

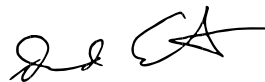
# **TITLE: CRITICAL MINERALS, CRITICAL ISSUES: COBALT GEOPOLITICS, GOVERNANCE, AND ECONOMIC DISPARITIES IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research investigates the governance and management of cobalt revenues in the DRC, assessing how policy frameworks, corporate interventions, and supply chain oversight influence economic development. By analyzing financial flows from cobalt extraction and comparing them to similar resource-dependent economies, this study explores the mechanisms that hinder equitable wealth distribution. Findings indicate that corruption, weak regulatory enforcement, and a lack of downstream value capture significantly constrain the economic benefits of cobalt mining for local communities. Additionally, geopolitical competition and foreign dominance in refining and processing have perpetuated supply chain opacity, reinforcing the DRC's dependency on raw material exports rather than value-added production.

Through policy recommendations aimed at strengthening governance, increasing revenue transparency, and enhancing domestic processing capabilities, this research provides actionable insights into mitigating the adverse effects of cobalt dependency. Ensuring that the DRC benefits equitably from its mineral wealth is crucial not only for national economic stability but also for the broader ethical considerations of the global energy transition. Without targeted interventions, the continued exploitation of cobalt resources risks perpetuating cycles of poverty, environmental harm, and social injustice, ultimately undermining the very sustainability goals that cobalt is intended to support.



Advisor Signature (David Eaton): \_\_\_\_\_