WHAT IS, AND WHY MINING?

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Mineral occurrences are subjected to rules of utility like other attributes of nature; population, water, terrain, flora and fauna, fisheries, sunlight, wind etc. Any of them can have a positive utility where a resource that can be converted to a reserve, or a negative utility when it becomes a burden that needs a solution - depending on the time and the geographical location of their occurrence. Driven by technology or supply/demand movements, a mineral occurrence may or may not present itself as a mineral resource. In many of the developing countries where there still is much potential to develop mineral resources into wealth generating enterprises, the initial policy discussions often get overwhelmed by confusion created by catch phrases such as "resource curse" and "irreversible environmental damage". This article takes a critical look at those arguments. It can also be demonstrated that, where it is professionally conducted "mining" as a industry sector has shown far higher degree of care and responsibility given the unknown and unpredictable settings within which they operate - and powerful tools and violent forces they have to use in making their produce. This article argues that it is responsible national policies and their implementation efficiency is what needs to be brought into the limelight because that is what is necessary to first separate the illegal operators from the legals; and then to separate mining companies run by environmental Neanderthals from those run by "Homo Eco Sapiens".