: 412).

Tilly and Tarrow (2007) term the array of different performances realistically available for a particular group as a *repertoire*. The repertoire does not only describe concrete action, but all strategies known and available to a group: "The repertoire involves not only what people do when they are engaged in conflict with others but what they know how to do and what others expect them to do." (Tarrow 2011: 39). Thus, repertoires basically are the "toolkit" of performances for activists (cf. Tilly/Tarrow 2007: 11).

While each activist group possesses a distinct repertoire of performances, it is essential to acknowledge that these possibilities are not infinite. Again, with theatrical jargon, Tilly draws a parallel between groups making claims and the dynamics of a jazz band, emphasizing the element of coordinated yet spontaneous orchestration, where *"*within that limited array, the players choose which pieces they will perform here and now, and in what order." (Tarrow 2008: 237).

4.2.3. Political Opportunity Structures

Repertoires have not always been the same but are constantly changing and can be continuously expanded through innovation and under influence of political opportunity structures (see section 4.2.2). Activists in different times and in different locations have had different repertoires. They always have a particular history and a memory of contention, by which their specific repertoire is influenced. Political, cultural and technological changes let new repertoires emerge. For instance, the internet has expanded some repertoires by, for example, adding hacktivism, online petitions, and social media awareness campaigns. History, though, has also shown that performances by others can be copied and thereby spread around the world. Therefore, some performances are modular and can be adopted globally by other groups in other contentions (Tarrow 2011: 41).

Political contention is always embedded in a historic and cultural context which also influences the repertoires of activists. As Tarrow (2011: 29) describes, "particular groups have a particular history – and memory – of contention*"*. Activists do not act and choose performances from their repertoires in a vacuum. They are embedded in a political context which does not fully determine but influences their repertoires. *Political opportunity structures* are a main component of the contentious politics concept, which specifically deals with the role of potentially changing political contexts (cf. Tilly 2007: 49). The structures do not only include opportunities

but also threats for collective action. Political opportunity structures describe all kind of dimensions of political context, which can grant space for activism or, on the other hand, constrain its possibilities (cf. Tilly 2007: 57f.).

Several aspects of the polity can contribute to shaping political opportunity structures, such as the potency of governmental authority, the presence of checks and balances, the extent of democratization, or the level of centralization or decentralization within the government (cf. McAdam & Tarrow 2019: 22). Beyond these formal political structures, an array of other factors can be influential, such as the relations between economic and political elites, or to the configuration of civil society, as well as class constellations and dynamics between cultural milieus (cf. Tarrow 2011: 160f.).

Political opportunity structures provide the context which can enable or restrict repertoires realistically available for collective action. In instances where authoritative regimes repress any public criticism, peaceful repertoires might be deemed unattainable, prompting a recourse to more subversive and violent repertoires. Thus, political opportunity structures set the context, in which there is a viability of certain repertoires while constraining the feasibility of others (cf. McAdam & Tarrow 2019: 23f.).

Political opportunity structures are dynamic and subject to constant change. They can involve brief windows of opportunity or extend over prolonged periods. For instance, brief windows of opportunity may arise from events such as shifts in political leadership, electoral cycles, political scandals, or national tragedies (cf. Tilly & Tarrow 2007: 58f.). Moreover, the prevalence, emergence, and demise of certain discourses within a society can also be influential as political opportunity structures (cf. Koopmans & Statham 1999: 204f.). For example, a broad shift in societal discourse because of noticeable climate change could affect the mobilization of people advocating for environmental causes in different ways.

Political opportunity structures shape the boundaries within which interactions between different actors and the state can feasibly take place. Certain *mechanisms* between these interactions potentially can lead to mobilization and demobilization of activists (cf. Tilly & Tarrow 2015: 97f.; 119f.; 127f.).

4.2.4. Mechanisms

As previously mentioned, contentious politics does not only focus on the actors of a contention but also on the interactions between them (cf. Tarrow 2011: 184). In their various works, Tilly and Tarrow identify numerous mechanisms that can manifest among actors engaged in contention (cf. ibid.). I gathered some mechanisms that I deemed relevant within the context of this thesis, which I outline below. These mechanisms can potentially lead to either mobilization or demobilization of activists. Mobilization entails an increase in the number of individuals actively supporting a cause or a heightened intensity of ongoing activism. Conversely, demobilization signifies a decline in activist engagement for a cause (cf. Tilly & Tarrow 2007: 92; 97). It is important to note that whether a mechanism leads to mobilization or demobilization is often contingent upon the specific circumstances. In some instances, mechanisms can prompt either outcome, depending on the context. As outlined by Tilly and Tarrow, there is an array of mechanisms and processes in the realm of social movements that can influence their trajectories and outcomes. These mechanisms can be used to understand how movements may evolve and adapt in response to various internal and external factors. In the following, I will briefly present the mechanisms *diffusion, scale shift, social appropriation certification, facilitation, escalation, institutionalization,* and *disillusionment.*

Diffusion describes the spread of ideas, strategies, and tactics across different contexts, allowing movements to be influenced by actions that have proven to be effective somewhere else. This leads to the adoption of similar methods and goals, which can create a sense of interconnectedness among movements globally (cf. Tilly & Tarrow 2007: 31; Tarrow 2011: 192). Non-political groups and organizations can be motivated to transition into political actors by leveraging their existing organizational and institutional foundations to initiate movement campaigns. Tilly and Tarrow describe this process as *social appropriation* (Tilly & Tarrow 2007: 34). Contention can *diffuse* to different stages of the polity. Tarrow (2011: 193) describes this process as *scale shift*. Depending on the level in the polity, actors encounter different opportunities and constraints. Different from horizontal diffusion, a scale shift can trigger institutional routines, which can engage elites. This can lead to claims being institutionalized but can also threaten collective actors which could operate easier on lower levels. In order to scale shift to higher levels of the polity, movements can gain recognition through a process that Tilly and Tarrow describe as *certification*. This process entails seeking validation for a movement's legitimacy and objectives from esteemed institutions or prominent individuals, aiming to enhance credibility and rally wider backing. Endorsements from authoritative entities hold the potential to

sway public perception and streamline interactions with policymakers (Tilly & Tarrow 2007: 34).

States employ diverse strategies when interacting with social movements, potentially influencing the demobilization or continued mobilization of activists. On one hand, state responses can encompass repression, yielding multifaceted repercussions for movements. While repression might dampen mobilization by instilling fear, it can simultaneously evoke empathy and solidarity among backers, potentially backfiring by intensifying mobilization and escalating conflicts. Alternatively, rather than resorting to repressive tactics, states can opt to partially address demands, satisfying the less radical activists and thereby contributing to demobilization. Tarrow (2011: 190) describes this proceeding as *facilitation*.

According to Tilly and Tarrow (2007: 101), protest movements often experience a point of exhaustion over time, leading activists to revert to their regular lives. To counter this tendency, leading activists typically choose one of two paths: *escalation*, involving the use of more radical tactics to regain attention, or *institutionalization*, aiming for political progress within the existing political system and its institutions. If none of these paths lead to any results for activists, finally *disillusionment* can be a demobilizing force**,** for instance, when collective action is met with excessive repression, negative experiences with collective action are made, or after prolonged periods without any achievements (Tilly and Tarrow 2007: 98).

5. Research Findings

5.1. The Development of Protests against Bauxite Mining in Cockpit Country

5.1.1. The CCSG and the *Save Cockpit Country*-Campaign

Overview

In this chapter, I present my findings while frequently referring to my field research in Jamaica at the hand of my observations, brief conversations, and recorded interviews. The structure of this chapter unfolds as follows: Firstly, in section 5.1, a comprehensive account of the protest movement's progression against bauxite mining in Jamaica will be revisited, with a spotlight on the various activities and significant events I learned about. Moving on to section 5.2, I examine the collaborative dynamics among different activist groups. Finally, section 5.3 will cast light on the mechanisms that fueled mobilization and demobilization of activists. In doing so, I will also show how political opportunity structures manifested and, thereby, exerted their influence on the course of the movement.

The genesis of a protest campaign

In the following, I will delve into the genesis of the protest movement against bauxite mining. The perspectives I heard align with the literature I reviewed earlier. I observed that NGOs and an epistemic community played a central role in initiating a campaign against bauxite mining. It's important to mention, however, that, probably due to my academic background, I had deeper interactions with academics in Jamaica (cf. section 3.4). Therefore, a potential bias in this thesis is likely, possibly leading to a stronger emphasis of the role of scientific actors in the anti-bauxite mining protest movement. I will commence this exploration by examining the activities of the Windsor Research Center (WRC) as an example. However, it's important to recognize that numerous other organizations were involved in similar activities which together led to the emergence of a protest movement (cf. Fuentes-George 2016).

The WRC in Cockpit Country was established in 2002 by the British engineer and conservationist Michael Schwartz (deceased in 2018). Together with his partner Susan Koenig, an American biologist, Schwartz developed the WRC as a meeting platform for scientists from all over the world to do research in the unique ecosystems of Cockpit Country. Moreover, the WRC

serves as a repository of data pertaining to the region's flora, fauna, and geology. While the active operations of the WRC were scaled down following Schwartz's passing in 2018, Koenig, in her continued role, remains available to provide information and support to researchers, akin to my own experience at the WRC in 2022. The WRC collects an array of region-specific information, making it accessible on-site and through its official website.

In the early 2000s, the WRC first received information from concerned residents in Cockpit Country that pegs marked with tape from a mining company[2] had been sighted in the region. Although the collection of information may not conventionally be considered a characteristic element of political protest, I propose recognizing its significance within the repertoire of activities undertaken. Notably, the WRC's efforts in gathering and disseminating knowledge were expressly intended to bolster activism against bauxite mining in Jamaica. After it became clear that bauxite mining was imminent, the WRC's research activities were tied to addressing the threat, as Koenig elaborated:

> "So, bauxite mining, because it is such a wide scale, irreversible impact has always come up as number one on the threats we needed to deal with. So, all the research, whether it was parrots, bats and caves, frogs, was always tied to addressing the threat of bauxite mining." (Koenig, interview, 2022).

When the WRC was notified about the imminent threat of bauxite mining in the region, it reached out to the *Jamaica Environment Trust* (JET) for legal advice in response to the situation. The JET is a non-profit, non-governmental organization which tackles a range of environmental concerns in Jamaica. The JET pursues its goals at the hand of three programs: law and advocacy, environmental education and awareness, and conservation. Over the last two decades, the JET has dedicated substantial attention to addressing the impacts of bauxite mining across all of the three programs, recognizing bauxite mining as one of the most serious threats to Jamaica's natural environment. When the WRC notified JET about the mining pegs, the JET teamed up with the American NGO, *Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide* (ELAW), to look into legal options to stop future mining in Cockpit Country. An email-newsletter the JET was running with ELAW then evolved into the CCSG (see section 5.2. for more detail).

In 2006, the CCSG started an environmental protection campaign called *Save Cockpit Country* (SCC), which demanded that Cockpit Country be declared an area exempt from any future mining practices. From there on, virtually any activity against bauxite mining in Jamaica was

[2] The mining company active in Cockpit-Country, formerly known as *Kaiser*, then as *Noranda*, and currently operating as *Discovery*, is now 51% state-owned. Unless specified otherwise, I will be referring to those companies in my remarks.

affiliated with the CCSG. The SCC-campaign featured an extensive awareness campaign in the context of which a variety of activities were pursued. The CCSG organized demonstrations in Cockpit Country as well as in Kingston, characterized by a combination of marches, rallies, and events with musical performances. News about the issue was spread out by the CCSG through various media channels. Many organizations and individuals in the CCSG advocated for the issue on their websites and through social media.

JET played a leading role in the CCSG. It created the official website for the campaign, *savecockpitcountry.org*, held stakeholder meetings, made press releases, and initiated the publication of a series of articles referring to the issue in the Jamaica Gleaner, one of the most important newspapers in Jamaica. The SCC-campaign included the production of numerous informative films about Cockpit Country. Notably, filmmaker and activist Esther Figueroa played a key role, as she was responsible several of these films. Of particular significance was the film *Cockpit Country is our Home*, which Figueroa made in collaboration with the WRC. It showcases the regions nature while simultaneously delivering educational insights on its ecology and overall importance for Jamaica. Schwartz visited many communities in Cockpit Country to create awareness about the topic in the rural areas. When he did so, he showed people Figueroa's films. As she recounted:

> "Michael Schwartz, […], went into every little community in Cockpit Country. […] And he took my films, my shorts that we made, and he would set up, he would bring a generator or whatever, or go someplace that had electricity. Sometimes it was just projected at night on the town square, it was in rum bars. [He took] the films from community to community to show the films to rural Cockpit Country residents." (Figueroa, interview, 2023).

And furthermore, the *"*Jamaica Environment Trust got funds and had it [Cockpit Country is Our Home] aired on TV on Jamaica TV-J in primetime.*"* (ibid.). Thus, the film was made visible for the general public in Jamaica.

As part of the CCSG's efforts, the WRC undertook initiatives to facilitate direct engagement between rural community members and national political institutions. In 2015, Michael Schwartz organized buses to transport people from various communities in Cockpit Country to government institutions, giving them the chance to voice their concerns firsthand. According to Figueroa (interview, 2023), Schwartz successfully brought over 100 individuals to Kingston for meetings with different state agencies. While their presence was largely ignored or met with rejection at most agencies, a notable exception was at the *National Environment and Planning Agency* (NEPA) office, where its CEO, Peter Knight, welcomed them and engaged in dialogue

with them. Figueroa captured segments of this meeting in her film *Fly Me to the Moon*, documenting this moment of interaction between the Maroons, affected community members and NEPA. During the event Taishon Wright, an Accompong Maroon, passionately expressed the Maroons' stance on Cockpit Country:

> "We want everyone to know that all of Cockpit Country is sacred to the Maroon people. It's not just trees; it is made sacred by the blood of our brothers, sisters, uncles that wet the soil. We forget the foundations that our ancestors have laid down for us. And I can tell you this, as a Maroon, and I speak on the behalf of the Maroon people, I tell you this: we will fight with every last breath in our body to ensure that we preserve, keep and protect it. We will chant the drums day and night until the ancestors raise from the depths. Until we make sure Cockpit Country is protected for the born and the unborn." (Figueroa 2019a: 58:00).

This speech exemplifies the participation of Maroons in events affiliated with the SCC-campaign, where their media-effective appearances in traditional attire, combined with emotionally charged and combative rhetoric, created impactful messages. The leading Maroon activists' impassioned speeches further contributed to the media effectiveness of their engagement, serving as a powerful tool to garner attention and support.

The impact of the CCSG's awareness campaign became evident when JET initiated a petition aimed at protecting Cockpit Country from mining. Numerous signatures were collected at rallies and various events. However, it was when JET posted the petition online on the official campaign website in August 2017 that the number of signatures surged rapidly, surpassing the required 15,000 signatures for a government response by a considerable margin. According to the JET's CEO, Theresa Rodriguez-Moodie (interview, 2022), the petition garnered over 35,000 signatures, exemplifying the strong public support and engagement for the cause.

In response to the concerns, Prime Minister Andrew Holness took action in November 2017 by officially designating the *Cockpit Country Protected Area* (CCPA) as an area protected from mining. However, the CCPA-map presented by the Prime Minister excluded certain sections of Cockpit Country that are considered by many to also be part of Cockpit Country. Consequently, protest activities persisted, reflecting the ongoing discontent. In 2019, for instance, the CCSG organized a march to parliament, seeking to convey their collective criticism of the CCPA and to advocate for a more comprehensive protection of Cockpit Country.

5.1.2. Activities beyond the SCC-Campaign

According to Figueroa (interview, 2023), following the awareness campaign, "every community became organized" in their opposition to bauxite mining in Cockpit Country. The heightened awareness of the impending mining activities spurred mobilization in the communities, which also resulted in small-scale demonstrations within the localities, independent from the SCC-campaign.

Especially in the places still threatened by mining after the 2017 declaration, there were small demonstrations directly at the sites. This happened, for instance, in the communities of Gibraltar, Madras and Caledonia, which are not part of the CCPA but considered by many to be part of Cockpit Country. An elderly man living in Caledonia, who introduced himself to me as Mr. Jones, said that demonstrations were "regular" (interview, 2022) and that they usually took place at a crossroad between Madras and Caledonia. At this crossroad, big haul roads were constructed for the mining vehicles.

According to other people in these communities with whom I spoke, the demonstrations were always peaceful. Some demonstrations were spontaneously organized in direct response to ongoing mining activities, involving protesting in front of excavators and trucks. Given the remote locations of these demonstrations, their visibility relies heavily on the dissemination of footage of the small protests through conventional media or social media. Hence, the sharing of footage, be it on social media or via traditional media outlets, played a crucial role in achieving awareness and reach of those rural protests. Achieving outreach through sharing imagery of protesting people in front of active mining operations was an important goal of those small demonstrations. The people there therefore usually welcomed my presence, initially thinking I was a journalist who could hear their complaints and then possibly make them more visible to the public.

The dynamic of spontaneously organizing demonstrations for the purpose of gaining publicity created a cat and mouse game between protestors and the mining company. Jones also told me about similar incidents in Caledonia. Here, mining companies would initiate excavation in new areas in secrecy until their activities were discovered. They would then swiftly cease operations, only to recommence in a different location at a later time:

> "They are regular. They demonstrate. […] And now people come here, man. That's why right now they don't go further down the road, you know. You see when you come to the crossing down there? They dig here and then they cross to the other side and go dig there. They want to dig it before the people even find

> out, you know! Like how people like you would come here and investigate…they want to dig it out before you know." (Mr. Jones, interview, 2023).

During my field trip, an instance exemplifying this practice occurred when I was invited at short notice to join a demonstration in Madras. It became apparent, however, that the mining company had heard of the planned demonstration and had promptly canceled all work at the site on that particular day. I was informed that the protests had also been canceled as a result. This incident highlighted the ongoing tactical maneuvers and responsive actions between the protestors and the mining company in their efforts to advance their respective goals.

A member of the *Southern Trelawney Environmental Agency* (STEA) was responsible for conveying this information (about the planned demonstration) to me. Established in 1996 and situated in Albert Town within Cockpit Country, the STEA is an NGO dedicated to promoting environmental protection in the region. The STEA, through its activities, aims *"*to develop community heritage and eco-tourism in Trelawney by highlighting cultural traditions, historic artifacts*"* (STEA website). While not explicitly a Maroon organization, the STEA maintains an association with the Maroons and collaborates with them on various initiatives. The STEA's objectives include advocating for the preservation of Cockpit Country and working towards the establishment of ecotourism within the area. It is a vital part of the CCSG, contributing to the collective efforts of the coalition. During my interactions with STEA, I spoke with Hugh Dixon, the executive director of the organization, who expressed his rooted connection to the Maroons, stating: "We are all Maroons here" (in Cockpit Country) (interview, 2023). Notably, Dixon's involvement extended beyond the organization's activities. He served as a guest of honor at the Accompong Maroon festival and fulfilled the role of a moderator during the speeches delivered at the event. His participation exemplified the close relationship and shared goals between the STEA and the Maroon community.

During my visit to STEA, I went on a hiking tour led by Ainsworth Smith, a tour guide working for the organization. Smith identified himself as a Maroon and shared his perspectives during our hike through the landscapes of the Cockpits. He emphasized the personal significance of nature to him, showcasing his understanding of the environment by pointing out various bird species and highlighting the practical and medicinal uses of certain botanicals.

Months later, I participated in a webinar on extractivism in the Caribbean, organized by the *Red Thread Women Organization*, to which Smith had been invited as a speaker representing STEA.

He had been specifically chosen to provide the Maroon perspective. His presence and contributions underscored the organization's role in incorporating viewpoints and voices of the Maroon communities within their environmental initiatives. Hence, depending on the specific activity, the actions undertaken by the STEA can be interpreted as endeavors of the Maroon community.

An array of organizations and individuals were part of the CCSG and took part in the SCC-campaign. Many people from Cockpit Country who identify themselves as Maroons participated in activities which are part of the SCC-campaign. This participation will be discussed later in more detail (see section 5.2). However, Maroons also had their own distinct activities which will be presented in the following (5.1.3.).

5.1.3. Maroon Activities

Throughout my field research in Cockpit Country, I engaged in conversations regarding the topic of bauxite mining with individuals I encountered. The threat of bauxite mining in Cockpit Country is a prominent topic which most people have an opinion about. The prevailing sentiment expressed by nearly every person I spoke with was a staunch opposition to bauxite mining in their region. Not a single individual I encountered welcomed such activities. Indeed, many of them proceeded to recount their participation in demonstrations, which often encompassed events associated with the SCC-campaign rather than independent initiatives. The SCC demonstrations often featured the distinctive presence of the (Accompong) Maroons, who showcased their ethno-cultural heritage through their performances, dressed in their traditional military wear, camouflaged with real plants. Displaying the drumming, the dancing, and the resonant sounds of the *abeng*[3] to other Jamaicans, plays an important role for them at the demonstrations.

In addition to participating in the demonstrations, the Maroons have undertaken other activities that I propose should be acknowledged as components of their protest against bauxite mining. To the Maroons, bauxite mining represents a continuation of historical intrusion by the GoJ as agents of the British crown. The ongoing contemporary struggle against the bauxite industry remains centered on the Maroons' endeavor to maintain their sovereignty. To the Maroons, this contemporary fight against bauxite mining is not a new struggle; rather, it is a continuation of

[3] Maroon musical wind instrument. Used during the war with the British to communicate throughout the rainforest.

what Maroon activist Daneyel Bozra (interview, 2023) described to me as a "multigenerational war" against colonial power. He further stressed, that the “interconnect” between previous fights and the contemporary fight as continuation of colonial intrusions must be “honest”.

Accompong Maroon Festival 2023

During my research trip to Jamaica, I attended the Accompong Maroon Festival held on January 5, 2023, under the theme *Culture as One: Unification through Peace and Friendship*. Prior to the festival, I had contemplated whether this event, often described in literature as a traditional celebration of ancestors, could also be considered a political gathering.

The festival unfolded into roughly two segments: the first part centered around traditional and spiritual commemorations, while the latter involved speeches on a designated stage, thus assuming a more political character. Given the contents of the speeches and the overall atmosphere, I would categorize the Accompong Maroon Festival, at least in that particular year, as an activity clearly aligned with the opposition to bauxite mining. Therefore, I will proceed to provide an account of the festival in relevance to my thesis, as it constitutes an element within the repertoire of activities against bauxite mining.

The festival began with a parade, which led through nearby towns and ended in Accompong, where it culminated at the sacred *Kindah*-tree[4]. Leading the parade were Maroons dressed in traditional clothing, playing drums and engaging in spirited ceremonial dances. After the parade reached the Kindah-tree, standing right in front of it, the Chief delivered a speech, focusing on ancestral reverence, Maroon identity, and the significance of Maroon unity. Subsequently, the Maroons immersed themselves in a long-lasting rhythmic dance, evoking a trance-like state, while paying homage to their ancestors in a traditional way by pouring rum onto the ground.

Following a break, the festival continued in front of a stage situated at the hilltop of Accompong, where a series of speeches were delivered (see figure 1). Notable speakers on the stage included the following individuals:

- Prof. Verene Shepherd, Chair of UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). She described the Maroons as a dignified indigenous group and denounced bauxite mining in the region as a serious encroachment on their rights. (More about her role in section 5.2.2)

[4] A big mango tree in Accompong at which, according to the Maroons’ folklore, Captain Cudjoe united the Maroons and planned the war against the British.

- Mark Golding, PNP top candidate and opposition leader in Jamaica, criticized the JLP government for its latest treatment of the Maroons.
- Maureen Tamuno, Nigerian High Commissioner, highlighted the African heritage present in Maroon culture and the connectedness to Nigeria.
- McLellan Hall, Cherokee Native American from the USA and initiator of *Project Venture*. He compared the experiences of Native Americans with those of the Maroons and emphasized the importance of alliances between the Indigenous peoples in the Americas.

Figure 2: The stage at the Accompong Maroon Festival (own photography).

In the surroundings of the stage, I noticed people wearing shirts with the slogans related to bauxite mining such as *No Mining in Cockpit Country*. One of them was the artist Major Daps, who is well known in the region for his song *Cockpit Country Anthem - No Mining in the Cockpits*, which he later performed at the festival.

Different to my expectations shaped by the literature I had read beforehand, the Maroons' way of life has evolved alongside the technological developments of the rest of the world, and they are not technologically secluded in their villages in the jungle. This was evident during the

festival, where the majority of attendees possessed smartphones and used their cameras to capture cherished moments of the event. Only during certain sacred rituals at the Kindah tree was the use of smartphones prohibited. Later during the festival, aerial footage was captured by drones, for promotional video material. Professional videographers, including Garreth Cobran, a Jamaican content creator, roamed the festival grounds, documenting it with high-tech photo- and video-equipment. In a brief conversation with Cobran in Accompong, he told me about his collaboration with Chief Richard Currie and the Accompong Maroon community, focusing on producing high-quality video content to raise awareness of the Maroons' causes and events. The content is shared through various channels online, including the Chief's Instagram and Twitter feeds with tens of thousands of followers.

Maroon activist Daneyel Bozra (interview, 2023) introduced me to *Accompong News*, a social media platform he co-administers alongside his colleague Dennis Foster. With a following of up to 3,400 individuals, their Twitter-, Instagram-, and Facebook-pages serve as sources of local news for people in the region, shedding light on events within Accompong, as well as on broader developments throughout Cockpit Country, while the issue of bauxite mining is an especially important topic. Under Richard Currie's leadership, the Maroons also started their own online petition called *Save Cockpit Country Rainforest*. This petition has no relation to the CCSG petition and has about 2,360 signatures (as of June 2023). Furthermore, former Deputy Colonel of Accompong, Norma Rowe-Edwards (interview, 2023), told me about the local radio station in the community that serves as a platform not only for music but also for informing people about concerns within the region. Currently, the radio station operates solely through analog transmission with an antenna, limiting its reach to only parts of Cockpit Country. However, Rowe-Edwards told me that plans are underway to establish an online radio presence, expanding its accessibility worldwide (ibid.).

Promoting indigenous identity

The Accompong Maroons have been working towards establishing a clear and recognized identity as an indigenous group. This effort is driven by the strong belief that the Maroons do not only descend from African runaway slaves but also mixed with the Taíno in an alliance against the British colonizers. They therefore seek to strengthen their collective identity as an indigenous group, to further foster their sense of sovereignty, and to thereby mobilize against bauxite mining more effectively. It is apparent that there is a reciprocal relationship between the Ma-

roons' strengthening identity and the looming threat of bauxite mining. On one hand, the indigenous identity is fortified as a means of countering this impending danger. Conversely, the threat itself becomes a catalyst for identity reinforcement, fostering a sense of unity in the face of a common adversary. Bozra indicated this reciprocal dynamic:

> "Around the issue of no mining in the Cockpit Country: absolutely united there. Whatever other differences, perspectives, outlooks there may be amongst us, we all agree that the Cockpit mountains belong to the Maroons. It's been our ancestral habitat, and no mining must take place there. We are all in unanimous agreement on that. It [the threat of bauxite mining] becomes a point of unification for us." (Bozra, interview, 2023).

To further achieve a stronger indigenous identity, the Accompong leadership has initiated quite formal measures. At the Accompong Maroon festival, ID-Cards for the State of Accompong were presented. These ID cards serve to identify and unite the Maroon community. The ID card initiative does not only recognize Maroon bloodlines—encompassing the indigenous Taino, an Arawak people, and the African peoples of the Ashanti and Koromanti tribes, from whom the Maroons are said to be originally descended—but also go beyond ancestral ties. Currie emphasized during the festival that being a Maroon is not defined by bloodlines but is rather a "mindset". This approach seems to be a deliberate strategy aimed at mobilizing a diverse range of individuals, including Jamaicans in the diaspora, particularly in Europe, Canada and the United States, to join forces in the fight for sovereignty and thus against bauxite mining in the region. The inclusive approach was evident during the festival, where numerous Canadian Maroons had gathered to show their support for the Maroon community and its cause. By emphasizing the broader connection beyond bloodlines, the Maroons are promoting greater solidarity with people beyond their lands. Furthermore, in 2022, the Maroons started collaborating with *Project Venture*, an NGO from the USA, which aims to promote indigenous identities in the Americas through educational initiatives and activities, with a particular focus on empowering youth.

Promoting ecotourism

Jamaica is a popular tourist destination and attracts visitors primarily to its coastal regions with famous beaches and large resorts. The inland areas of Jamaica, particularly in Cockpit Country, exhibit notably less tourism development. During my visit to Accompong, on the day of the Maroon Festival, I observed some international tourists present. However, during my subsequent travels through various villages in Cockpit Country over the course of nearly two months, I did not encounter another single tourist. However, based on my interactions and discussions

with locals, it became evident that the presence of tourists in Cockpit Country was very welcomed. Cockpit Country holds a distinct appeal for individuals seeking to avoid mass tourism and rather are looking for environments characterized by unspoiled nature, and specific cultural practices, like those preserved by the Maroons. Interest in the region has been ignited among a specific segment of tourists, exemplified by some Canadian tourists I encountered during the Accompong Maroon Festival. These tourists told me they were drawn to Cockpit Country with the specific purpose of learning about herbal medicines from Maroon elders. In my experience, the presence of tourists in Accompong was for the most part not serendipitous; rather, they had traveled there due to very specific interests.

This indicates that the region holds the potential for a certain type of tourism, namely ecotourism. Dixon pointed out, that promoting ecotourism is not only economically interesting for the residents of Cockpit Country, but also a way to take sustainable action against the bauxite industry. According to Dixon, the promotion of ecotourism in Cockpit Country holds not only economic potential for local residents but at the same time also serves as a means to counteract the bauxite industry sustainably. Dixon emphasized that by promoting ecotourism, the community can harness the region's natural and cultural heritage as an asset, fostering economic growth while preserving the environment. This approach aligns with the objective of sustainability, offering an alternative path that not only generates income but also safeguards the fragile ecosystem and cultural practices of Cockpit Country. As Dixon put it:

> "[Promoting ecotourism] is a protest activity. So, our strategy is, effectively: where you're likely to mine, we carry the possibility of ecotourism there for the people to be involved and to promote it, have more people come see it and help us advocate with the local people. And in [the] process people earn, […] from alternative means rather than the proceeds of bauxite, which is temporary." (Dixon, Interview, 2023).

After all, tourism and bauxite mining are not compatible. Figueroa poignantly described the antagonism when she said that the one relies on "beautification" while the other "uglyfies" (interview, 2023). Consequently, regions that are lucrative for tourism are more likely to receive backing from the Jamaican Ministry of Tourism, which naturally casts a rather critical eye on the bauxite industry in Jamaica.

5.1.4. Lawsuits

When I asked Maroon activist Bozra about the protest activities undertaken by the Maroons, he promptly responded, "Okay, there are verbal protests. Well, we know that's not what cuts it." (interview, 2023). And, indeed, it appears that the era of large vocal demonstrations against bauxite mining has ended. Instead, the focus has shifted towards legal action and lawsuits, which have emerged as the "next stage" (Figueroa, interview, 2023) of the ongoing protest activities against the bauxite industry in Jamaica.

Since its filing in January 2021, the STEA has been pursuing a lawsuit on behalf of individuals residing on the fringe of Cockpit Country in St. Ann, within the scope of the SML 173. The significance of this lawsuit should not be underestimated, as it has "ended up in taking the government and the bauxite company to court" (Dixon, interview, 2023). This legal action has emerged as a significant case concerning the ongoing bauxite mining issue, bringing both, the government and the bauxite company, to face legal scrutiny. The lawsuit primarily centers on an article in the Jamaican Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (Constitutional Amendment 2011) that explicitly grants every Jamaican "the right to enjoy a healthy and productive environment free from the threat of injury or damage from environmental abuse and degradation of the ecological heritage and the right to protection from degrading treatment." This legal action alleges that bauxite mining activities have resulted in a breach of this fundamental right. As a consequence of the lawsuit, bauxite mining in specific locations within Cockpit Country was halted in January 2023 due to an injunction. The awaited decision by the Supreme Court will ultimately determine whether mining will be permitted to continue in those particular cases. Additionally, nine residents of Cockpit Country, residing in areas impacted by SML165, SML172, and SML173, filed a similar lawsuit. The Supreme Court has decided to hear this case alongside the STEA's case in November 2023.

These two lawsuits being heard at the Supreme Court do not involve the Maroons, and the Maroons are not mentioned in these specific cases. However, the Maroons have initiated their own separate legal action. On May 6th, 2022, Chief Currie assembled a team of lawyers and filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Court of Judicature of Jamaica against the Government of Jamaica and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust. According to a brief description by Currie the lawsuit "outlines violations of constitutionally protected rights to private property, the observance of political doctrines, and trespass to the Maroon estate, which has been unlawfully permitted by the Government of Jamaica to be mined for bauxite." Further, "the claim expresses

the Maroon property rights under the laws of Jamaica, and the Maroon boundary was declared and defined 116,218 hectares as Cockpit Country. Maroon indigenous rights under international law and Maroon statehood have also been expressed [...]". (Currie 2022).

As of June 2023, there have been numerous postponements, and no consideration, let alone a hearing, has taken place yet. Additionally, the Maroons are exploring the possibility of collaborating with the United Nations and other international organizations for further legal action (see section 5.2.2.).

5.1.5. Significant Events for the Movement against Bauxite Mining

In this section, I outline two events that I identified as being significantly influential in the context of protests against bauxite mining in Jamaica. They are: Firstly, the designation of the Cockpit Country as a protected area in 2017 and, secondly, the election of a new Maroon Chief in Accompong in 2021.

The CCPA Designation 2017

A pivotal milestone concerning the bauxite mining issue in Jamaica occurred when Prime Minister Andrew Holness officially designated Cockpit Country as a protected area. In November 2017, Holness announced the designation of an area measuring 74,726 hectares, to be recognized as the Cockpit Country Protected Area (CCPA). This designation signified that the CCPA would henceforth be protected from any mining activities previously granted by the Mining Act of 1947. Holness emphasized that the CCPA deserved protection due to its significant rainforests, distinctive hydrologic and ecological features, and its cultural and historical sites. To illustrate his announcement, Holness presented a map detailing the boundaries of Cockpit Country, asserting that it had been made by considering all the mentioned characteristics.

The CCSG had also created a map of Cockpit Country in a similar manner, yet their findings differed from the official CCPA map presented by the GoJ. According to the CCSG's map, Cockpit Country spans an area of 116,218 hectares, approximately 40 hectares larger than the GoJ's proposed CCPA size. The areas excluded from the CCPA happened to overlap exactly with areas for which prospective leases for mining in the near future had been already granted. Therefore, also after the announcement of the CCPA in 2017, the CCSG continued to protest and voice criticism, advocating for the inclusion of additional ecological locations and cultural heritage sites into the CCPA.

The entire process leading to the legal protection of the area was a five-year journey, spanning from the initial (non-legal) announcement of the CCPA in 2017 to its final legal adoption in 2022. During this process, the government took minor measures in response to the CCSG and addressed some concerns, resulting in the legal adoption of a revised boundary in 2022, which extended the protected area by about 4 hectares. Despite this small adjustment, a significant portion of land that the inhabitants regard as part of Cockpit Country remains affected or threatened by mining activities. Additionally, there is still a prevailing fear that the demarcation could be altered again in the future, particularly under pressure from mining companies.

While the designation of a protected area may appear to be a success at first glance, a critical examination of the respective proceeding is necessary. Delimited areas are not immune to later alteration, as boundaries can be subject to subsequent changes, downgrades, political revisions, or revocations. The intended demarcation of Cockpit Country has experienced numerous shifts over the years. In this process, the state, acting as a sort of arbitrator, attempted a balancing act to maintain mining accessibility while seeking to appease the opposition. The nexus of mining and conservation in Jamaica introduces a situation where the GoJ assumes roles in both domains. However, given that the state holds a 51% stake in the mining company, its role as a neutral mediator is questionable in this situation. The states' authority to establish borders extends its power beyond the mere delineation. It includes the power to declare the certain areas' worthiness of either preservation or destruction. The process of delineating boundaries not only establishes spatial definitions but also carries significant socio-economic implications. The act of boundary definition therefore is accompanied by "borderline violence*"* (Widengard 2023), which has been evident in the demarcation of Cockpit Country. In this context, boundary delineations confer value upon nature, either serving conservation purposes on one side while enabling destructive exploitation for profit on the other. Thus, a juxtaposition of areas through delineation legitimizes the sacrifice of one for the other. This results in the establishment of "sacrifice zones" (Figueroa, interview, 2023), such as Gibraltar, where the livelihoods of people are sacrificed for short-term economic gains (cf. Caceres 2023).

Furthermore, the demarcation line is sharp, with mining zones abutting directly against the CCPA, neglecting the potential impact of mining on adjacent nature and inhabitants. In light of this concern, Rodriguez-Moodie repeatedly has emphasized the necessity of a "buffer zone*"* (interview, 2022) between Cockpit Country and the mining areas. Moreover, even though the designation of the CCPA has represented a partial success for the protest movement, it also has had a demobilizing impact on its momentum. This demobilization dynamic aligns with what

Tilly and Tarrow describe as *facilitation* (see section 4.2.4). The demobilization dynamic through the CCPA designation will be discussed in more detail in section 5.3.2.

While the 2017 CCPA declaration is often seen as a "tactical success*"* (Connell 2020: 218) the Maroons rather see it as something that again "started contention and discontent" (Accompong CERD Report: 6). The reactions to the 2017 Designation of the CCPA differed between non-Maroons and Maroons with whom I spoke. While non-Maroons generally took it seriously and saw it as a victory or at least a subject worthy of commentary regarding its substance, Maroons had a distinctly different perspective. To them, the designation held no significance or value. To the Maroons, any Jamaican legislation, including the CCPA, was virtually irrelevant, as they believed decisions about the territory's status should not be made by representatives of the Jamaican state. Hence, when I discussed the declaration with Maroons, the topic was met with derisive laughter or described as an affront to their sovereignty. When I asked Rowe-Edwards about it, she simply laughed and dismissed it as "frivolous." (interview, 2023).

Change of leadership in Accompong 2021

For the Maroons, a different political opportunity was especially relevant— one in the context of their own political system: the change of power in Accompong in 2021. It was most likely the bauxite mining issue that led to the removal of the previous Colonel, Ferron Williams, from office, and which became a key factor for the successful election campaign of the new Chief, Richard Currie. Williams had provoked disapproval of his leadership among many Maroons due to his perceived closeness to the Jamaican government. A striking example of this association occurred during the 2019 Accompong Maroon Festival, where Prime Minister Holness (JLP) sat alongside Williams, deepening the sense of negative perception among the Maroons. In stark contrast, it was the opposition leader Mark Golding (PNP) who attended the 2023 Maroon Festival, while Prime Minister Holness was absent. At the festival, Golding criticized Holness and the GoJ for their treatment of the Maroons in the context of this issue. Mark Wright, an Accompong Maroon elder, described Williams to me as someone "they call a JLP, which is Andrew Holness friend "(interview, 2023).

During a hike through the dense jungle near Accompong with two young Maroons, who introduced themselves as Rob and Joey, they told me that Richard Currie's victory in the 2021 election was due to the issue of bauxite mining (interview, 2023). Going beyond this assessment, they described former Colonel, Ferron Williams as a corrupt sellout who had depleted the treas-

ury of Accompong and was willing to compromise Maroon territories for bauxite mining. Similar sentiments about Williams' reputation surfaced in my brief conversations with other residents of Accompong. Some mentioned that he was frequently absent from the community, often having travelled to Negril, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Jamaica. While I cannot verify the veracity of these accusations, they indicate a sense of discontent with the previous Colonel who was perceived to have embraced stronger relations to the Jamaican nation-state and, thereby, to the enemy in the context of the bauxite mining issue. Rowe-Edwards, who during Williams' time, served as Deputy Colonel, also acknowledged that her former colleague did not recognize the threat of bauxite mining enough. As Rowe-Edwards put it:

> "The topic... it was there in a hidden form. […]it was there in a hidden form because what has been happening over the years... the […] Forestry [Department], that's the government, they have been encroaching […] on our lands […] ... they continue to encroach. And no leader was there to step out and say enough is enough. So, my experience, I served at a time when there was such a leader, such a leader who did not value or couldn't see the importance of protecting our land because we cannot say we are sovereign without land, right? No, it [bauxite mining] wasn't that big of a topic, but it was a big threat. It was always a threat." (Rowe-Edwards, interview, 2023).

As Rowe-Edwards pointed out, the new Chief was the one who brought the topic of bauxite mining to the "forefront." (ibid.). Following his election, the new Chief continued to prioritize the issue of bauxite mining. What sets him apart from previous colonels is his relatively young age; he is the youngest chief in the modern history of the Maroons. This generational difference likely influenced his governance style and political strategies. Notably, he embraced modernizations and employed digital strategies for the awareness campaign, as previously mentioned.

According to Dixon, Chief Currie has amplified the voice of the Maroons against bauxite mining. When I asked him about the role of the Accompong Maroons within the protests against bauxite mining, he said:

> "They are advocating in the same way, they [the Accompong Maroons] in fact, have taken up the mantle for opposition to mining. They've always had that position, from one Chief to the next all, having that position with the most articulate of the Chiefs being the current one, who has […] taken it to another level of, of protest and advocacy to protect it, because it's, it's essentially the landscape of the treaty. […] the new Chief and his council, you know, have been very proactive and have brought increased visibility to the struggle for protecting the area. So, I mean, we have been here, he has been in place for the last two years. We have been in place for 26 years. So, you know, we've, we've provided a lot of information for everybody who is engaged in the advocacy, but this has really stepped it up several notches." (Dixon, interview, 2023).

Since Richard Currie's election, a noticeable cooling has settled over the relationship between Accompong and the GoJ. This is indicated by the frequent absence of Currie from events involving the GoJ and other Maroon communities. Moreover, government officials, including Prime Minister Holness, in response to statements made by Currie, have reiterated the stance that there are no sovereign territories in Jamaica and that the GoJ is the sole authority in the nation (cf. Jamaica Observer 2022).

5.2. Collaboration

5.2.1. The CCSG and Collaboration

Prior to the potential prospect of bauxite mining in Cockpit Country, there were preexisting endeavors for conservation in the region, more specifically to establish a protected national park akin to the Jim Crow Blue Mountains in eastern Jamaica (cf. Fuentes George 202: 148). These ideas had been in around for decades. However, it was the clear imminence of bauxite mining in the early 2000s that catalyzed the beginning of activist mobilization. Figueroa described the genesis of the coalition in the following manner:

> "What happened was, when it became known that there were these prospecting licenses and the possibility of imminent mining, a coalition of all sorts of people [formed]. […] There were environmentalists who didn't want mining. There were people concerned about tourism that didn't want mining. There was people […] who live in places that didn't want pollution and water scarcity and all of these things, right. So, this really amazing coalition of people came together." (Figueroa, interview, 2023).

However, the formation of this coalition was not a spontaneous grassroots movement which rose from the depths of society. Rather it was initiated by scientific experts and organizations affiliated with an epistemic community around ecological conservation in Jamaica. More specifically, as outlined in section 5.1.1, the protest movement developed when the WRC received alerts from concerned residents, prompting them to establish contact with the JET, which had pre-existing links to ELAW. Already prior to the emergence of the bauxite mining issue, JET had collaborated with ELAW to maintain a *listserv*, a closed email newsletter, where information regarding environmental matters in Jamaica was shared to its selected subscribers. Over time, the subscribers from this mailing list were transitioned into a Google Group, more were added, and it eventually evolved into the CCSG.

The CCSG comprises more than a hundred members, including individuals and organizations. It is important to note that the CCSG does not function as a formal organization with established organizational structures, but rather as a closed but loose online network, where participants engage in discussions concerning the bauxite mining issue in Cockpit Country and share information about relevant events and activities. Although a loose network, the CCSG most likely encouraged a sense of collective involvement and facilitated the exchange of knowledge and perspectives among diverse stakeholders within the group. The CCSG relied largely on online communication, complemented by a few physical meetings which were held at the JET office in Kingston. This again underscores the significant role of JET within the CCSG. At public meetings with the GoJ representatives from JET, WRC, and STEA usually represented the CCSG together (cf. JCO).

Following my conversations with Koenig (WRC) and Rodriguez-Moodie (JET), it became clear to me that a close and collaborative partnership between JET, WRC, and the ELAW existed. Koenig described this alliance as a "triangle" (interview, 2022) of organizations working in tandem, contributing their distinct expertise to address the imminent mining issue effectively:

> "I always pictured it as a triangle where we brought our skill sets to the table. And at any given point, one, or all three of these things were important. But other times in the campaign, you know, one maybe needed to come to the fore, to deal with certain issues or to deal with certain agencies. And at other times, you know, these two could support this one. And so, it was always a very equal partnership with different skill sets coming into the table. And that's something that to this day is still just so important. There was everything was necessary. The science was necessary, but it wasn't sufficient. The legal advice was necessary, but not sufficient. And where it really all always comes together is the outreach, the social media and the public support." (Koenig, interview, 2022).

And also, during my conversation with Rodriguez-Moodie, when I inquired openly about possible collaborations, she answered promptly and spoke elaborately about JET's work with ELAW and the WRC. Concerning the Maroons, Rodriguez-Moodie told me that they were "consulted" and not excluded from the decision-making process. She emphasized that they were involved in the stakeholder meetings organized by JET:

> "The Maroons and, as I said, multiple NGO groups, and the Maroons were consulted. This was before the current Chief Currie. But we consulted with the different Maroon communities […]. And they were […] consulted in that whole process with a lot of the stakeholder groups, including the Maroons and so forth, and so they were a part of any discussion that took place in Cockpit Country. They were not left out." (Rodriguez-Moodie, interview, 2022).

Schwartz, the former director of the WRC, also personally consulted with the Maroons during the leadership of Sydney Peddie, who served as the Colonel in Accompong until 2009. As mentioned earlier, Schwartz and Figueroa engaged with Maroon communities by showcasing educational films about the mining threat. However, these efforts do not indicate that the Maroons were proper collaborators within the CCSG and respective activities. Koenig reckoned that Colonel Peddie had not even been part of the CCSG group, and she described the Maroons as "fairly self-contained" and "peripheral" (interview, 2022). She noted:

> "[The Maroons] weren't involved with the advocacy for Cockpit Country Stakeholders Group and the boundary. […] So, they were always kind of peripheral but had the opportunities. […] I don't think Colonel Peddie was ever part of the CCSG group. And then, you know, new elections come along [to Ferron Williams], and the Maroons kind of are fairly self-contained for a lot of things." (Koenig, interview, 2022).

During my conversations with Maroons, they often mentioned events they had attended and, upon further investigation, I found that these events were organized by the CCSG and part of the SCC-campaign. The CCSG also held awareness events in communities, often featuring music, where people gathered to express their concerns about bauxite mining. These events are the result of "coordinated actions" (cf. Tilly & Tarrow 2007: 31) facilitated by an array of members of the CCSG. However, it is important to note that these coordinated actions were primarily initiated by the CCSG and the epistemic community, and the Maroons joined them – and not the other way around. The Maroons were consulted, and they participated in the activities, but they seemingly did not collaborate on an equal footing with the leading members of the CCSG. In this context, it therefore would be more accurate to describe the Maroons as participants within the SCC-campaign rather than active collaborators. While they were involved in the stakeholder discussions and took part in protesting activities, they did not play an active role in planning, financing, or executing the SCC-campaign's initiatives.

During my discussions with Maroons about collaboration, they did not even mention the CCSG; indeed, they hardly mentioned any Jamaican organizations. This suggests that, despite their participation in the SCC, there was little awareness of collaboration with local groups. The Maroons themselves often perceive their role as the spearhead of the movement. They engaged in SCC-demonstrations, captivating media attention with their distinctive dress, music, blowing the abeng, and delivering impassioned speeches. From their perspective, they stood out as the focal point of the demonstrations, with other Jamaicans joining their ranks. When I asked Maroons about the role they play in the resistance against bauxite mining they saw themselves as

the core of the movement. For instance, Bozra (interview, 2023) said that "the Maroons ultimately are the resistance." This perspective was also evident when Rob and Joey recounted their experiences of marches in Kingston, which were organized by the CCSG:

> **Rob**: Yeah, we go to Kingston regularly […]
>
> **Liam Frank**: How's that like when you do those protests?
>
> **Rob**: It's good! A lot of people come out to see!
>
> **Joey:** A lot of people come and support it.
>
> **Rob**: Because we are the Maroons. Yea because they know…once they hear the drums they come out and say, "wow those are the Maroons". […] Okay, see! Maroons always get support […]. (Rob & Joey, interview, 2023).

However, during conversations with Maroons in Accompong, one organization occasionally surfaced: the STEA. Interestingly, it was the only Jamaican organization that Maroons mentioned in terms of collaboration. For instance, Accompong elder, Wright (interview, 2023), mentioned that Accompong had partnered with the STEA already decades ago to promote ecotourism in the region, and this collaboration continues as they are now united against the threat of bauxite mining.

Fuentes-George (2016: 15; 21) positions Dixon and the STEA as integral members of the epistemic community in this context, a viewpoint with which I concur. The STEA can indeed be classified as part of this epistemic community due to its engagement in scientific endeavors, such as conducting socioeconomic surveys for the World Bank and monitoring fauna populations (cf. STEA website). However, it exhibits distinctive characteristics setting it apart from other organizations within the epistemic community, which primarily comprises biological, botanical, and ornithological organizations that have focused on addressing issues related to biodiversity loss in Cockpit Country. While the STEA shares concerns about biodiversity, it distinguishes itself by promoting the preservation of the Maroons' cultural knowledge and by forging connections between its activities and their traditions. Furthermore, the STEA demonstrates interest in promoting ecotourism, exploring the economic prospects for local inhabitants. Consequently, the STEA's approach includes both environmental monitoring and the advancement of cultural heritage, creating an intersection that combines scientific expertise with cultural advocacy. Many individuals behind STEA are themselves Maroons, which highlights the personal link the organization has to the cultural heritage they strive to protect. As a result, the STEA serves as a nexus organization that bridges the gap between the epistemic community and the

Maroons. While actively engaging in environmental advocacy as an NGO, the STEA also takes on the role of preserving Maroon cultural heritage through collaborative efforts with the Maroons.

However, when the topic of collaboration was broached, Maroons mostly did not mention local Jamaican organizations at all (apart from the STEA). Instead, they mostly referred to "international bodies" (Rowe-Edwards, interview, 2023) with whom they either already collaborate or at least should collaborate in the future. This collaboration will be explored in the following section (5.2.2).

5.2.2. The Maroons' Perspective on Collaboration: International instead of Local

The previous section focused on the perspective of the CCSG and its limited collaboration with the Maroons. In this section, I shift attention to the Maroons' viewpoint and delve into the motivations and dynamics that shaped the Maroons' differing approach towards collaboration.

When I asked Maroons about collaboration with other organizations, some mentioned "Mr. Dixon," referring to the Executive Director of STEA. However, the CCSG, JET, WRC, or any other Jamaican organization were never mentioned. Instead, the Maroons often pointed to "international bodies" (ibid.) that they believe are ready to support their cause. For instance, Rowe-Edwards indicated:

> "We have international bodies that are out there to assist us with our rights. We just have to know how to use and how to go to these bodies. […] we just have to use the tools that are already out there to fight for our protection. We must [collaborate with international bodies], it's not enough. We should. We must, we must. Because those international bodies are already protected. They're there to protect all our rights. […] Now, I believe this new leader has engaged in the assistance of international bodies, particularly the United Nations, because they have it all set up. It's all it's all set up. It's just for us to access." (Rowe-Edwards, interview, 2023).

When I spoke to Accompong Maroon elder, Wright, about any collaborations with other organizations or communications with the GoJ, he seemed to avoid discussing local interactions and instead redirected the conversation towards the Maroons' interactions with the UN:

> "The most communication we're dealing with right now, it's the United Nations. We are dealing with the UN, through the UN for them to know who they are and who we are. Because he's [Andrew Holness] moving like a dictator. So, the UN, which is the people who respect, and honor indigenous people is the one we're dealing with." (Wright, interview, 2023).

But what do the "international bodies" that Rowe-Edwards (interview, 2023) mentioned actually refer to? And what exactly does Wright mean by the "*communication*" with the UN? The primary entities they are alluding to are the *Inter-American Commission on Human Rights* (IACHR) and the *United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (CERD).

The IACHR and the *Inter-American Court on Human Rights* (IACtHR) are two independent organs of the *Organization of American States* (OAS), which were established to promote and protect human rights in the Americas. While the IACHR monitors the situation concerning human rights in the Americas, the IACtHR is the judicial body responsible for adjudicating cases of human rights violations brought against member states of the OAS. Accompong Maroon and activist Bozra elaborated that a ruling by the IACtHR serves as a legal avenue, drawing parallels from a precedent case:

> "One of one of our things is that we know that there is a precedent that was set in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Now, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is the human rights arm of the Organization of American States. Now, the precedent was set with the Saramaka Maroons of Suriname, and the attempts of the Surinamese government to mine their lands. And the Court ruled in favor of the Maroons, forced the Surinamese to change their constitution. And Jamaica is a signatory of that court. So, the moment that the indigenous people and the Maroon administration's get themselves together and bring a clear and present danger, petition to that court, you already know that the court is there. The precedent is set; they're going to rule in favor of the Maroons." (Bozra, interview, 2023)

Here, Bozra refers to the case *Saramaka People v. Suriname,* tried at the IACtHR in 2007. This case involves the Saramaka Maroons of Suriname, who share a similar historical background with the Maroons of Jamaica. The Saramaka Maroons fought against Dutch colonizers and, in 1762, signed a peace treaty, similar to that of the Jamaican Maroons, that recognized their way of life and granted them autonomy in their respective territories. However, in the 1990s, MNCs involved in bauxite and gold began mining on the Saramaka Maroons' territories. The Saramaka Maroons then filed a lawsuit at the IACtHR. The IACtHR ruled in their favor, affirming their right to the land (cf. Price 2011: 216f.). While the effectiveness of the Court's decision in protecting the Saramaka Maroons is a subject of ongoing scrutiny and investigation, it has become a source of inspiration for the Maroons in Cockpit Country. They view the Saramaka-case as a

legal “precedent” (Bozra, interview, 2023.) and see it as a reinforcement of their own claims in the lawsuit they have filed at the Jamaican Supreme Court. They believe that international law is on their side, given the successful outcome of the Saramaka-case.

Moreover, the Maroons are actively seeking support from the UN-CERD, which monitors the implementation of the affiliated Convention in UN member states and gives recommendations for further proceedings. Member states are obliged to regularly submit reports about the state of racial discrimination in the nation which are then examined by experts of the CERD. In addition, the most relevant civil society groups in the nation can also submit reports. According to the official report submitted by the GoJ in 2022, “Jamaica has no population that is considered as indigenous given that pre-Columbian indigenous tribes were exterminated during the period of colonization.” It then continues to elaborate how racial discrimination among the African, Asian, and other ethnicities is being combatted by the state (GoJ CERD Report 2021-2024: 2).

As mentioned in section 5.1.3, the Maroons are actively working to assert their status as an indigenous group. This way, they hope to garner greater support from the CERD and the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). At CERD's 108th session (November 2022), the Accompong Maroons submitted their own report, serving as a counter-draft to the Jamaican government's official report. Through this alternative report, the Maroons aim to highlight their perceived discrimination and the threats they face, particularly from bauxite mining, which directly challenges their sovereignty. In their report, the Maroons criticize the Jamaican government's official stance for failing to acknowledge them as an indigenous group. They emphasize that bauxite mining stands as the most significant threat to their existence and rights as a rural indigenous community:

> “The Indigenous Accompong Maroons face a very dire situation as our lands are being escheated and encroached upon for bauxite mining by the Jamaican government which has created situations that are serious, urgent, and that present a risk of harm that is irreparable in nature. The environmental degradation and impact to the Cockpit Country rainforest by mining above our ancient water tables and aquifers that provide fresh drinking water and irrigation for farmers’ livelihood, coupled with threats to the environment that may result in harm to the life or health of the population, or the way of life of Maroons in their ancestral territories, and threats to our health have caused the Accompong Maroons in Cockpit Country to make this alternative report so as to bring attention to the discriminatory policies of the Jamaican government. No relocation efforts are made for displaced Maroons caused by bauxite mining.” (Accompong CERD Report for 2022: 3).

In 2022, a unique opportunity presented itself to the Maroons when the Jamaican historian, Verene Shepherd, assumed the chair of CERD. With her friendly ties specifically to Rowe-Edwards, Shepherd is a strong supporter of the Maroons' cause. As mentioned in section 5.1.3, Shepherd participated as a speaker during the Accompong Maroon Festival, where she criticized bauxite mining in the region and affirmed the Maroons' indigenous status. Having Shepherd in this influential position provides the Maroons with a valuable Jamaican ally at the chair of the CERD, allowing them to elevate their concerns and demands on the international stage through the UN.

The Maroons' distrust of Jamaicans

The Accompong Maroons believe that the responsibility to protect Cockpit Country rests solely with their community. They see the region as their "ancestral habitat" (Bozra, interview, 2023) and consider themselves the "custodians of the Cockpits" (Rowe-Edwards, interview, 2023). Their concern goes beyond territorial ownership; it is deeply rooted in their cultural identity and the sacredness they attribute to landscape.

According to the Accompong Maroons' perspective, their community represents the epitome of true freedom in Jamaica. They perceive that conventional Jamaicans have not fully liberated themselves from a "mindset of former slaves" and of "British automatic authority"—continuing to be considered subjects of the British Crown (ibid.). Thus, there is a certain distrust of the "abinaqua[5]" (Rowe-Edwards, interview, 2023). Even the Windward Maroons, from Accompong's perspective, are not free, as they have been incorporated into the Jamaican nation state.

In this context, the Maroons do not place their trust in Jamaican organizations, or any entities associated with the Jamaican nation to truthfully protect Cockpit Country. Instead, they maintain a general denial of these actors' ability or position to fulfill this role. From their perspective, the Accompong Maroons are the sole legitimate "custodians" (ibid.) of Cockpit Country, and they believe that only they possess the comprehension of its significance necessary to safeguard it. The Accompong Maroons view domestic actors as subjects of the Jamaican government, and thus they doubt their capacity to challenge and protect Cockpit Country in the long term. As Bozra expressed:

> "The Jamaican citizens are under the jurisdiction and purvey of Jamaican government and they can't counteract that... legally or otherwise the only people who are in the position to make the stance for the

[5] Maroon creole for "outsiders", referring to other Jamaicans.

> defense of the Cockpits, [who are] autonomous and separate, and apart from the authority of the Jamaican government, are the Maroons." *(*Bozra, interview, 2023).

Further, the Accompong Maroons take pride in the fact that they are the only Maroon community exempt from paying taxes, which they often highlight as proof of their autonomy and self-governance. Rob and Joey also proudly told me about it:

> "Because if they come up to mine our land, we will have to pay taxes and those things. And we don't want to pay tax. We don't pay taxes, because we are a free land. Yeah, our land is free. So, we don't pay tax. […] So that's what the government wants to do. They want to come mine out our lands so they can control us." (Rob & Joey, interview, 2023).

The intrusion for the purpose of mining is perceived by the Maroons not only as destructive for the region's nature, but as a threat to their freedom and, in the long run, as a means of exerting control over their community. The Maroons view not only the state but also other domestic actors with suspicion due to concerns about potential interference in their territorial rights and autonomy. In fact, in the past, there has also been contention between Maroons and domestic environmental actors over agricultural practices and illicit logging by Maroons, which has allegedly been to the detriment of endemic bird species (cf. Fuentes George 2020: 147).

Instead of banding with domestic players, the Maroons place greater trust in international entities because they perceive them as actors without any plans for interference or territorial claims in their land. International entities are rather seen as neutral arbiters who stand above the confines of the Jamaican nation-state, capable of holding it accountable before international law. Through engagement with them, the Maroons seek recognition as an indigenous people, given the respective lack of acknowledgment from the Jamaican government.

5.2.3. Epistemic Power Disparities

It is important to clarify that the CCSG does not constitute an epistemic community (cf. Fuentes George 2011). While the CCSG indeed may be guided by members of the epistemic community, it is a loose coalition of many different organizations and individuals. Within the CCSG, some members, such as the WRC, are part of the epistemic community, sharing scientific knowledge and expertise. However, the epistemic community extends beyond the confines of the CCSG, involving organizations and experts who may have views contradictory to the CCSG's. These members can be influential for policy formulation and decision-making. The

CCSG can benefit from the expertise and guidance provided by members of the epistemic community. However, the members of the epistemic community that are the part of the CCSG have more epistemic power and access to decision makers. Thus, there is a disparity among members of the CCSG regarding epistemic power. In this section, I will delve into the case of the WRC to exemplify how and why disparities in epistemic power can act as obstacles for collaborative efforts.

Koenig, from the WRC, aligns herself clearly with a positivist science approach, a characteristic she emphasized often during our conversation in Windsor. Her awareness of the power wielded by knowledge derived from positivist scientific methodologies is evident, and she attributes the WRC's strength in the anti-bauxite mining movement to this scientific rigor:

> *"*One of the reasons why the advocacy was always so good is because it was always grounded in the science and the facts before Cockpit Country. And even now, the mining proponents have always been so powerful because they have always been able to dismiss everything communities and the environmental sector has said takes place. Because we didn't have the data. […] So, we've done a lot of research, everything has always been directed towards improving our understanding of Cockpit Country so that it could always be an advocacy-based, data-driven argument against money. […] So that's how that evolved and why I'm still here today, doing research and advocating for data-driven, science-based conservation policies*."* (Koenig, interview, 2022).

Moreover, Koenig was cautious in maintaining a certain distance from the Maroons, aiming to preserve her credibility with the GoJ. When I asked whether she collaborated with the Maroons, she denied doing so for the following reasons:

> "And that was a very conscious decision on our part, in that I'm, you know, Dr. Susan. So, I'm the behind-the-scenes objective scientist, who, you know... "here are the facts, and then make your decision". And it was always very important that I was not seen as being […] a "hysterical environmentalist" who was just hugging the trees. So, you know, you could always rely on objective, rigorous Susan, in whatever information. […] I keep myself out of the spotlight. Just to make sure no one can say that I'm biased or in any way not objective." (Koenig, interview, 2023).

This shows how the aspiration of epistemic community members to maintain a high level of credibility towards governments can become a barrier for collaboration with (epistemically) rather informal actors, such as indigenous communities.

According to Koenig (interview, 2023), prior to the establishment of the WRC, Cockpit Country lacked any institutional source of information, leaving the GoJ uninformed about the area's ecological conditions. This raises the question of whether indigenous knowledge, embedded in the traditional folklore of the Maroons residing in the region, could have provided insights.

However, in the context of the Jamaican nation state, traditional knowledge was overlooked and marginalized in favor of more formal sources of information.

The exploration of epistemic power in this context reveals a notable imbalance between the Maroons and the epistemic community. The epistemic power held by the scientific community grants them the authority to influence policy decisions and shape the discourse surrounding environmental issues. On the other hand, the traditional knowledge of the Maroons, rooted in their cultural heritage, lacks the recognition and validation afforded to formal scientific knowledge. The epistemic community, which initiated the formation of the CCSG and the SCC campaign, is very transnational and predominantly constituted by experts who are white, brown, and/or of foreign origin. This composition is not coincidental. The enduring influence of the historic colonial project in Jamaica has ingrained power structures that persist to this day. Among other social markers, foreignness and whiteness still carry a certain prestige in Jamaica, conferring a sense of authority that lends greater credibility to the perspectives of those possessing these characteristics. Therefore, expert statements coming from individuals associated with foreignness and whiteness seemingly hold greater weight.

Among their peers in the epistemic community, Koenig and Schwartz, as white US-American and British scientists, were able to leverage their privilege and affiliated authority. This utilization of their social markers, especially the perceived superiority often attributed to foreign experts, enabled them to offer policy advice that was taken seriously. In contrast, statements originating from black Jamaicans from Cockpit Country, let alone Maroons, might not have received the same level of attention and gravitas. In fact, Fuentes George (2016: 21) pointed out, that except for Dixon, not a single black person living in Cockpit Country was part of the epistemic community in this context.

This underscores a discernible power disparity inherent in the knowledge production about Cockpit Country, interwoven with inequalities, including those based on race and origin. The prioritization of knowledge stemming from transnational entities and organizations, as well as from Jamaica's metropole, Kingston, accentuates this imbalance. Knowledge held by the rural inhabitants of Cockpit Country, particularly the Maroons, seems to have been largely disregarded. This reflects a significant gap in the knowledge production process concerning Cockpit Country, with perspectives from metropolitan and transnational entities being dominant.

The cartography of Cockpit Country

The utilization of epistemic power disparities was evident in the cartography process of Cockpit Country for the CCPA. Cartography, as the practice of creating maps, involves making decisions about what to include and how to represent spatial information. Cartographers possess the power to choose what information is displayed on maps, what is emphasized or downplayed, and how it is visually presented. They play a role in constructing and reinforcing particular narratives, ideologies, or understandings of space, which can influence public perceptions and decision-making processes. Cartography therefore is a form of knowledge production that carries epistemic power, as the cartographer's choices and interpretations can shape how others perceive a space.

There has long been a widespread general understanding in Jamaica regarding the location of Cockpit Country, which is predominantly situated in Trelawney but also extends slightly into all neighboring parishes. Various stakeholders have produced numerous maps of Cockpit Country, each reflecting distinct considerations and factors. However, it is noteworthy that, until recently, there was no legally binding boundary defining the area. Consequently, the recent establishment of a legally binding demarcation of Cockpit Country carries significant implications, conferring substantial authority upon the GoJ in shaping future possible developments within the region.

As previously mentioned, (see 5.3.2), in 2017, Prime Minister Holness held a presentation unveiling the CCPA, delineating the boundaries of Cockpit Country and defining what is to be protected from bauxite mining. The development of the CCPA can be traced back to 2008 when the GoJ initiated a scientific working group tasked with mapping Cockpit Country through the *National Ecological Gap Assessment Report* (NEGAR). Collaborating with scientists from the UWI Geology Department, the working group followed a scientific approach to define Cockpit Country based on geological features, surface and subsurface freshwater reservoirs, as well as the distribution of specific animal species. Thus, the initial cartography was solely based on ecological attributes. Over time, the cartography efforts expanded, incorporating additional factors such as sociological aspects and historical cultural sites, which ultimately led to the presentation of the CCPA map in 2017. According to Koenig (interview, 2022), the CCSG followed the same process as the GoJ in creating their cartography. The mapping efforts were led by her expertise in the WRC. However, the CCSG's findings differed significantly, resulting in their

definition of Cockpit Country being over 40 hectares larger than the CCPA (see figure 2). Koenig pointed out that the reasons for this deviation in the maps were obvious, as she stated:

> "And then he [Holness] showed a map of the mining leases and prospecting licenses […] it's like, oh, well, that makes sense, then, because when you see the mining leases, then his designated and now gazetted area, it makes sense for how they came up with the definition of Cockpit Country: It was to facilitate the mining companies. […] Parts of Cockpit Country were intentionally excluded. And in my expert opinion […] they were intentionally excluded to facilitate bauxite mining." (Koenig, interview, 2022).

Koenig's account reveals the utilization of knowledge and its associated power by the GoJ and scientific institutions to enforce a policy ostensibly backed by scientific evidence. This revelation angered Koenig, who saw Holness's proclamation as an insult and a disregard for the CCSG's work, as she expressed:

> "So, because the Prime Minister went to such great pains to tell us how it [the CCPA] was all science-based, data-driven, to then turn around and insult our intelligence of everyone involved. To then say, well, this is Cockpit Country, and we let the data define it. [It] was such an insult to me personally, and professionally as a scientist, you know, to use the good name of science as he did." (Koenig, interview, 2022).

Figure 3: CCPA and CCSG delineation. Used with permission of the WRC.

The GoJ effectively wielded epistemic power by presenting its actions as impartial scientific research, conducted in collaboration with scientists from the Geology Department of UWI and other experts. However, a closer examination reveals that the research was carried out in a

manner that conveniently accommodated the regional interests of mining companies. This obviously raises concerns about the true intentions behind the research and whether it was genuinely objective or influenced by corporate interests. In 2022, the GoJ "gazetted" (Rodriguez-Moodie, interview, 2022) the CCPA, not based on the cartography provided by the CCSG, but rather based on the recommendations of its NEGAR task group. As a result, one of the key distinctions between the CCPA and the CCSG map is the exclusion of numerous Maroon heritage sites from the CCPA boundary.

The question arises: Did the Jamaican state simply lack knowledge or disregard the significance of those heritage sites? That appears not to be the case. As early as in 2007, the *Jamaica National Heritage Trust* (JNHT) had clearly identified and marked Maroon heritage sites, signifying their importance and recognition by a national institution. Therefore, the exclusion of these sites cannot be justified by a lack of awareness or concern. Rather, during the creation of the CCPA, certain sites were deliberately ignored or disregarded, favoring the interests of the mining companies and effectively granting approval for the potential destruction of the respective sites.

At this point, it is worth noting that the methodology employed by the CCSG in their cartography simply involved including all heritage sites defined by the JNHT, which suggests that no extensive collaboration with Maroon communities was necessary. Instead, the approach appears to have been a straightforward utilization of existing data without any need to actively engage with Maroon communities to incorporate their knowledge.

This disregard for Maroon heritage by the GoJ occurred under the guise of supposedly objective science, with the inclusion of university scientists in the investigation. However, in reality, it reflects the abuse of epistemic power, leading to an arbitrary demarcation that conveniently allows the mining company continued access to key mining areas in the near future. Mining companies have been eyeing potential mining profits in Cockpit Country since the early 2000s. Throughout the process of reaching an agreement for the CCPA, as also described by Altink (2023: 37), there was a shifting trade-off of areas within the CCPA, heavily focused on maximizing Noranda's profits while trying to appease the CCSG to some extent. As later discussed in section 5.3.2, this maneuvering can be recognized as a demobilization strategy, aimed at slowing the opposition over a lengthy time-period. The prioritization of corporate interests over cultural heritage preservation, under the pretext of scientific investigation, underscores the complexities and power dynamics at play in the battle against bauxite mining. The concerns of the

Maroons and local communities are overshadowed, prompting them to continue their resistance and to seek justice through legal avenues and international collaboration.

Also, the different lawsuits filed in the context of the bauxite mining issue can potentially shed light on whose epistemic views are more likely to be considered seriously. The lawsuit initiated by STEA on behalf of the threatened Cockpit Country residents makes no reference to the Maroons, let alone Maroon identity, indigenous rights, or any other related matters. Instead, STEA presents itself solely as an environmental organization, maintaining a deliberate distance from the Maroons. Consequently, the lawsuit does not depict STEA as a representative of the Maroons, but rather as a civil society organization operating within the legal framework of the Jamaican nation-state. Presumably, this approach aims to enhance the organization's credibility and standing before the court. Notably, the lawsuit has achieved a measure of success and has been taken seriously in legal proceedings. As a direct outcome of the legal action, mining operations in the affected areas (SML173) were suspended due to an injunction at the beginning of 2023 until the Supreme Court has made a decision (expected in November 2023).

In contrast, the Maroons have pursued their own lawsuit, emphasizing their self-identification as an indigenous group and asserting their sovereignty while delving into the historical context dating back to 1738. Unlike the STEA's lawsuit, the Maroons' legal complaint has faced a striking lack of serious consideration and has not received the same level of responsiveness from the authorities. The legal process has encountered multiple delays, resulting in its continuous stalling. Apparently, the Jamaican state has thus chosen to politically scorn the Maroons' lawsuit, leaving the case without a single hearing being conducted to date.

5.3. Mobilization and Demobilization

5.3.1. Mobilization

In this section, I will present the mechanisms from the contentious politics framework which played an important role for (de-)mobilization within the protest movement against bauxite mining in Jamaica. The mechanisms I identified were *social appropriation, diffusion, upward scale shift, institutionalization,* and, particularly for the Maroons, *certification.*

The initial mobilization of activists was primarily driven by NGOs, such as the WRC, the JET, and STEA. With the mailing list from the JET, an existing network comprising various NGOs,

research institutes, and individuals was effectively reactivated to address the emerging issue of bauxite mining in Cockpit Country. This phenomenon aligns with what Tilly and Tarrow (2007: 34) refer to as *social appropriation*, which, as described in section 4.2.4., entails the activation of non-political actors, enabling them to deploy their resources and organizational structures in support of a campaign. In the context of this particular conflict, numerous, often scientific, non-political organizations became instrumental in mobilizing efforts for the protection of the region against bauxite mining. For example, botanical and ornithological institutes became politically active, motivated by their concern for endemic bird and flora species in Cockpit Country. This collective engagement shows how diverse stakeholders from different spheres converged for the cause, leveraging their specific expertise and interests for the movement. The WRC's activity is also an illustrative case for this, as it had originally been a scientific organization, which later adeptly utilized its research for the cause of environmental activism. Based on its research into underground ecological water systems, for instance, the WRC made a significant discovery, revealing that approximately 40% of Jamaica's water supply originates from within Cockpit Country. This crucial information quickly gained traction and the 40%-statistic functioned like a catch-phrase and became a widely recognized and compelling argument for the importance of preserving Cockpit Country. The widespread recognition and use of the statistic as a catch-phrase helped make the necessity of protecting Cockpit Country intelligible to a large mass, which facilitated mobilization.

The involvement of diverse, and in some cases, foreign and international organizations contributed to expanding the available repertoires through a continuous process of *diffusion* (cf. Tilly and Tarrow 2007: 31). This led to a repertoire of protest actions beyond simple demonstrations, for instance by incorporating globally recognized initiatives such as *Fridays for Future* and the *Climate Strike*, which were strategically connected to the bauxite mining issue. The connection of the topic to climate change is logical, as destroying a rainforest for bauxite mining obviously has negative implications in this context.

Additionally, the successful signature campaign, while a renowned practice in many western countries, is not very popular in Jamaica (cf. Figueroa 2019: 122). However, in the context of this particular protest movement, the diffusion of internationally known repertoires proved to be a successful mobilization strategy. By integrating the signature campaign as a form of protest, the movement gained momentum and support and ultimately generated a direct response from the GoJ. Moreover, the practice of petitioning and filing lawsuits, part of the CCSG's

repertoire, has also *diffused* to the Accompong Maroons, as they have now adopted these same activities, though in their own manner.

In this conflict, radicalization of activists and escalation in the clash between the state and the activists has hardly occurred. Similarly, instances of extreme physical repression by the state have been minimal. The conflict has predominantly unfolded within a framework of measured actions and restrained responses, with both activists and the state demonstrating a degree of caution in their approaches. This context of comparatively tempered interactions has characterized the overall trajectory of the protest movement against bauxite mining in Cockpit Country.

As described in 4.2.4, *escalation* and *institutionalization* can be two different trajectories of a movement, depending on the *political opportunity structures*. This involves activists deciding whether to seek informal, confrontational tactics or, rather, to seek formal, institutional channels for their demands. At the background of the Jamaican polity in Jamaica (see 2.2.) and the initiation of the SCC-campaign through an epistemic community, the protest movement against bauxite mining in this case pursued the path of institutionalization.

In view of the economic development discourse in Jamaica (see 2.2.), violent protests against an industry historically deemed so important for the nations development probably would have been perceived as an attack on the general public's prosperity, thus jeopardizing support for the cause. Instead, the protests remained peaceful and were conducted within the framework of legal opportunities offered by the political system. The peaceful proceeding most likely garnered more public support and the movement gained political traction while remaining within the bounds of legality.

The Maroons often employ radical rhetoric when discussing their ongoing struggle against the government and the bauxite industry, expressing their unwavering commitment to defend their land, while invoking their warrior ancestors. However, in practice, their actions in this conflict have been remarkably peaceful. Their use of radical language seems to be more symbolic, rooted in the homage to their historical fight, rather than indicative of a potentially violent approach. The Maroons I conversed with consistently underlined the so far peaceful nature of their protests against bauxite mining. Bozra, in particular, emphasized the importance of pursuing formal and legal channels to ensure the sustainable protection of the area, as he stated:

> "At the end of the day, no matter what else you do, you have to come back to the legal and official. So, you could burn down your tractors and blow up, blow up your excavators and kill the miners. You're still

> going to have to come back to get it legally ratified and established, that this is yours." (Bozra, interview, 2023).

Although he did not explicitly link this to the 1738 agreement, the respective historic success in the end also was a legal one, and the parallels are obvious. The Maroons keep on trying to pursue legal protection by invoking the 1738 agreement and asserting their legal sovereignty in the contested territory. They have taken formal steps to address their grievances, filing a complaint with the Supreme Court and submitting a report on perceived discrimination to the UN. These actions reflect their efforts to advocate for their rights within established legal frameworks and international channels. While the Maroons may use passionate language to underscore their determination, their conduct in the conflict has been marked by peaceful engagement, complemented by a strategic pursuit of legal ways to uphold their claims.

The protest movement's evolution within a progressively legal and institutionalized framework gradually facilitated what Tilly and Tarrow (2007:31) refer to as *upward scale shift*, achieved through a series of "coordinated actions" (ibid.: 31). This shift was primarily enabled by members of the epistemic community, who gained access to decision-makers and their advisors. As a result, the issue quickly garnered attention and discussion within the highest offices of the Jamaican state's institutions. The concerted efforts of the epistemic community to engage with key stakeholders and policy influencers played an important role in elevating the matter to the forefront of political discussion and policy considerations.

Furthermore, the Maroons' try to fortify their legitimacy through a mechanism which Tilly and Tarrow (2007: 34) refer to as *certification*. This involves seeking recognition of their status from external parties to bolster their position. In the case of the Maroons, certification was pursued through engaging in meetings with diplomats—for instance, from the United States and Nigeria—as well as with representatives from the United Nations. These efforts were aimed at solidifying their standing and gaining acknowledgement of their political autonomy and status as an indigenous people to reinforce their claims in this context.

5.3.2. Demobilization

As aforementioned, protests against bauxite mining in Jamaica since the early 2000s have been remarkably peaceful, and often happened within institutionalized settings. Unlike scenarios where protests undergo radicalization, which often triggers physical repression through the state

as a demobilization strategy, the Jamaican protests have remained peaceful. As a consequence, instances of physical repression through the state have been scarce. The main mechanisms of demobilization that occurred were *facilitation*, in combination with a strategy that I term *protractive elusion* (see below). Furthermore, financial incentives and *disillusionment* led to the demobilization of activism in directly affected communities.

Demobilization through the designation of the CCPA

Apart from the critical voices towards the CCPA designation in 2017, many CCSG-stakeholders considered the declaration a partial success, a sentiment shared by JET's CEO, Rodriguez-Moodie, who stated:

> "The boundaries are still small, still about 30% is not [protected]. Now [it is] about 78,000 hectares. And so, while it's not the area that people wanted, it is the largest terrestrial protected area in Jamaica, right. You have to acknowledge that." (Rodriguez-Moodie, interview, 2022).

As a manifestation of political opportunity structures, the official 2017 declaration of the CCPA by the Jamaican Government was an influential event with a demobilizing impact on resistance. Members of the CCSG were satisfied with the spatial extent of the CCPA, which led to the demobilization of the respective activists. The demobilization of the CCSG through the 2017 announcement and the consequential five-year process towards legal protection therefore can be interpreted as the result of a successful demobilization strategy by the GoJ through what Tilly and Tarrow refer to as *facilitation* (Tilly & Tarrow 2011: 190).

While activists from the CCSG found partial satisfaction and thus experienced a degree of demobilization, it is essential to note that mining companies' interests, at least in the short term, have been served. This has been achieved by precisely excluding those areas from the CCPA where mining activities were slated to occur in the immediate future. Therefore, what may appear as a victory for one side upon initial inspection does not necessarily equate to a defeat for the other, at least not in the short term.

When I asked Koenig from WRC how the movement developed after the 2017 designation, she elaborated:

> "I think it was maybe a little bit of fatigue. […] we've achieved so many successful milestones, and then it […] was just a waiting game. Because the boundary was designated in 2017. So, until the government let us know what the final boundary was […] we were really in a waiting game. […] There were all these little steps in the process that had to take place before the Minister could declare the area […] closed to mining. So, we were all just basically waiting for the news, keeping track of the mining leases. I feel like

> since […] the designation in 2017, was, that we were kind of falling behind and waiting for government instead of leading the charge. And I think that's where we had a little bit of transition and why we've lost the momentum. One of the reasons why we've lost momentum on the public awareness campaign and engagement with the public." (Koenig, interview, 2022).

These remarks show that the *facilitation*-mechanism alone cannot fully account for the demobilization observed in this case. According to Koenig's account, the partial fulfillment of activists' demands was not the sole factor that led to the movement losing momentum. It was the cooptation of the protection effort by the GoJ, followed by continuous announcements and bureaucratic processes, which sapped the movement's momentum. Therefore, in order to comprehensively analyze the demobilization process, I propose to introduce an additional mechanism, which I will refer to as *protractive elusion*. This mechanism describes how the deliberate prolongation of processes, and the withholding of information can contribute to the demobilization of activists. A combination of *facilitation* and *protractive elusion* had a demobilizing effect on activists from the CCSG and the movement which, according to Koenig, "lost its momentum" after the 2017 announcement because it changed the dynamic of the CCSG from being "proactive" into the passive role in the context of a "waiting game" (interview, 2022).

Already prior to the 2017 designation, evidence points to the fact that the GoJ employed *protractive elusion* as a demobilization strategy. This was highlighted in JET's publication *RED DIRT* (2020), in which the challenges of obtaining information from the GoJ were outlined. The government's approach was characterized by evasion and unresponsiveness, as it allegedly ignored information requests and withheld crucial data, including details about relevant bauxite deposits and potential mining licenses in Cockpit Country. The JET specifically raised concerns about unanswered ATI-requests, describing that in the first half of 2020, out of 27 ATI-requests made, only 4 responses were received. Therefore, Greenaway (2020: 74) pointed out that "*there are significant obstacles hindering public access to information on the Jamaican bauxite-alumina industry through the Access to Information (ATI) Act*".

During our conversation, Koenig shared her own challenges with ATI requests and how she had to carefully frame her inquiries to elicit meaningful responses from the GoJ. According to Koenig, the GoJ's handling of requests was not forthcoming, but rather evasive, and they strictly interpreted the requests word for word, lacking a common-sense approach. Koenig elaborated on this matter:

> "So, yeah. […] Jamaica Bauxite Institute and Mines and Geology Division ignore me. […] So, I submit my little ATI to NEPA and MGD, Forestry Department, and they have the opportunity to say, you know,

> within 30 days, here's the information you requested, or, you know, that information isn't available. And they're supposed to give a reason, but they don't always do. Reading the responses, they are certainly interpreting ATI requests word for word for word precisely. A person could probably interpret it, but a lot of it is because I don't know what I don't know. I don't know what specific document they have. But I know what information I want. So then comes the challenge of: how do I ask for that information? […] I've had the repeat experience with NEPA saying GIS files were not available. Even though […] prior, they had presented maps publicly, that clearly demonstrate that they had those files. So, by the time I did my ATI request, does that mean: you deleted those files? […] What they told me was that they were not available. They didn't say: "we don't have them". Just: "not available". […] That's the little games how the government can slow the flow of information intentionally.*"* (Koenig, interview, 2022).

Koenig's account reveals the challenges in accessing information regarding future plans in the area in practice, despite the *Access to Information Act* (ATI) mandating the GoJ to disclose information upon request. Numerous ATI-requests were left unanswered, or one was simply told that information is not available, undermining the lack of transparency and accountability.

Similar treatment by the GoJ can also be seen in the case of the Maroons. The Maroons, who initiated their own separate legal action against the GoJ, have also experienced *protractive elusion*. The postponement of hearings has been slowing down the legal proceedings, frustrating the Maroons' efforts to seek justice through legal institutions. The practice of ignoring the leeward Maroons is also evident in other incidents, such as official events where all Maroon leaders of Jamaica were invited with the exception of Accompong Chief Currie. In fact, there have been many events, where particularly Currie had not been invited, and he has publicly complained about it. This exclusionary approach shows how the Accompong Maroon community is marginalized due to current political contention.

Thus, the absence of overt physical repression by the GoJ has been replaced by more nuanced tactics of subtle undermining, a circumstance which Dixon also indicated to me in his remarks. When I asked about any backlash from the government he might have experienced in the past, his response was unequivocal: "all the time," and he further noted that the "government is on the side of the mining companies". However, when I pursued my questioning to get further details about their encounters with the government, Dixon could not present concrete instances of backlash or repression. Instead, he stated that the government ignores them and, in general, does not support alternatives to bauxite mining, adhering to its extractivist development model:

> "Well, government does not support very much of what we advocate for. That's one. As an organization, I can't say we have very much government support for what we do. […] So, so for us one is: you're killing the messenger. That's a big backlash, you're killing the messenger that is giving you a message of hope,

> alternatives, and economic sustainability going forward. So that is a big backlash, it may not come in named forms, but the fact that we have called for the government, for example, to meet with us just to even appreciate what we're saying. They've never responded." (Dixon, interview, 2023).

Furthermore, the GoJ and mining companies also tried to *facilitate* by trying to create an appearance of environmental and social corporate responsibility. These efforts saw the mining industry engaging in green- and social-washing practices by highlighting rehabilitation projects, such as the construction of greenhouses and social projects, such as the construction of sports fields. While touted as positive endeavors, the reality was that these projects did not yield substantial results and were more emblematic of performative actions rather than substantive contributions to the environment and/or local communities. Figueroa also pointed to this:

> "And […] the damage it does is irreplaceable because, though they love to talk about their reforestation and their environment, they portray themselves in these ads, and these attacks, and their PR, that they are the environmentalists, and we are not. So, once you you've removed the topsoil, you remove the most important thing that we depend on for food. You've, you've dug down and you're you've left this gaping hole. And what's the point, exactly? You know? And then you replace it with your […] greenhouses, you can drive all over these places. And you'll see these, you know, defunct greenhouses." (Figueroa, interview, 2023).

Indeed, community council members have reported that virtually all greenhouses that have been built by the mining companies have gone defunct in some way (cf. Levy/Baker 2020: 120).

The mining company's attempt to portray itself as environmentally and socially responsible was further reinforced by a demonstration allegedly organized by its employees in September 2019. Rodriguez-Moodie told me that a *"*busload of people showed up from Noranda and protested*"* (interview, 2022). It was an instance which took place right in front of the JET's office in Kingston and involved more than 200 employees of Noranda. During the demonstration, which was a direct response to the SCC-campaign, the participants accused JET and the CCSG of disseminating misleading information concerning the topic of bauxite mining and emphasized Noranda's engagement in agriculture-friendly projects, such as the establishment of greenhouses. Furthermore, they expressed concerns about potential investor withdrawals and the potential loss of jobs within the mining sector. The protest aligns with and seeks to bolster the aforementioned development discourse prevalent in Jamaica (see 5.2.), and to leverage it as a demobilization strategy against anti-bauxite activism.

Disillusionment at the edge of Cockpit Country

On the fringes of Cockpit Country, where bauxite mining is imminent or had already commenced, demobilization of activism mainly took place through financial incentives through the state-mining complex and ultimately *disillusionment*.

During my visit to Gibraltar, a small town on the eastern outskirts of Cockpit County, I came across a sudden expanse of red dusty earth where construction workers were engaged in conversations with local residents. Initially, I presumed it to be an active mine, but after my interaction with the construction workers and residents, I discovered that this area had already been entirely mined. What was still happening in the area was a new construction project – a sports field for the town, funded and built by the mining company. The construction of a sports field aligns with aforementioned social-washing. It is obvious that a sports field will serve little practical purpose in comparison to previously fertile lands. The construction appears as a superficial gesture to showcase the company's supposed commitment to social development, obscuring the environmental impact of their mining activities.

Figure 4: Former mining site next to the primary school of Gibraltar (left) and an attempt of rehabilitation (right) (own photography).

According to the conversation I had with a group of people at the site, for many years they had engaged in demonstrations against the government and the mining company. However, they eventually reached a point of resignation, feeling that their opposition, the powerful alliance of the GoJ and the mining company, was too formidable to overcome. Consequently, they made the decision to cease their demonstrations altogether. In return for their restraint, they have

been receiving monthly cash benefits since then. They had given up and had accepted that parts of their landscape had been irreversibly destroyed. In another instance, I visited a former mining site near the Gibraltar primary school, where I observed an effort at rehabilitation. As mining operations in Gibraltar have concluded in 2019, the outcome of the rehabilitation attempt after three years seems quite dismal (see Figure 4).

This situation in Gibraltar exemplifies a demobilizing mechanism described by Tilly and Tarrow (2007: 98) as *disillusionment*. This disillusionment can manifest when extreme repression is experienced or, as in the case of Gibraltar, when individuals perceive a sense of hopelessness in their struggle against formidable opponents. This sense of disillusionment, coupled with the provision of cash benefits, led to the demobilization of the community, leaving them resigned. Figueroa (interview, 2023), during our conversation, also described what is happening at the fringes of Cockpit Country as the government playing “divide and conquer” leading to "disillusionment". She noted:

> “So, everything was done that, within […] a liberal democracy, you are supposed to do. You're supposed to interface with government, right? And government is supposed to listen to you. […] so, in Gibraltar people organized from at least 2014 and said: “We do not want to be mined.” They were mined. […] they were mined from about 2018, 2019. […] So, so you have this process of disillusionment, right? Because […] when you tell people there is a possibility, […] that you can influence what happens in your community. And people go through those processes […] And the opposite happens of what they desire and have clearly stated. […] Then they're disillusioned. Meanwhile, the government and the mining company, which are one and the same because the government owns 51%, are playing divide and conquer, they're buying people out. They're bribing people.” (Figueroa, interview, 2023).

In the nearby village called Caledonia, I also encountered this sense of powerlessness while engaging in conversation with an elderly man who introduced himself as Mr. Jones. He shared the devastating impact bauxite mining had on his life, particularly the loss of his fruit and vegetable orchard, once a source of sustenance and livelihood. With his house perched on the edge of the mined slope, Mr. Jones (interview, 2023) lamented the desolate state of the once-fertile soil and the coldness that now permeated the nights, because the area is stripped of vegetation.

Unlike the situation in Gibraltar, Madras was still experiencing active bauxite mining operations that projected further extraction. Jones shared his exhaustion and desire for relocation, a plea that, according to Jones, has been ignored by the government and mining companies. The mining operations continued unabated and encroached perilously close to his home (see figure 5). Instead of addressing his demands, Jones conveyed that he is receiving financial compensa-

tion, just as the aforementioned people from Gibraltar. He specifically elaborated that households received J$12,000 (~US$72) per month, along with an additional J$8000 (~US$52) every three months as a compensation for the health impacts of adjacent bauxite mining (ibid.).

The financial inducements through payments are a form of coercion employed by the GoJ-mining complex and is a demobilizing strategy aimed at pacifying the affected community's grievances. By offering financial incentives to residents, the GoJ aims to undermine their motivation to engage in protest activities. Furthermore, the provision of monetary resources creates a dependency relationship where individuals may prioritize personal economic gains over collective action. The strategy attempts to weaken the solidarity and mobilization potential of the residents by influencing their interests and aligning them with the goals of the mining companies.

Figure 5: Mr. Jones' house in Caledonia adjacent to a bauxite mining site (own photography).

6. Summary, Conclusion, and Prospects

Activities against bauxite mining and the GoJ's reaction

The protest movement against bauxite mining in Jamaica drew upon a broad *repertoire* of activities to voice their concerns and rally support. The epistemic community played a vital role for the inception of the movement. In the early 2000s, scientific information about Cockpit Country was collected to substantiate arguments against bauxite mining, and the data was actively provided to educate and mobilize residents of Cockpit Country and beyond about the issue. The endeavors of Michael Schwartz from the WRC are particularly noteworthy, who, in collaboration with the Nature Conservancy, conducted an educational campaign from 2003 to 2005, and traversed villages in Cockpit Country to raise awareness. Subsequently, in 2006, the CCSG formed – a loose coalition of various actors such as NGOs, research institutes, concerned individuals, and Maroons. From 2006 until at least 2017, the CCSG engaged in diverse activities to raise awareness and protest bauxite mining. The *repertoire* of the CCSG included organizing public demonstrations, rallies, employing diverse media engagement, petitions, and filing lawsuits. Through various media publications such as films, newspaper articles, and social media, the activists reached a broad audience in Jamaica and beyond. NGOs engaged with local communities through music events and stakeholder meetings which fostered awareness in rural locations.

The CCSG and its activities can be seen as an example of effective collaboration between various actors. This collaborative effort also involved the Maroons, while especially the STEA played an important role, as it functioned as a connective organization between the Maroons and the epistemic community. The collaboration led to mobilization of activists which was reinforced through *social appropriation* and *diffusion (*see 5.3.1*).* The activities were *performed* in a peaceful manner and remained within legal boundaries. Jamaica's working democratic institutions and the political and legal frameworks gave opportunities for these peaceful protest activities without overt repression. The functioning legal system in Jamaica provided avenues for pursuing legal strategies. Connections of NGOs with government agencies (especially with the Forestry Department) led to an *upward scale shift* of the issue (see 5.3.1). The topic was discussed early on within of some government agencies and especially members of the epistemic community were taken seriously by the GoJ (cf. Altink 2023).

In general, the GoJ engaged with the activists and attempted to address their demands. As early as 2007, the GoJ made (non-binding) promises that Cockpit Country would be protected from

mining activities. However, the absence of any legal definition for Cockpit Country posed a challenge. From 2008 until 2013, the GoJ, in collaboration with UWI, established a team tasked with conducting a study to develop a clearly defined boundary for Cockpit Country (cf. Altink 2023: 36f.). However, it took several more years until the GoJ finally presented an official boundary. Following a petition organized by JET for the CCSG, which amassed over 35,000 signatures in 2017, the GoJ was compelled to respond. Consequently, the GoJ presented the Cockpit Country Protected Area (CCPA) in November 2017. It took almost five additional years until the CCPA was finally gazetted in 2022.

The GoJ, in a sense, coopted the cause, by repeatedly declaring Cockpit Country exempt from future mining in more or less binding ways over a long period of time. The designation of Cockpit Country as a protected area in 2017 exemplifies the pivotal milestone of this strategy. The GoJ thereby portrayed itself as the protector of Cockpit Country, effectively assuming the role claimed by the Maroons and the CCSG. This cooptation reached its peak with the establishment of the CCPA. Thereby, the GoJ demobilized activists through *facilitation* (see section 5.3.2), which is "one of the reasons why [the CCSG] lost momentum on the public awareness campaign and engagement with the public." (Susan Koenig, interview, 2023). At the same time, the GoJ, in practice, was opaque and hindered mobilization efforts through bureaucracy and information control, which led to *protracted obstruction* (see section 5.3.2.).

In areas adjacent to bauxite mines, the GoJ stifled activism through financial incentives. Residents close to the mines received monthly and tri-monthly payments, ostensibly to address arising inconveniences and health-related issues due to mining activities. These payments, while officially intended to alleviate inconveniences, created dependencies and discouraged activism within affected communities. Furthermore, residents in these areas of Cockpit Country experienced demobilization through disillusionment, as their protest efforts ultimately yielded no results (cf. conversations in Gibraltar, Madras and Caledonia, 2023).

Maroon involvement

The Maroons were involved in the activities of the CCSG from 2006 to 2017 but their role remained somewhat peripheral. Although the Maroons always adopted a strong theoretical stance of opposition against any interference into their territory, the extent of their concrete activities against to bauxite mining in the early stages of the protests remained unclear in my research. It is crucial to acknowledge the potential influence of my positionality (see 3.4) on

this circumstance. As an academic researcher, I found it inherently easier to access and communicate with scientific actors, whereas establishing contact and communication with the Maroons posed greater challenges. Information obtained during interviews with Maroons tended to be vague, and often infused with historical and spiritual elements. In my perception, although they seem extremely committed, the Maroons held a relatively peripheral position at the onset of the CCSG's concrete protest activities. However, I acknowledge that my positionality might have distorted this perception.

After the designation of the CCPA in 2017, the CCSG's overall protest movement experienced a decline in momentum. However, during this period, protest activity among the Maroons gained traction. In 2018, areas, especially acknowledged by the Maroons as part of Cockpit Country, were subjected to bauxite mining for the first time (cf. Jamaica Observer 2018). The issue became increasingly politically relevant in Accompong, and even demonstrations held in Kingston in 2019 were notably dominated by Maroon appearances (cf. Rob and Joey, interview, 2023; cf. Teach Dem 2019). It was with the shift in leadership in favor of Chief Richard Currie in Accompong in 2021 that Maroon activism became even more prominent. From this point onwards, the Maroons have "taken up the mantle" (Dixon, interview, 2023) against bauxite mining, also by engaging in activities separate from the CCSG. Under the new leadership, there was a push to further promote the cause, which unveiled new opportunities for Maroon activism. The Maroons displayed their culture through clothing, dances, and music in the protests, and used it to draw attention from the media. Traditional celebrations and events were used as opportunities for them to make statements against bauxite mining. Apart from these activities, the Maroons are also engaged in promoting (eco-)tourism in Cockpit Country. They view this as a chance to not only showcase their culture but also to create alternative, sustainable income sources for inhabitants of the region. Ecotourism as an economic approach is supposed to serve explicitly as an alternative to bauxite extraction.

Furthermore, the collective reflection on a common adversary seems to have led to a strengthening of Maroon identity. The Maroons are actively seeking recognition as an indigenous group. Credibly driven by their sense of indigeneity, they also aim to secure increased support and protection for their region through international institutions, thus seeking *certification* (see 5.3.1). The quest for sovereignty and indigenous identity are the main aspects that set the Maroons' motivations apart from the rest of the movement in their struggle against bauxite mining.

Environmentalism and epistemic power disparities in Jamaica

Environmental activism in Jamaica, apart from Maroons and Rastafari activism, tends to be characterized by elements of elitism, which is also connected to a racial dimension. It is predominantly led by foreigners, as well as white or light-skinned, and wealthy Jamaicans. Environmentalist leaders in Jamaica therefore rather do not speak for the marginalized in Jamaican society (cf. Williams 2023: 87f.). This was also apparent within the anti-bauxite mining protest movement. Initially, the epistemic community's focus in this conflict first and foremost was on the impact on the natural environment, particularly the endemic species of flora and fauna (cf. Fuentes George 2016). Their attention was not directed towards Maroon communities, and they did not include their perspectives or specifically advocate for them. A closer examination of the interaction between the epistemic community and the Maroons within the CCSG reveals an unequal partnership. The CCSG, led primarily by NGOs like JET, took the lead in organizing demonstrations and events, with the Maroons participating but without playing equally significant roles.

There appears to be a mutual distrust between the epistemic community and the Maroons. The Maroons distrust the epistemic community because they see them as part of the Jamaican nation. Overall, a general sense of distrust among the Maroons towards other Jamaicans is evident, alongside a distinct perspective regarding the significance of their role in the conflict. This mistrust originates from the Maroons' self-perceived position as the exclusive guardians of Cockpit Country, viewing the rest of Jamaicans as enduring (post-)colonial subjects of the British crown. Conversely, the epistemic community is skeptical of collaborations with the Maroons due to their epistemic perspectives and affiliated concerns about their credibility. Therefore, a potential barrier to collaboration arises from the epistemic community's aspiration to uphold a high level of credibility, which enables their influence on policy makers. Entering a very close relationship with the Maroons and adopting their narratives might be perceived as a risk to the epistemic community's trustworthiness in the eyes of the GoJ. (See 5.2.). Regrettably, this dynamic may inadvertently suppress the voices of individuals who are likely affected and marginalized.

The epistemic power imbalance between the Maroons and the epistemic community is reflected in existing literature on the topic (cf. chapter 2). Until now, the Maroons have been noticeably overlooked in academic literature, with their roles as environmental actors not receiving thorough examination (cf. Connell 2020: 229). This oversight is exemplified in JET's 2020 publi-

cation, "RED DIRT," which is presented as a “Multidisciplinary Review of The Bauxite-Alumina Industry in Jamaica”. This extensive work, possibly the most comprehensive up-to-date study of bauxite mining in Jamaica, includes contributions from several key members of the epistemic community. However, within its 250 pages, the publication makes only two mentions of the Maroons and omits any exploration of their role in the conflict (cf. JET 2020).

The final delineation of Cockpit Country by the GoJ illustrates the manifestation of epistemic power. In the GoJ’s mapping of Cockpit Country, important sites of the Maroons were simply ignored, and mainly geological factors were taken seriously. As Fuentes-George (2016: 18) highlighted, there has been a contentious divide between anthropological and geological methodologies in delineating Cockpit Country. This discord has manifested in discussions over whether cultural or scientific approaches are more suitable for accurately defining the region's boundaries. These instances show how disciplinary perspectives can constrict specific considerations in activism. In the case of the CCSG’s cartography, a multidisciplinary approach, including historic and cultural points, led to a different, and larger delineation of Cockpit Country.

Understanding Maroon dedication

The Maroons have always been generally opposed to any interference in their region. Initially the Maroons engaged in martial resistance against colonial troops. This changed in 1738, when they acquired legal status through their peace treaty with the British. From this point on, the treaty played a central role for the Maroons' self-understanding as a sovereign state free from colonial control. Later, they also rejected efforts of political incorporation into the newly independent Jamaican nation after 1962 (cf. Connell 2017: Chapter 2). The contemporary challenge to their sovereignty is the intrusion of the GoJ and affiliated mining companies for the purpose of bauxite mining.

While the Maroons highlight their connection to the region's natural environment, their concern goes beyond the nature itself. The concern for nature is linked to the fact that the flora and fauna ensured the survival of their ancestors during the wars against the British. Contemporary Maroons feel a responsibility towards their ancestors and a corresponding duty towards the nature that hid and protected them. For the Maroons, the mining issue transcends the environmental sphere; it encompasses concerns of sovereignty, indigenous identity, and resistance against the ongoing implications of (post-)colonialism. The Maroons appear as the most fervent and unwavering opponents of bauxite mining, because of the additional dimensions to the protest for them, which put them in a distinctive position within the conflict. Their self-perceived role as

protectors of the region predates the formation of the Jamaican nation. Their ideological stance thus seems impervious to the prevailing development discourse that influence the rest of the island's population. Shaped by their history, the Maroons require no ideological conversion or conviction against extractivism or towards alternative economic models since, to them, the region has no price tag and cannot be commodified. Arguments which frame the opposition to bauxite mining within a cost-benefit analysis, assigning a monetary value to Cockpit Country, appear absurd to the Maroons.

With their distinct perspective on the conflict, one that explicitly delves into the issue of (post-)colonialism, the Maroons introduce a more profound political-ecological critique into their activism. The involvement of the Maroons in this conflict transforms it from being solely about environmental destruction to a broader struggle for environmental justice, encompassing the historic rights of an indigenous people. Their activism is deeply rooted in a 300-year history of resistance against colonial power which is perpetuated to this day through the global economic system (cf. Connell 2020: 230). This line of reasoning parallels arguments from academic studies of neo- and postcolonialism which highlight the enduring presence of colonial structures even after formal independence (cf. Albrecht 2019: 10). Specifically, the persistence of extractivism is a legacy of colonialism that still plays a key role in extracting value for the benefit of the global North (cf. Acosta 2016: 60; cf. Canterbury 2018).

Prospects: more interdisciplinarity for post-extractive alternatives?

Although 2017 marked a significant milestone in the protection of Cockpit Country, environmental activists should not become complacent. Considering the broader context, it is evident that Jamaica persists in adopting extractivism as a strategy for economic development. Contemporarily- designated boundaries of extraction may shift in the future; given the expansive logic of capitalism, such shifts might only be a matter of time. At the core of this conflict is a debate about the economic models that should shape the island's future development. In Jamaica, as in many other developing countries in the Global South, a prevailing development paradigm suggests emulating industrialized nations as role models, often while relying on extractive industries, which are not sustainable. To ensure the sustainable protection of regions from exploitation, a comprehensive reevaluation of the entire extractive model is imperative. Sustainable environmental activism thus cannot just point at symptoms but needs to include a systemic critique.

Mainstream environmental conservation often emphasizes the market value of natural areas. From this perspective, conservation primarily seeks to provide economic benefits to humanity by protecting nature from detrimental impacts. Such understandings of nature are bound up in the logic of capitalism and its utilitaristic aspects, which involve the commodification of nature and the classification of areas as either necessary for conservation or sacrifice (cf. Büscher & Fletcher 2020: 37f.). This understanding further perpetuates a fundamental dichotomy between nature and humanity (cf. ibid.: 45; cf. Favini 2018: 15).

However, capitalism, and especially its expansive logic, essentially remain the roots of future environmental destruction (cf. Tetreault 2017: 341f.). Staying within its logic proves insufficient for genuinely sustainable conservation. Therefore, discovering sustainable solutions requires the exploration of approaches with a more profound systemic critique. Büscher and Fletcher (2020: 112), for instance, introduced searching for alternative strategies of "convivial conservation." This perspective aims to transcend the conventional human-nature dichotomy inherent in mainstream conservation and to prioritize conviviality – the sustainable, engagement of humans with nature while conserving it. Philosophies and long-term sustainable practices of indigenous communities such as the Maroons may be inspiring for such approaches (cf. ibid: 120f.).

The fundamental debate in the deeper context here is extractivism vs. post-extractive alternatives. Tourism remains Jamaica's primary economic pillar, despite its own challenges within the framework of expansive capitalism and affiliated privatization (cf. Toppin-Allahar 2015). However, tourism presents a more sustainable future compared to extracting finite minerals. Therefore, a strategic shift toward prioritizing tourism over extractivism in Cockpit Country is not only pragmatic but also aligns with the state's interests. Furthermore, advocating for ecologically sustainable tourism would be an even more commendable objective.

It is crucial to acknowledge that even though Jamaica achieved formal independence in 1962, it remained ensnared within the economic relations dictated by the global economic system (cf. Stephens & Stephens 2017; Edmonds 2015). A careful consideration of these postcolonial structures is essential when exploring the extractive model and its interdependencies. Environmental activists within the epistemic community should acknowledge and use the fact that the Maroons' struggle not only encompasses environmental issues but also other themes such as anticolonial sovereignty, alternative culture, and identity preservation. Following this broader

perspective may align with all environmental activists' goals as, in the fight against extractivism. Individuals with deep rooted anti-colonialist and/or anti-capitalist motivations can play a vital role, especially in proposing alternative approaches for the future. Embracing interdisciplinary exchange and thus engaging more with the humanities can be fruitful in this context.

Although Cockpit Country's ecological, geological, and biological aspects obviously lend themselves to positivistic scrutiny that can be instrumental for activism, they can also undergo epistemic and philosophical reinterpretations from a political-ecological critical standpoint (cf. Dietz & Engels 2017: 6f.). Such reinterpretations can furnish more robust ideological and theoretical foundations for protest movements, inspiring new activism, and waves of mobilization (cf. Choudry & Kapoor 2010: Part III). Through political-ecological and post-colonial reflections, opportunities may arise to establish stronger connections with existing alternative epistemic perspectives, such as those among indigenous communities like the Maroons (cf. Büscher & Fletscher 2020: 37). As it stands, the postcolonial critique of extractivism is predominantly voiced by the Maroons, with limited resonance among other (scientific) activists. Including such critical interpretations does not necessarily mean that the scientific characteristics of Western positivist epistemology must be wholly forsaken.

I therefore advocate for more interdisciplinarity in the realm of environmental activism in Jamaica, which I believe could contribute to a mitigation of the barriers arising for collaboration from epistemic power disparities among the participating groups. A case of simple and straightforward – yet effective – interdisciplinary collaboration could be observed in the Cockpit Country boundary delineation by the WRC. Although the WRC primarily focuses on biological aspects, it took historical and cultural factors into account when defining the boundaries for the CCSG. While this might not be an in-depth collaboration, it serves as an example of how even a surface-level interdisciplinary approach can amplify the voices of epistemically marginalized stakeholders. Expanding on this idea, more robust narratives for environmental preservation could emerge through increased interaction between biologists, geologists, botanists, and historians, anthropologist, and sociologists, as well as non-conventional experts from Rastafari and Maroon communities, such as Maroon elder Mark Wright, for instance, who introduced himself to me as a farmer, herbalist, and historian (Wright, interview, 2023).

As they persist in their quest for self-governance, the Maroons uphold and perpetuate their praxeological strategy, reminiscent of their historical struggle against colonialist oppression (cf. Conell 2020: 231). The possible connection between "local lore" (Fuentes-George 2019) and

scientific conservation strategies, must not necessarily allude to specific, tangible practices. Instead, this connection involves abstract, profound interpretations of the relationship between humans and nature and distinct viewpoints regarding its understanding and utilization. By bringing these perspectives into interplay with various scientific standpoints, particularly through interdisciplinary analyses, we can delve into novel avenues for activism and may envision post-extractivist alternatives.

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Appendix

Table 1: List of Interviews

Recorded interviews		
Interview partner(s)	**Location and date**	**Affiliation/ organization**
Susan Koenig	Windsor	Researcher and activist, WRC
Theresa Rodriguez-Moodie	Kingston	CEO, JET
Hugh Dixon	Albert Town	Executive Director, STEA
Norma Rowe-Edwards	Accompong	Former Deputy Colonel, State of Accompong
Daneyel Bozra	Accompong	Accompong resident and activist; Accompong News
Mark Wright	Accompong	Accompong Elder, herbal expert, farmer, activist
Rob and Joey (pseudonym)	Accompong/ Quickstep	Accompong residents and activists
Esther Figueroa	Gordon Town	Filmmaker and activist
Mr. Jones (pseudonym)	Caledonia/ Madras	Resident
Conversations		
Residents	Accompong, Aberdeen, Stetin, Maggotty, Gibraltar, Madras, Caledonia, Mandeville, Kingston, Sherwood Content	