# Transnational Dimensions
# to Environmental Resource Dynamics

## Modes of Governance and Local Resource Management in Eastern DRC

*James Fairhead*

The British in 1940 'agreed on the necessity of preventing the territories' [Congo's] raw materials from falling into the hands of the Germans (Fetter 1988: 382).

It was said [during the Cold War] that the West would go to war to keep Zaire within the western orbit (Mazrui and Ajayi 1993: 651).

We must also find effective ways to secure Africa's vast natural resources – its diamonds, cobalt, uranium, oil, timber, coltan, its gold – so they do not provide currency for the world's terrorists (Rice 2001: 12).

We think the West has used Uganda and Rwanda to invade our country so they can mine our riches without paying (Pole Institute 2001).

The number of excess deaths directly attributable to Rwandan and Ugandan occupation can be estimated at between 3 million and 3.5 million (UN 2002).

 A great deal of transnational policy and associated research concerning African natural resource use has explored opportunities for reshaping patterns of governance to influence and improve the management of environmental resources. However, such aspirations must contend with an inverse process: how transnational engagement with environmental resources is influencing patterns of governance and local resource management.

Nowhere has this been clearer than in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, whose rubber supported the car revolution, whose uranium supported the nuclear revolution, and whose cobalt and tantalum now support the technological revolution. Alongside these strategic minerals, it has massive reserves of diamonds, gold and now oil. These resources have been financing conflicts since 1996, which best estimates suggest have cost three million Congolese lives. This chapter will state what has become so obvious during the recent civil wars: that it is impossible to consider politics and governance anywhere in the DRC without considering the country's wider engagement with the industrialised world. Yet how does this influence local resource use? In beginning to address this question, I shall consider how the modes of resource governance associated with these current conflicts long precede them, and thus why, as Keen puts it (1998), 'war can usefully be seen as a deepening of exploitative processes already existing in "nor-

mal" times'. The present chapter shows how current modes of resource extraction that we can associate with the conflict have been shaped in a similar fashion for a century.

A linked statement of the obvious is that international interest in some of the DRC's resources will shape modes of governance and thus the management of others. Viewed in this way, it becomes inappropriate to differentiate environmental resources in the conventional way between 'renewable' and 'non-renewable', or between agro-ecological/living resources (such as forest, cocaine, coffee, conservation and rubber), and minerals (such as oil, cobalt, coltan[1], uranium, diamonds and gold). Arguably, making a strong distinction between these and treating them as if they were radically separate has long enabled the transnational configuration of resource governance, use and sustainability to be downplayed. The focus on renewables and land, as well as on their scarcity, always seems to lead analysts to explore the causes of resource conflicts in a localised way. For example, 'population increase' on location has been considered to increase demand for renewable resources and their value, or poverty or social transformation on location to undermine long-term sustainable management. The way that *international and global political and economic forces affect wider governance and thus local environmental practices is eclipsed.* We lose sight of how mining, timber, agri-business and conservation business affect governance (and conflicts) and through this, affect located social, political and economic orders, environmental practices and their sustainability. The wider links are often marginal in works relating territory, demography and scarcity together as the main explanation for conflicts over natural resource management. My intention here is to demonstrate that they need to be analytically centred by tracing how profoundly they shape the social relations of everyday resource management.

I shall consider these links in the Kivu region of the DRC, and more particularly through the lens of the province of Bwisha, and of a small village there where I conducted fieldwork some time ago, for two years between 1986 and 1989. The province has since attracted considerable attention, if not detailed fieldwork, that enables me to contextualise the current war economy within a deeper economic history. Bwisha is a Rwandan (Kinyarwanda)-speaking province extending north of the town of Goma, and filling out a triangle where the DRC borders on both Uganda and Rwanda. Following the Rwandan genocide in 1994, it hosted hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees fleeing the post-genocide regime in Rwanda. Then in 1996, Rwandan and Ugandan troops occupied the province and forcibly emptied these camps. These troops then supported the major rebellion that went on to topple the DRC's notorious kleptocratic president, Mobutu Sese Seko – a

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1. Coltan is the ore from which tantalum is derived. The tensile, heat and electrical properties of tantalum make it a crucial ingredient in armour penetration and missile technology, housing radioactive elements, including in nuclear reactors, manufacturing capacitors for third-generation computer technology (e.g. in mobile phones), rocket motors and radiation shielding

rebellion of allied oppositions led by Laurent Kabila. After two years, however, Laurent Kabila fell out with his Ugandan and Rwandan backers, and the latter gave their support to a second rebellion, this time against Kabila that continued until 2003. At the time of writing, Bwisha is currently under the control of Rwanda and Rwandan-backed rebels. To its north, the Nande-speaking region of the DRC is controlled by Uganda and Ugandan-backed rebels. There have also been clashes between these rebel groupings, and indeed, between different factions within each of them, linked to competition over mining areas. Whilst the occupation by Rwanda and Uganda had its origins in their need to protect their borders from hostile forces based in the DRC, a sequence of UN reports documents how this logic has mutated into, or been a cover for, 'the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of DR Congo' (e.g. UN 2001 2002).

## Looting Kivu: A History of Practice

Kivu was looted before by Rwanda, during in the nineteenth century. While this Rwandan presence protected the province from being looted by Tippu Tip's interior slave- and ivory-trading empire, which was based near modern Kisangani, its own occupation was not itself benign. Kivu was then looted by the Belgian colonial administration, which established a mode of land, labour and resource expropriation that has lasted up until the present day. Understanding this mode is important in order to consider its local manifestations in lived experience – how it plays out in one village and its resource management.

Bwisha was relatively independent of Rwandan rule until the mid-nineteenth century. Until then there had been a gradual influx of pastoralists (Batutsi), but they recognised the authority of the more or less confederated principalities that they encountered (Vunabandi 1979: 11). How and when the Rwandan state first came to rule over Bwisha is not certain, but three phases in the development of Rwandan rule can be distinguished: the conquering of Bwisha (on and off from the fifteenth century): the imposition of Rwandan delegate rulers (late eighteenth century), and the systematic taxation of the province from the late nineteenth century.

During the eighteenth century, the Rwandan monarchy acquired sufficient power to appoint chiefs to rule over Bwisha's principalities. In some of them the existing lineage rulers were chosen as the vehicle for indirect rule, but in others direct rule was imposed. In all, a hierarchical administrative structure was created in which the province *(ikihugu)* was ruled by a provincial delegate. The province was subdivided into districts ruled by local district chiefs, and this was itself divided into administrative hills, each with their own chief (Kashori 1983).

Bwisha was first taxed systematically during the rule of the expansionist Rwandan monarch, Rwabugiri in the late 19th century. He extended Rwanda's borders far into what is now the Kivu region of the DRC. By the time of his

death, the independent authority of Bwisha's princes had been eradicated. Those chiefs who had not been replaced by outsiders only retained their position by virtue of their loyalty to the Rwandan monarchy. Rwanda levied heavy taxes on produce and labour. When documented early in the Belgian era, each 'lineage' was said to provide 110 baskets of sorghum, 15 baskets of beans, 2000 leaves of tobacco, perfumes, salt, calabashes, lance shafts, an ivory tusk, animal skins, bracelets, beer, butter and other commodities, as well as 10% of the cattle (Dubuisson 1935). The tax was collected by a 'hill chief', who took a 10% cut, passing the rest on to the 'district chief', who took a 10% cut before passing it to the 'provincial' chief, who took his cut, before dispatching the produce to the centre. The products were carried to the royal court by conscripted porters. These taxes fell most heavily on those subordinate to the ruling lineage. Each lineage also had to supply two man-days of labour in every five to work for the chiefs at various levels of the hierarchy. The threat of Rwanda's elite soldiers (*inkemba*) enforced tax payment (Kashori 1983: 15–23).

Rwandan control was imposed on a political set-up conventionally described as 'nested lineages': the founding lineage that first cleared the land would make land available to other newcomers, who became its political subordinates and who had to pay 'tribute' to their overlords. They in turn could make land that they received available to others, and so on. While this may not capture the specific history in each district, it does represent well the nested sets of dyadic relations that structured access to land, political status and taxation. The heavy taxation by Rwanda accentuated the expropriative nature of these relations. Nominal tribute became a heavy tax, falling disproportionately on those in structurally inferior positions.

The first colonial military post was installed in 1902, when the Congo was the Belgian kings' fiefdom. As the Belgian colonial administration strengthened (after the outrageous exactions of the King's administration were exposed, and power transferred to Belgium), and especially after 1910, when the borders with Rwanda and Uganda were fixed, the Belgians attempted to force Bwisha chiefs to pay taxes to them, not the Rwandan court. Nevertheless, Bwisha princes continued to pay taxes to the Rwandan monarchy until 1914, as to begin with they were not convinced that the Belgians would stay (Matagne 1964; Kashori 1983: 72–7). The Belgian administration soon sought to identify pliable intermediary chiefs of their own through whom they could rule. The Belgians focused their attention on an interpreter, Ndeze, who had worked with them to assist military requisitioning during the First World War (when Belgian- and German-backed forces fought an entrenched battle in the area between 1915 and 1917). Although his claim to rule was tenuous, Belgian support enabled him to be elected as supreme leader over the many principalities. He then consolidated his authority by deposing all Rwandan-backed leaders and replacing them with his own appointees (Misabiro 1980: 19; Bwana Kweli 1985; Munyaruenzi 1980; Bangamwabo 1982). He also gained authority in a similar way over a neighbouring province,

Bwito. For chiefs at every level of the hierarchy, disobedience was sanctioned by suspension of power, either for short periods or for good.

From the 1920s, a powerful coercive combination of this chief, the colonial administration, European entrepreneurs, the army and the police was able to expropriate huge areas of land from cultivators, either for coffee plantations or for a national park. They imposed heavy taxes, and forcibly recruited labour for plantations, road building and infrastructure. Once again, as will become clear, these exactions fell most heavily on political subordinates.

To attract colonial investment and promote the region's economic development, Kivu was privatised. A company called the Comité National de Kivu (CN-Ki) was formed and empowered with the right to collect taxes. It had exclusive rights over forests, mining and all 'vacant ground', which it could sell as it wished, but it was duty bound to re-invest the proceeds in Kivu's infractructure (Mendiaux 1956, Drevet 1977). Legally the rights of local populations to their lands were upheld. However, CNKi was frustrated because first, all the best coffee-growing areas were occupied, secondly, there was no unclaimed land, and thirdly, it was difficult to recruit labour to work the lands that were less populated. With the connivance of pliable chiefs such as Ndeze, and to their huge personal profit, CNKi illegally sold inhabited lands to planters (Mendiaux 1956). By 1930 there were some 240 plantations in Kivu.

Similar 'illegal' methods were used to dispossess inhabitants of what became the Virunga National Park. Parks were established through the corrupt attribution of vacancy – the worst following the forced depopulation of the park area on the pretext of sleeping sickness – and through a public utility law that enabled 'compensation' to be paid to Ndeze. Ndeze's subordinate chiefs could not block the sale, and the population affected was not consulted and received none of the compensation (Nzabandora 1984: 59–62; Gapira 1980: 56–7). Ndeze also profited from shares he acquired in the monopolistic fishing 'cooperative' created on what was then Lake Edward in 1949. Certain local colonial administrators who attempted to contest the methods of the Park authority and the methods of the planters found that they were almost powerless in the face of CNKi and the Park authority (Gapira 1980: 88–91). The latter was answerable to Brussels, not to the colonial state.

Labour as well as land was appropriated. During the First World War, local chiefs had been obliged to send produce, soldiers and porters, leaving a major famine (known locally as Rumanura) in their wake. In the 1920s and 1930s, village chiefs were required to provide 25% of the available male labour force to work on road-building programmes (Northrup 1988: 195). This burden fell most heavily on those in contextually inferior positions. Plantation owners arranged with senior chiefs to force village chiefs to supply labour (Bangamwabo 1982: 49). While it was possible for regular skilled workers to be attached to a plantation and live on its land, local chiefs preferred to keep workers living on 'chiefdom' land, as they maintained authority over them and could tax them. The

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greater powers, threats and obligations that the chiefs now had meant that they both could and had to extort far higher tributes and corvée (unpaid work for the state) than they previously had. In many instances it was the chiefs, not workers, who received pay. Recruitment was often in the name of chiefs, who directed different subordinates to work each day (cf. Bashizi 1978: 16–19).

The administration and planters attempted to prevent any alternatives to colonial employment, whether by keeping food prices too low to be commercially viable, banning smallholder coffee production or strictly controlling labour mobility. Among men on whom the exactions fell hardest, there were many who fled their natal lands to other regions where they had greater autonomy. Others migrated to Uganda, where work and conditions were reputedly more favourable. The authorities responded, however, by sending 'recapture groups' to find, bring back and punish those who had fled the locality or employment to which they had been restricted. The relatives and wives of those who had fled were forced to work in their place (Bangamwabo 1982: 51).

Half of Bwisha's male population were working on the coffee plantations by 1938 (Northrup 1988: 195), but there were still shortages, prompting forced relocations of population from other regions, from Nande-speaking regions to the north and from Rwanda. During the Second World War, labour conditions worsened, as if this were still possible. Those not working on the plantations were forced to do corvée work for 120 days a year, thus easing plantation recruitment (Anstey 1966: 146–58).

While the settler class had been advantaged during the war, the short-staffed colonial administration had had to cope with a resultant famine and nascent rebellions in 1944–5 (Bezy et al. 1981: 36). Finally, after the war, the administration took steps to strengthen the rights of the workforce, and curb the power of the plantations, chiefs and Park (Drevet 1977: 99). Labour markets were freed and wages rose five-fold. By the mid-1950s more than two-thirds of the male population were employed (Drevet 1977: 99, Bangamwabo 1982: 78).

The DRC achieved independence in 1960, but any gain for the population was short-lived. In the election struggle surrounding independence, Kivu's largest party was the Centre de Regroupement Africaine (CEREA), whose manifesto included opening the park for hunting and farming, and abolishing taxes and corvée. Its vocal membership consisted of those in the newly elected councils, teachers, and those who had been dispossessed during the Belgian regime. It was opposed by a party (ARP) supported by the chiefs and the traditional elite, which sought to 'uphold custom against radicalism', though for want of support it had to merge with the party supported by the white community (PNP). Needless to say, CEREA won overwhelmingly. In Bwisha, Ndeze fled to Belgium, and a newly elected assembly took over from the 'traditional' chiefs.

Yet seven years of political turmoil ensued, including the assassination of the leftist Lumumba, occupation by UN forces, the eventual failure of the leftist Mulele rebellion, and the eventual military success of the CIA-backed Mobutu in

the civil war in 1966. Mobutu then consolidated his rule by reinstating many of the 'traditional' chiefs, including Ndeze in Bwisha. Ndeze thus expanded his mandate not only as a traditional chief, but also as the state administrator (until 1973). Rumour of a Batutsi bid for political ascendency in Kivu and their backing for the ill-fated Mulele rebellion of the MNC had aided Ndeze's return to power. Ndeze had already 'cleansed' Bwisha of Batutsi authority once (in the 1920s), and he did so again.

During this period, Kivu's plantation economy collapsed. The plantations remained territorially intact, but of the nine hundred foreign owned plantations in Kivu, only fifty remained in partial operation in 1973. The plantation owners who remained accumulated vast areas of land by purchasing it from those who were leaving. Then foreign assets were nationalised in 1973. In Rutshuru, the family of Ndeze, his loyal subordinates and other members of the state administration acquired the plantations. This, and instances like it thoughout the country, provoked a deeper crisis, and in 1976, a 40% stake in some plantations was ceded back to their original owners to keep them operational. In Bwisha, Mobutu himself was a major personal beneficiary, and the coffee plantations that he had interests in were also granted monopolistic marketing powers.

In short, until the 1950s, an alliance between the colonial administration (plus its army), the traditional chiefs (plus their police), the planters (plus their police) and the park (plus their guards) was able, often illegally and corruptly, to expropriate land from cultivators extort heavy taxes and corvée to build infrastructure, and recruit labour to work in the plantations. From the 1970s, these alliances were strengthened, as Ndeze and many administrators themselves became plantation owners. In the 1950s, the administrations' reform programme had sought to control the monster that it had created by attempting to strengthen the power of the population (and itself) relative to this elite by introducing local democracy and labour laws, but this failed. Wages did improve during the 1950s boom, but restrictions on education and on credit, coupled with the restrictive trading practices of the colonial elite, prevented nationals from acquiring capital in what had become sub-Saharan Africa's second-most industrialised nation. Following Mobutu's ascendency, control passed to the new elite, when the old alliance between capital, state and traditional authority was forged once more.

Plantation profitability and wages slumped. By the mid-1970s many labourers were reluctant to work for wages that had fallen to less than 6% of 1960 levels in real terms. This was especially so given the growing market for, and profitability of food crops, and given emergent opportunities for small-holder coffee production. Employers again found it necessary to coerce unfree labour. This could be achieved in several ways. First, plantation owners could force those who farmed their land to do more unpaid work for them (two days a week). Secondly, they could recruit the labour of the desperate and land destitute. Thirdly, employers were able, given emergent conditions of personal insecurity, to recruit labour by 'giving protection' to employees, squatters and indeed land-holders.

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Realising this, employers were not encouraged to reduce levels of violence and in-security. This 'protection racketeering' assisted their recruitment of cheap labour. Indeed, in many cases, landlords and employers were behind the deployment of violence (by hiring soldiers who freelanced from their camps) that became endemic.

Employers who worked in increasingly unprofitable circumstances could thus pass their problems on to their work force, as control over land and security was used to gain control over labour (see Schoepf and Schoepf 1987: 25). Indeed, despite deepening economic crisis, the 1980s saw a huge increase in the demand for large tracts of plantation land by self-financing projects, whether church organisations, the urban entrepreneurial elite, the 'traditional' chiefs or national (often Kinshasa-based) politicians. The control of unfree labour by land-holders was central to the viability of these enterprises.

During this period, the elite managed to expand their land-holdings. At times President Mobutu did make some populist attempts to restrict this and the 'feudal' economy that emerged. In 1973, Mobutu legislated against inherited chief-ships and against traditional authorities having perpetual rights to control land. He legislated in favour of squatters' rights being granted following three years of uncontested occupancy. Yet this altered the rules of the game, and its victors, not the game itself. Indeed, as Schoepf and Schoepf indicated based on their research in south Kivu, these laws actually enabled all 'those with power, wealth and influence…to manipulate the system to appropriate any lands not yet conceded or titled…including lands currently occupied' (1987: 22). The legislation advantaged the state elite over the traditional one in the struggle for spoils. International assistance, in particular in support of ranching (meat-marketing, cattle-health programmes, infrastructural development) exacerbated this by enhancing the profitability of cattle-ranching. By 1991, in the highlands of the Masisi area, west of Bwisha, around 500 families controlled about 60% of the land (Vlassenroot 2002).

In the mid 1980s, a sub-regional committee on land tenure investigated reports of the fraudulent use of the vacancy law and boundary extension. It concluded that:

> Our customary chiefs must henceforth know that feudalism has been abolished, that there is no longer *Bami* ['traditional' royalty] land and cattle. It is wrong that they entrench themselves behind customary jurisdiction, that they dispossess land from their subjects; that they forbid them rights to build permanent homes, and that they deny them all rights of ownership, whether it be land or possessions. They must know that their figurehead on these unconstitutional activities generates interminable land conflicts, which compromise the socio-economic development of their entities, collectivizes individual litigations, and stirs up tribal hatred (Katuala et al. 1986: 89, my translation).

## Located Experience of Regional Processes

These processes were generalised throughout the more densely populated regions of Kivu and had profound affects in villages everywhere. In Kagara, the village where I lived in the hills above the town of Rutshuru in the late 1980s, people's exposure to exaction and dispossession was sharply differentiated. This can be seen in respect of personal security and exemption from informal taxation and compulsory labour, as well as in land relations.

First, people obtained protection through different institutions. Many of those who were the descendents of early land-holders, and who thus had more secure rights to land, sought to maintain their rights to both land and their own labour through 'traditional' authorities, notably the village Kapita, his committee, and those he favoured. On the other hand, villagers who had 'state' positions in this bifurcated administration[1] could secure their rights through the state administration that they represented (within the Comité de Base of the Mouvement Populaire pour la Révolution or MRP as it was then called), or through employment in state-supported institutions (e.g. as schoolteachers, Red Cross officials or 'development' representatives). Some other families were able to draw on the backing of their church (whether Catholic, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist or one of the profusion of new Protestant churches), or the mosque. Churches supported and protected their ministers, and indeed their flocks. To achieve this (and, cynically, to secure a following), the churches fostered regional and national political connections and, with the help of these, operated a sophisticated protection system. Church communities provided legal support in land claims (for example, upholding squatters' rights over traditional rights in national courts) and provided physical protection to those who were being violently harassed. In the Catholic system, for example, one member of the local chapel would follow anyone who had been arrested, while another would be dispatched to the mission to alert the higher authorities and initiate support and release procedures. Lastly, as in the colonial period, plantation owners would ensure protection for their own relatively skilled employees.

People advertised their protection when travelling. Identity cards peered from plastic pockets on the outside of jackets, and metal 'MPR' Party badges on the lapel, bibles in hand and crosses hanging loose all signified protection to any military or police operative that one might encounter. These modes of protection clearly hark back to colonial times, when administrative jobs, social clout or employment would exempt the lucky from army recruitment, tax and forced labour.

The importance of such protection extended to land and labour. Land grabbing was not restricted to the major players. Thus it also became possible for land-holders, whether high- or low-ranking chiefs, or representatives of more powerful

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1. See Mamdani 1996 for further analysis of bifurcation between state and traditional authority throughout the continent.

lineages, to claim that lands that they or their parents had once ceded to strangers had simply been 'let'. They redefined the 'tributes' that the strangers had paid as 'rent', allowing them to claim that the land still belonged to them. Such land grabbing was limited where I lived to the actions of a huge neighbouring plantation that seized a third of the village's land after successfully pursuing what the village felt was a false boundary dispute.

In this particular village, the founding lineage had lost political control to a ritually illegitimate appointee. They were poor and in no position to exert their ancestral rights. Until the 1960s, newcomers soliciting land in the village were usually granted some by this family. From the 1970s, however, a growing market for land had grown up due to land scarcity, reductions in plantation work, declining wages and increased reliance on farming for food and cash, alongside an increase in 'distress sales' by the poor. Wealthier villages consolidated their holdings, disparaging those who sold because of their lack of 'ability' (*ukuntu*), their foolish impulsiveness, and their inability to 'resist meat' (and drink). Land arrangements ceased to be ritually significant.

In a neighbouring village, expropriation occurred differently. A large ancestral landholding family had tried to evict those to whom they had granted land under past social and economic conditions in the ways described above, by redefining their subordinates as tenants and squatters. In this instance, the churches directly supported the tenants' and squatters' case in the state court. They also used its rituals (exorcism) to oppose directly the ancestors (redefined as devils) of past land-holders who were particularly feared.

It is possible to draw too sharp a distinction between this 'grabbing by direct expropriation and land losses through the market. Those in vulnerable positions with respect to mobility and labour were led to sell land. In this respect, continuing control over land has come to depend more on political connections and protection, as well as its income effects, as much as on inheritance and the assertion of rights. A similar story is told by André and Platteau (1998) in pre-genocide Rwanda, where access to land began to depend more on access to off-farm income (urban employment and mortgage facilities) than on inheritance. In the village, all modern land transactions are imaged in relation to the notions of the possessor and the dispossessor, in stark contrast to past relations of the politicoritual chief and subordinate, which had earlier been the stuff of political and social alliance.

In short, with the collapse of the economy in the 1970s and 1980s, the distinction between those who had invested in protective institutions (and who had documents showing them to be part of a greater community), and those who had not, became increasingly important. My fairly robust assessment, based on key informants, suggested that about a quarter of adult men in the village could avoid direct expropriation. For example, they felt safe in using the roads without being vulnerable to expropriation from the military and police of assorted forces, and they were exempt from forced labour and labour tribute for their land. When it

came to constructing a road to the village, these people were strongly in favour, finding common interest and a source of friendship in these issues – a wealthy elite with a 'wider' outlook (Fairhead 1992). On the other hand, a poorer majority, many of whom lacked any documentation whatsoever, felt that the road would bring yet further control and expropriation from the centre, not to mention them being forced to build this vehicle of their own oppression themselves.

Protection for the village elite did not come cheap. For example, the Kapita used to exempt relatives, friends and respected men from compulsory state labour, for which they paid twenty litres of banana wine and a chicken annually. The compulsory labour burden then fell on younger and poorer men instead. Despite the opportunities for 'buy out', however, it was better to have 'real' exemption than to pay others for a piece of theirs, as such payments inevitably increased. Yet proper protection itself required self-exploitation. None of the jobs that guaranteed protection paid a salary: the jobs had to pay for themselves.

Social changes have added to, and shaped, patterns of marginalisation from land and livelihood. Vulnerable people who had hitherto had access to land via customary land claims find that such claims are no longer being honoured by land-holders. This is particularly true of return migrants, separated women, wives in polygynous marriages, widows, the handicapped, orphans and the children of broken marriages. While this is linked to land shortages amongst the land poor, it is accentuated throughout society by that the trend towards land-holding becoming more dependent on purchase than inheritance, as purchased land is largely excluded from these wider forms of social rights and entitlements. As André and Platteau (1998) also note in Rwanda, a particularly important transformation has occured in the number of children who are born of marriages which are not 'legal' because poor men have been unable to provide the bridewealth required of a marriage. This has two effects. First, wives of such households usually adopt a strategy of maintaining more independent economic activities. Secondly, wives and the children of such marriages have very poor claims to land. André and Platteau suggest that in Rwanda, the children of more than two thirds of marriages have precarious tenure. Whether or not the proportions are so high in the Kivu case is unclear. The manner in which rights vary with assorted forms of partial payment has evolved, and it has been the young man's responsibility to pay bridewealth, especially among the majority of the poor since the economic collapse of the 1960s and 1970s.

It is not my intention to document in detail how these modes of exaction and economic decline and the social changes associated with them are shaping land use. Rather, I would like to suggest a few implications that will be suggestive of the field that I have explored elsewhere (Fairhead 1990). First, few people now let land, or indeed offer any debt at all. Anyone who does make such arrangements ensures that they are more formalised, restricting how tenants use the land: no perennial crops and no permanent dwellings are allowed. Land use in the region is thus shaped by the need to assert tenure over the land you wish to claim,

by establishing perennial crops, whether coffee, bananas or exotic trees, and building perennial houses, that is, those with metal roofs, or inversely, by refusing these things. This response to tenurial ambiguity is generic to much of East Africa.

Most farmers hold land under a variety of tenure arrangements. For those with limited land, their most secure land must be devoted to perennials that they cannot cultivate elsewhere. These crops tend to reduce erosion and be under the control of men. The more seasonal food crops, those under women's or 'household' control, and which are more erosion-sensitive, tend to be marginalised on lands which farmers hold in a less secure way, often at some distance from home. The tenure system has thus disrupted potentially more sustainable and integrated farming methods. Moreover, the legacy of the history of land possession is that ecologically marginal and highly erosion-prone land has often remained in the possession of chiefs and large landowners. It is these fragile lands which are let to land-poor farmers, who only cultivate seasonal crops there. In this instance, insecure tenure certainly hinders land improvements, although this is not necessarily a general feature of land insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Place and Hazell 1993).

A third impact concerns the greater individual autonomy in economic relations between parents and children, and between husbands and wives. Given the economic tensions that exist in many households, many, especially poorer women have pursued a range of land-use strategies to avoid losing control over their produce. This includes cultivating crops that involve less male participation in production, cultivating outside seasonal patterns, and 'storing in the field' rather than in the house to limit bulk supply (and to protect stocks against soldiers and looting). They also tend to sell stocks earlier.

## Exit Options and Rebel Movements

From the early colonial period, many young men in structurally poor positions had sought an exit option, whether in migration to the copper mines to the south or to Uganda to the east. In the early period, as already noted, attempts were made to track such dissenters down or to harm their families. Out-migration became popular again in the 1960s and 1970s, when Ugandan wages were three times those in Congo. More than half the men living in the village in the 1980s had worked in Uganda at one time, and many others remained. Yet by the 1980s, opportunities for out-migration to find employment had become much more restricted. This was a period when many Congolese began migrating south, into Zambia, Angola and South Africa, acquiring a dubious reputation throughout the continent.

Other alternatives have been speculative gold or coltan digging, or settling in remote regions in the forest. Migrants to these areas, as strangers without secure networks, become subordinate to the mine owners or the land chiefs of the forest

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tracts. Thus while the ability of entrepreneurial migrants to 'get by' has been celebrated as part of the DRC's 'informal economy', this has itself been shadowed by an informal polity, such as those that I have described which gate-keep protection and economic opportunity, and which are linked to modes of protection and exaction. So those taking the mining option – in the DRC, at least – do not escape Kivu's predatory economy.

On occasions, options have emerged to link up with rebels. Thus, the rebel movements linked to the 1965 Mulele rebellion continued in South Kivu until the 1980s. It was eventually restricted in its operations to parts of South Kivu controlling gold mining there and, according to credible accounts (Schatzberg 1988), trading gold with their opponents, the army of Mobutu, in exchange for arms. The rebel commander, Laurent Kabila, traded the remainder of the gold out of Burundi and Tanzania. This earlier 'rebellion' found a way to become self-sustaining. For low-ranking soldiers working among the rebels, or as national soldiers in the '*Zone Rouge*' region of the conflict, the conflict did not provide an opportunity for accumulation. For populations living in theatre of rebellion, it was a decade of impoverishment and depopulation.

In short, wider forms of exaction that date back to early colonial times remain the central forces shaping village life. They shape people's differential relations with the different institutions that link the village to the wider political field and their investments in these. They shape people's access to their own labour, their mobility and personal geography (using footpaths or roads). They shape modes of marriage, inheritance, disinheritance and destitution.

## Coltan and the Current Conflict

Before considering how the contemporary conflict is being shaped by the strategies of foreign powers, I would like to review how the emergent war economy could be understood as a development of these existing economic and political patterns. As with the remnants of the Mulele rebellion, which fought on between 1967 and 1980 under Laurent Kabila, the first rebellion against Mobutu (1996–98, also led by Kabila) and now the second rebellion against Kabila and then his son's presidency has developed into a self-financing – indeed extremely profitable – endeavour.

The new occupying armies took over existing modes of self-financing, based on practices of exaction and forging links with a new, and not so new, economic elite. Yet these dynamics in Kivu were accentuated by the boom in the mining of coltan from late 1999 to early 2001. Coltan is mined in particular areas throughout Kivu. Different mines were captured by different forces. Some mining areas fell under Rwandan and rebel control. Other zones were controlled by their opponents, the former Rwandan army and their militia. According to some informants to the Pole Institute (2001), it is Congolese Hutu (from Bwisha?) who transport the material across the lines to sell in Rwandan controlled areas. Some

mines are controlled by Mai-mai forces, — a militia that began as ethnic-linked protection forces, but which also became freelance in operation. Other mines (e.g. in Lubero) are controlled by Ugandan forces and Ugandan-backed rebels. Militias and armies with their origins in other causes now fight to control the mines. Spoliation now also focuses on coltan mining sites as the object of dispute.

Yet it is not just control of the mines, but also of the control of labour which is important. As the UN report summarises: 'With minor exceptions, the objective of military activity is to secure access to mining sites or ensure a supply of captive labour' (UN 2002, paragraph 93).

Many of the Coltan reserves in the region appear to have been developed initially by young men who gained authorisation by land owners and authorities. Yet now most of the work is no longer conducted by them, but by employees, and coerced labour.

As the final report of the UN panel of experts states:

> The bulk of coltan...as much as 60 to 70 per cent, has been mined under the direct surveillance of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) mining détachés and evacuated by aircraft from airstrips near mining sites directly to Kigali or Cyangugu. No taxes are paid. Rwandan military aircraft, Victor Bout's aircraft and small airline companies are used in the evacuation of the coltan. RPA has maintained control over most of the coltan sites where rich deposits are found, where the percentage of tantalum is high, and where local airstrips are accessible. A variety of forced labour regimes are found at sites that have been managed by RPA mining détachés, some for coltan collection, some for transport, others for domestic services. Many accounts report the widespread use of prisoners imported from Rwanda who work as indentured labour. (UN 2002, paragraph 75)

Other mines remain under the control of manager supervisors, themselves under the surveillance of police monitors. Miners are day labourers without a contract. When the price of coltan fell in 2001, the coltan economy did not cease, but was maintained through the use of conscript and forced labour. One commercial informant to the UN Panel 'explained that, because of the collapsed international coltan market, prices for the mineral in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo had dropped dramatically. However...the continuing international interest in coltan from the Democratic Republic of the Congo is due to the very low labour costs for extracting the mineral' (UN 2002, para 109).

In summing up the mode of illegal exploitation, the UN report identifies networks of:

> a small core of political and military elites and business persons and, in the case of the occupied areas, selected rebel leaders and administrators. Some members of the elite networks occupy key positions in their respective Governments or rebel groups. Members of these networks cooperate to generate revenue and, in the case of Rwanda, institutional financial gain. The elite networks ensure the viability of their economic activities through control over the military and other security forces that they use to intimidate, threaten violence or carry out selected acts of violence. The networks monopolize production, commerce and fiscal functions. The elite networks maintain the facade of rebel administrations in the occupied areas to generate public revenues that they then divert into the networks, thereby depleting the public treasury. (UN 2002)

Most journalistic and academic reports have focused on the smaller-scale coltan exploitation which they have had access to. They focus on the entrepreneurial peasant echoing works celebrating the 'entrepreneurial' means that the poor use to 'get by' (cf. de Boeck 1999; Jackson 2001). From this perspective, the poor's engagement with mining has been considered as one more means of 'getting by', thus exposing the continuities in this mode of economic life. Yet in regions where entrepreneurial youths continue to mine, access is not straightforward. In Rwandan-held areas, they tend to be Rwandan-speaking Tutsi youth. As one informant to the Pole Institute put it, 'At the moment it is a high-risk job, especially if you are not a Hutu or a Tutsi. Our young Hunde miners are shot at point-blank range' (Pole 2001). In other regions, miners, intermediaries and major traders all had to pay a 'licence' fee to RCD rebels, which itself was a major investment. What is missing in this focus on resourcefulness is attention to the less 'heroic' continuities that I have foregrounded in this chapter: the entrepreneurial abilities of the elite, invaders and military. Unfortunately the anthropology of resourcefulness in celebration of everyday struggle and humour has played into the claims of corporations such as the Bayer group, which claim that their tantalum originates from 'peasant suppliers', not from rebel groups. Yet as the UN report bluntly noted at this time, 'in fact, no coltan exits from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo without benefiting either the rebel group or foreign armies.' Missing from our accounts, then, has been the story of the three million who did not 'get by'.

The trade in coltan is also monopolised. The UN report suggests that only:

> A smaller portion, perhaps 15 to 25 per cent of the total coltan exported, is purchased by comptoirs owned by Rwandans who buy from local négotiants at remote coltan sites or from the agents of local defence groups. More typically these comptoirs, owned by Rwandan army officers or those closely linked to the Government of Rwanda, such as MHI comptoir, Eagle Wings or Rwanda Metals, have obtained their own mining sites and conscript their own workers to exploit the sites under severe conditions.

The view of those not involved is that the boom mostly enriches only the elite, whose experience of the coltan economy mirrors that of plantations:

> On the whole the relationship [of the mines] with the authorities is good. With the local population the relationship is not good. The population is unhappy with the mining conditions. They also criticise the fact that mining takes place on the land of large landowners and only benefits them (Pole Institute 2001).

A prevalent image in much of the literature has been the apparent 'banditry' of militia forces. Thus militia have been known to 'attack their own village'; their own 'parents'; even their own traditional chiefs (Jackson 2001). Yet when the differentiated experiences of exaction at the local level are clarified, a common logic of the settling of scores emerges in which chiefly families are targeted by those who have been in structurally subordinate positions.

## International Dimensions to the Conflict

In similar works that sketch out the long history and local manifestations of Congo's looting economy, once dubbed its kleptocracy, one tendency has been to consider it in relation to 'Mobutu' and 'African corruption'. Yet from the outset of Belgian rule, these patterns of governance have reflected international interest in what is now the DRC.

Early Belgian interest in Congo was driven by the pre-First World War rubber boom and the wider 'Scramble for Africa'. While Belgium soon became Congo's main trading partner, the United States became the principal market for its raw materials from the 1940s. Indeed, the country soon gained a Cold War strategic interest for its uranium. By the late 1950s, it had an experimental nuclear reactor, and at independence became a nuclear state. Yet its strategic importance grew further around its cobalt and manganese. As Mazrui and Ajayi note, in the 1970s '[a] major reason why the West was bailing out Mobutu Sese Seko...was the importance of Zaire's cobalt for western technology and industry' (1993:651) This mineral has become strategically central. Indeed, the DRC had the credentials of being the Saudi Arabia of cobalt' (Adedeji 1993, 426). Cobalt is a critical ingredient in the superalloys used in air- and land-based turbine engines, as well as for rechargeable batteries for cell phones and computers. Environmental pressures for zero emission vehicles will massively increase demand for this 'oil of the future'.

Strategic minerals are those that are militarily, politically or economically essential. The most significant strategic minerals are those for which supply is highly concentrated in a limited number of states, from which major military-industrial powers must import. Congo's cobalt and now the tantalum (in coltan) can claim this status. All five major capitalist countries (France, Germany, Japan, UK, USA) are critically[1] dependent on cobalt and Tantalum. The tensile, heat and electrical properties of tantalum make it a crucial ingredient in armour penetration and missile technology, housing radioactive elements, including in nuclear reactors, manufacturing capacitors for third-generation computer technology (e.g. in mobile phones), rocket motors and radiation shielding.

Changing patterns of international resource demand have led to increased import dependence on these minerals. As declared strategic minerals, the US has at times accumulated extensive stockpiles of cobalt and tantalum. This trend towards increasing dependence preoccupies many military and economic strategists the world over. Over the last decade, international security officials have been paying even greater attention to intensified competition over these strategic materials, and this has regained centrality in American Security Planning. Indeed Klare, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, goes further, arguing that there is now a 'new ge-

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1. That is, when supplies come from few suppliers, over long distances, or from a country of a different ideology.

ography of conflict, a reconfigured cartography in which resource flows rather than political and ideological divisions constitute the major fault lines' (2001: 51). Nowhere is this more appropriate than in southern Africa for its minerals and in western Africa for its oil. At the heart of all this is the DRC.

Strategic resources have now acquired further importance following the attacks on the USA on September 11th 2001. First, Africa's 'non-Islamic oil' has become central to the geopolitics of energy. Secondly, as former Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice argued in the context of the US House of Representatives' deliberations on Africa and the war on global terrorism:

> We must recognize that regimes lacking legitimacy and failed states are convenient safe havens as well as breeding grounds for terrorists. If we are serious about our anti-terrorism commitment...the US must become more rather than less engaged in the difficult task of peacemaking, peacekeeping and national reconstruction – from the Great Lakes to Sierra Leone, from Liberia to Sudan and Somalia. We must also find effective ways to secure Africa's vast natural resources – its diamonds, cobalt, uranium, oil, timber, coltan, its gold – so they do not provide currency for the world's terrorists. (Rice 2001: 12)

While these aspects preoccupy strategists, they also offer immense profit to those who control their supply. Strategic minerals tend to be price–inelastic: that is, if prices rise, the amount demanded does not fall. Rather, if supply can be assured, the buyer is often willing to pay a very high price. As Hveem (1986) notes, in strategic terms, embargoes are worse than price increases. Under such conditions, there is a huge potential for monopolistic behaviour, and conglomerates controlling strategic elements can make massive profits by forming cartels, through intra-firm trade etc. There have been many times that neither cobalt nor tantalum have had a traded world price: prices tend to be set by producers or negotiated in contractual arrangements. Those who control these minerals can exert huge leverage ('rents') over industries that depend on them, especially if they form cartels. Control has been highly concentrated at the corporate level.

In the 1990s, for example, the reduction in Zaire's (as it then was) cobalt output (from 10,000 tonnes/annum in 1992 to ca. 2–3,000 tonnes) forced the price up from about $6/pound to $25–$33/pound. This made access to the DRC's cobalt reserves worth more to corporations which control the rest of the world's supply (principally American Mineral Fields, which controls much of Canada's reserves). Informed analysts predict that if the DRC's cobalt production picks up again, the price of cobalt may drop from $25/pound to $7/pound (*The Economist*, May 3rd 1997: 62), massively reducing, for example, the value and extraction profitability of American Mineral Field's Canadian reserves. It is not surprising, then, that the principle firm competing for the DRC's cobalt reserves at that time was AMF, which not only controlled much of the Canadian reserves, but could maintain their value by limiting the DRC's supply. Cuba, the other major cobalt producer, was embargoed internationally.

Entrepreneurs will go to great lengths to secure reserves. Those who already have reserves remain undaunted by backing both sides of a conflict, and even bro-

kering peace negotiations, as Anglo-American did in South Africa. On the other hand, non-established firms who are seeking to capture reserves can back one side, perhaps hoping, in the event of victory, to displace competitors. In the DRC, the major established mining corporations were largely francophone, but following the conflict, anglophone ones are taking over. *Africa Confidential* has referred to 'considerable brawling among foreign investors' and notes that 'French and Belgians, Japanese and South Africans, suspect that the advance of the Alliance's troops will mainly benefit North American mining corporations' (25 April 1997, 38[9], 3).

North American, European and Asian corporations have struck deals with both governments and rebels. At the same time, the world's leading mining corporations have supported protagonists in the conflict, profiting both from their interests there and, indeed, from the increased value of their reserves elsewhere when conflict disrupts Congolese production.

Many of the corporations operating in the DRC and its neighbours have strong political connnections. These are hard to research in detail, but some indication of the links involved can be gauged from the 'revolving door' that sees senior figures in government moving in and out of corporations. In recent years, for example, Barrick Gold, which has large interests in the DRC, has counted three former CIA directors and two former North American Presidents in its management (George Bush Snr., Richard Helms, Robert Gates and Brian Molroney). The Bechtel Corporation, which also worked with Laurent Kabila during his first rebellion, has had former US Secretary of State George Schultz alongside Philip Habib and Casper Weinberger working for it, as well as CIA directors William Casey and Richard Helms. Haliburton Oil – which, together with its subsidiary, Brown and Root, has major oil and other interests in the region – had current US Vice-President Richard Cheyney as its CEO until his nomination. Until recently Chevron Oil, which is now involved in a $2bn investment in the DRC, counted Condoleezza Rice as a member of its board, prior towhich she was a Special Assistant to George Bush, and is now US National Security Advisor. Corporate expansion in conflict zones has coincided with an explosion in private security firms, mostly mercenaries. The largest private security transnationals not only work closely with the US government, but are owned by former members. The Vinnell Corporation of Fairfax, Virginia, for example, is owned by BDM International Inc. and controlled by the Carlyle Group, which counts former ex-CIA Vice-Director Frank Carlucci and US Secretary of State James Baker among its major shareholders. Carlucci was Secretary of Defense under Ronald Reagan and George Bush Snr. and, it might be noted, was also former Second Secretary at the US embassy in the DRC, and later became Deputy Director of the CIA. The nature of corporate and political links can perhaps be gauged well in the work of Cohen & Woods, a Washington-based lobbying firm. On the one hand, this has worked for both mining and security firms who are seeking contracts and concessions in Africa, such as MPRI in Angola, while on the other hand it has

worked for African leaders seeking US political support, such as the late Laurent Kabila. This is managed by Herman Cohen, former Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Jim Woods, former Assistant Secretary of State of US Defense.

The firm that is most implicated in exporting coltan from Rwanda is Trinitech International, which itself owns Eagle Wings Resources. Its main office is in Rwanda, and its manager there in the early 1990s was President Kageme's brother-in-law. It collaborates with the Rwandan People's Army in order to receive privileged access to coltan sites and captive labour. It was exporting to the Ulba Metallurgical Plant in Kazakhstan, to its parent company Trinitech International Inc. in the United States, and to Bayer. Its official owners are Robert and Eileen Raun, the former apparently a luminary of the University of Nebraska, one-time Secretary of Agriculture in that state, and a one-time governor of the Kellogg foundation.

## Conclusion

Environmental resources are fundamental to poor and indebted modern African economies. This paper has focused less on how patterns of governance have been able to influence the management of environmental resources than the inverse, namely how the transnational dimensions of the management of valuable environmental resources influence patterns of governance. It is this that modern policy must address. As Montague has recently argued for the DRC, 'In order for investment to be used as an effective tool for development, multinationals must understand that massive corporate investments have a negative impact on society in the absence of state stability. Indeed, their financial leverage only exacerbates state instability' (Montague 2002: 115). The present chapter has traced how these transnational engagements shape natural resources management.

Secondly, there have been several periods of economic recession, during which the continued profitability of enterprises rooted in these alliances has been maintained by control over unfree labour, in many cases linked either to 'protection racketeering' or to extending control over land. It is clear that the 'war-lord' nature of the contemporary DRC represents an extension of earlier practices that have long been current in the region. The classic distinctions between 'war' and 'peace' throw this strong continuity out of focus. The analysis here supports Keen's argument that 'war can usefully be seen as a deepening of exploitative processes already existing in "normal" times' (1994: 12)

Thirdly, the conflict in the region is not simply about 'one people' against others. Because of this, a prevalent image in much of the literature on conflict in Congo and elsewhere has been the apparent 'banditry' of militia forces. Yet when the differentiated experiences of exaction at the local level are clarified, the form that this takes become more comprehensible. Understanding these attacks re-

quires a consideration of a century of engagement between transnational corporate and imperial interests and Congolese society.

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