Laboured Landscapes
Legacies and Futures of Extraction in Africa

Workshop of the AEGIS CRG ´Resource Extraction in Africa´
Friday 12/10/2018

Workshop Venue
Faculty of Social Sciences, Leiden University
Room: 5A-47
Wassenaarseweg 52
2333 AK Leiden
https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/social-behavioural-sciences/contact

Organizers:
- Sabine Luning, Institute of Culture Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University, sluning@fsw.leidenuniv.nl
- Robert Pijpers, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Hamburg, robert.pijpers@uni-hamburg.de

In the seventies studies of resource extraction, and large-scale economic interventions in the south more broadly (called Third World at the time), focused strongly on labour issues. The more recent debates on large-scale land acquisitions in Africa and elsewhere ('Land grabs') entailed a radical swing to attention for land. Labour seemed a less pertinent issue, particularly due to the fact that the new forms large-scale land use were less labour intensive. Studies focused on competition over land, and Corporate Social Responsibility was seen to move from the relationship between employer/employee to the relation between TNC's and local communities residing in the vicinity of the (mining) operations.

However, a return to the 'labour question' was signalled by the work of scholars such as Tania Li (2009, 2011) who engaged in discussions over redundancy of local populations, precisely because of the current characteristics of large-scale land investments in Africa. This fed into broader moral discussions on the question of benefit sharing: Can and should labour still be considered the major basis for creating value? Should we not move towards new ways of wealth redistribution? In this discussion, with pertinent relevance for economic issues in both North and South, extraction of resources takes centre stage. Ferguson (2016) shows, for instance, how mineral wealth has a long history of being conceived as something that cannot be owned solely

on the basis of labour and capital put into the extraction practices, but as something that belongs to groups of people with long histories in the lands (mostly located in the state as ultimate owner). Subsequently, discussions concerning, for example, resource curse, local content, CSR and employment, can be framed in wider perspectives on (re)distribution of extracted wealth, based on legacies and politics of belonging and more inclusive futures.

The issue of 'Labour' has thus returned in scholarly debates, but embedded in debates over value of land and people living and labouring extractive landscapes. This panel invites papers that address this issue of 'laboured landscapes' and the connected (moral) issues of wealth distribution.

Registration: sluning@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

Programme

08.30	Room open, coffee/tea
08.45 – 09.00	Opening Sabine Luning & Robert Pijpers
09.00 – 09.45	*What is a landscape, anyway? Spatial concepts and metaphors for extractive regions* - Katja Werthmann, University of Leipzig
09.45 – 10.30	*Changing Forest Cover and Land Use Pressures following Oil Discovery in the Northern Albertine Rift Landscape, Western Uganda: Methodological Learning* - Ronald Twongyirwe, Mbarara University of Science and Technology
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee/Tea
11.00 – 11.45	*"Tãngpogse": Downhill's women. Construction of a social status on the South-West gold mining sites (Burkina Faso)* - Alizèta Ouedraogo, l'Université Lumière Lyon 2
11.45 – 12.30	*Women in the Katangese mining sector: surplus or added value?* - Francesca Pugliese, University of Liège
12.30 – 13.45	Lunch
13.45 – 14.30	*Unequal Extractions in China's Ghanaian Gold Rush: Bringing Class Back In* - Gordon Crawford, Coventry University
14.30 – 15.15	*Mining capital, land, and labour in the Congolese copperbelt* - Benjamin Rubbers, University of Liege
15.15 – 15.45	Coffee/Tea

15.45 – 16.30	*Labour, ownership and transparency from the end-side perspective of the gold supply chain* - Matthieu Bolay, The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva
16.30 – 17.15	*Flexibilization, social distinctions and masculinities: A case of Zambia's Mining sector* - James Musonda, University of Liege
17.15 – 17.30	Closure

Abstracts of presentations

What is a landscape, anyway? Spatial concepts and metaphors for extractive regions

Katja Werthmann, University of Leipzig

In many studies from the social sciences on resource extraction, especially mining, spatial concepts like "frontier", "borderland" or "enclave" have been used repeatedly for mining regions and their socio-spatial environments, often in a rather metaphorical way. Whereas the notion of the "frontier" evokes open horizons and unknown possibilities, the "enclave" is associated with disconnection and opaqueness. "Borderlands" are spaces of opportunity for entrepreneurs, but at the same time spaces of marginalization and insecurity for many.

Recently, the terms "operational landscape" and "minescape" have been proposed as concepts that capture the multidimensionality of extractive activities, which include a variety of actors, scales, temporalities and materialities. "Operational landscapes" are an integral element of what Brenner (2014) calls "planetary urbanization". Ey & Sherval (2016) use "minescape" as a "conceptual tool" for "representing and encompassing the nuances of the everchanging extractive sector".

This paper discusses spatial concepts and metaphors for extractive regions. Are such spatial concepts and metaphors useful for capturing the complexity of extractive activities and their social and spatial contexts? Do these concepts resonate with emic notions of spaces and spatialization? Can they elucidate the relation between labour and landscape?

- Brenner, Neil (ed.), 2014: Implosions/Explosions. Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization. Berlin: jovis.
- Ey, Melina & Meg Sherval, 2016. Exploring the Minescape: Engaging with the Complexity of the Extractive Sector. Area 48 (2): 176-182.

Changing Forest Cover and Land Use Pressures following Oil Discovery in the Northern Albertine Rift Landscape, Western Uganda: Methodological Learning

Ronald Twongyirwe, Mbarara University of Science and Technology

The Northern Albertine Rift Landscape (NARL) is endowed with some of the largest natural forests in Uganda (e.g. Budongo and Bugoma), with rich biodiversity, but has suffered extensive deforestation in the last 30 years. Oil was recently discovered in the landscape and extraction

plans are underway. This has increased pressure on natural resources and heightened the potential for resource use conflicts. Central to these natural resource use pressures are competing interests over land for agriculture, settlement and industrial development. This undermines people's livelihoods, and threatens biodiversity conservation. In this presentation, we show the extent to which natural forests have been lost over a recent 30–year period based on remote sensing imagery, social surveys and ground truth data (generated during the first author's PhD studentship). In particular, we elaborate the aggressive expansion of the sugarcane out–grower scheme and small-scale agriculture – the main drivers of natural forest erosion on private land around Budongo; but show how the militarised protection of the gazetted forests has been successful. We obtained some additional funding to understand the potential impact of the oil industry in this complex socio-ecological system. In the second part of the presentation, we share insights on how mixed methodologies could be used to generate sensitive data in geographically contested landscapes. The mixed approaches include: remote sensing, social surveys, and agent-based modelling (ABM). The ABM process includes conceptualisation, generation of model runs, and use of results in a participatory manner with local communities. This approach has the potential to enhance transparency of the model and inform decision making, for policy formulation and conflict management.

"Tãngpogse": Downhill's women. Construction of a social status on the South-West gold mining sites (Burkina Faso)

Alizèta Ouedraogo, Laboratoire Des Enjeux Contemporains, Lyon2 / ENS-Lyon / CNRS

Since the 1980s, artisanal gold mining has emerged in many countries in West Africa. In Burkina Faso, especially in the South-West region in the Lobi country, artisanal gold mining in those years was practiced only by women. The 2000s are characterized by a massive arrival in the region of many migrant gold miners (women and men) from neighboring countries (Ivory Coast, Mali, Ghana, Niger, Togo and Benin) and other regions of Burkina Faso. This situation is explained by the increasing impoverishment of the populations, especially the rural one because of the great droughts and bad agricultural productions in West Africa. Consequently, the native and non-native women and men find themselves in competition on the gold sites.

The concept of "tãngpogse" is created by artisanal miners to refer to women staying on gold panning sites. This has resulted into consequences for the family life of miners such as family crumbling and dislocation, difficulties related to children education, unfaithfulness, polygamy and break-ups (divorces).

Our communication will focus on gender-based anthropological analysis of gold-bearing sites, the construction of a social identity, and the sexual division of labor.

Women in the Katangese mining sector: surplus or added value?

Francesca Pugliese, University of Liège

Over the last decades, with the boom in foreign mining investments, the number of women working in the mining industry of the Haut Katanga region (RDC) has steadily increased. The employment of women remains mainly relegated to artisanal mining, and only rarely can women obtain a stable job in the new transnational mining companies, and thus fully benefit from the economic opportunities generated by the increased extraction of mineral resources. Through a discussion of case studies, this paper analyzes the situation of the Congolese female workers and their double difficulty to profit from the country's mining wealth: as locals and as women. Indeed, according to T.M. Li, large-scale land (and mining, in this case) investments do not necessarily imply a gain for the locals, which instead, in many cases, are considered as a surplus in the mining formal sector, generally in need of highly-skilled employees. Hence, in a society where women willing to work are often hampered by their own families, it is understandable how low their possibilities are to enter the formal mining sector, which even highly educated Congolese male workers struggle to access and see as a significant achievement in their careers. Based on ethnographic research in various mining companies during 2017 and 2018, this paper explores exceptional cases of female workers in the formal sector, their access to employment and the strategies to maintain their working position, generally thought of as naturally reserved for men. By analyzing the condition of the female mining workers, this paper aims to reflect on the issue of wealth distribution from the gender point of view.

Unequal Extractions in China's Ghanaian Gold Rush: Bringing Class Back In

Gordon Crawford, Coventry University
Nicholas Loubere, Lund University

Since the mid 2000s, tens of thousands of Chinese citizens from a single rural poverty-stricken county in the southern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region have been migrating to Ghana in order to engage in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASM). The Chinese miners have rented farmland in rural areas, often near rivers, and have imported their own mining equipment,

including for river dredging, which has allowed them to rapidly scale up the extraction of alluvial gold. This mass migration event has created new forms of cooperation between Chinese miners and local Ghanaians, but has also resulted in substantial environmental degradation and some violent conflict. Moreover, foreign involvement in small-scale mining is formally illegal. In mid-2013 the Ghanaian government initiated a nation-wide crackdown on illegal mining activities, deporting nearly 5,000 Chinese miners. This was followed in April 2017 by a complete moratorium on ASM in the country for locals and foreigners alike, which continues to this day.

The Chinese presence in the Ghanaian ASM sector has been widely covered in domestic and international media. There is also a growing body of academic literature examining this event and its outcomes. With some notable exceptions, the majority of media coverage and academic literature on the topic depicts the Chinese miners as a homogenous group equally benefiting from the gold rush, and having a uniform impact on the local society, economy, and environment in Ghana. This paper argues that this dominant discourse neglects to highlight the segmentation that exists within the migrant miner group, and the uneven ways in which the Chinese ASM activities have impacted on local populations. Drawing on in-depth fieldwork in both Ghana and China, we illuminate the ways in which mining operations are differentiated between investors and workers, creating winners and losers among and between Ghanaians, the Chinese miners, and their families back in China. This nuances the oft-told story of the successful Chinese miner extracting wealth from Ghana to send back to China, and instead paints a picture of a heavily textured labour landscape segmented along class lines.

Mining capital, land, and labour in the Congolese copperbelt

Benjamin Rubbers, University of Liege

According to T.M. LI, far from reducing poverty, the promotion of FDI in agriculture leads to the dispossession of a growing number of small farmers without providing them with alternative livelihood opportunities. Highly mechanized, the new mega farms simply do not need their labour. Developed on the basis of research on rural development programs in Indonesia, this analysis has been expanded to various forms of large-scale land acquisition in Asia and the global South. An increasing proportion of the world's population, Li argues, is becoming 'surplus' to capital's requirements.

Following her invitation to study this issue in comparative perspective, my paper aims to assess the relevance of Li's argument for mining investments in the Congolese copperbelt, where large concessions of land have been granted to foreign companies in the last two decades. I will first attempt to refine and nuance Li's broad analysis by drawing attention to the specificity of

this context with respect to three aspects: access to land; access to employment; and variations between mining projects. After this general discussion, I will focus on a case study (Tenke Fungurume Mining) that fits particularly well in Li's scenario, as the development of this mining project has entailed the displacement of several villages and the forced eviction of thousands of artisanal miners. In addition, although this company set up a recruiting procedure giving priority to the 'local community', voices denouncing the marginalisation of local people in access to employment were raised early on. To conclude, some of these dissenting voices will be examined in more details to reflect on their politics, the forms of redistribution that they call for, and their limitations.

Labour, ownership and transparency from the end-side perspective of the gold supply chain

Matthieu Bolay, Centre on Conflict, Development & Peacebuilding

The expansion of gold mining – both large and small scale – is being documented by a growing number of studies mainly focusing on the production-side of the supply chain. Yet, the end side (trade and consumption) tend to be neglected in the anthropological (and akin) literature. Looking at gold production from the end of the supply chain allows to rethink taken for granted distinctions, for example between "capital and labour intensive", "large and small-scale" or "formal and informal" mining for the diversity of production circuits tend to merge across the mineral's lifespan. In this process, the refinery industry plays a key role by conflating technical procedures, certification schemes, and by acting as a catalyst for trade, thus linking production circuits with the consumption side of the chain.

With growing media interest, consumers' concerns and advocacy pressure, this discrete industry has recently received greater attention. In Switzerland, where it has historical roots, the industry is directly concerned by a federal initiative on "responsible multinational companies" which may change the Swiss constitution and impose due diligence to refiners' supply chains, thus enacting public expectations of greater "transparency" in the mining sector. Because of their position, refiners are deemed to be accountable for labour ("human rights") and land ("the environment") at the bottom of the chain and are expected to enact a transparency regime upon which a more inclusive distribution of wealth could be envisioned.

Based on preliminary fieldwork with actors of the refinery and trade industry in Switzerland, as well as with politics and advocacy groups, this paper aims at opening the transparency "back box" and bring some initial insights about how labour and land are (or not)

made ethical objects through competing discourses and practices at play in the construction of gold's "transparency".

Flexibilization, social distinctions and masculinities: A case of Zambia's Mining sector

James Musonda, University of Liege

Mass and frequent retrenchments of workers, and the introduction flexible work arrangements (i.e. subcontracting, precarious work, and casualisation), have been the most salient outcomes of the privatisation of Zambia's mining sector. Accordingly, recent research rightly observes that workers, especially those subcontracted are the real losers. The remaining few in direct employment experience persistent employment uncertainty, due to frequent global economic crises that affect commodity prices especially copper. These processes are also creating difficulties for trade union organisation by reducing the number of potential union members as well as resistance to unionisation by the new employers, and hence increasing the vulnerability of workers. This paper goes beyond the challenges faced by subcontracted mineworkers, to consider how subcontracting is leading to new forms of social distinctions and masculine identities.

To illustrate my point, I draw on specific examples from various aspects of the work experience: wages and conditions of work, health and safety, nature of work, relative position of subcontracted workers, employments contracts, and unionisation. Using ethnographic evidence from a Zambian underground copper mine, I show how social distinctions find expression in these aspects of work and hence contribute to new forms of masculine identities. I argue that subcontracting in mining goes beyond worker's vulnerability to affect masculine identities and subjectivities. Therefore, for a more complete understanding of the new labour relations, we need also to pay attention to the social relations and work processes.

This paper is part of a larger ERC funded "WorkingMining" comparative project that investigates social changes attributable to new multinational mining companies, post-privatisation. In my PhD thesis, I investigate various aspects of work experience (the labour process, gender, loans, safety, and living in mining communities.