

NEOEXTRACTIVISM IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO AND ANGOLA. BETWEEN NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION, REGIONAL TRENDS AND LOCAL PARTICULARITIES

David Mouzo Williams¹



Introduction

This article aims to investigate the formation of extractive enclaves in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)², and its possible projections in the rest of Africa, mainly through comparison with another case, that of the Republic of Angola. For this, the African continental insertion within the neoliberal globalization in the period 1970-2000 will be taken into account, particularly the imposition of the Structural Adjustment Programs, by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Understanding that this is part of the same capitalist restructuring, the contributions of extractivism in Latin America will be used as part of the same global South.

Conceiving it as a “neoextractivism” (Svampa 2019), within a “jumping-globe” neoliberal globalization (Ferguson 2007), the transformations of the figures of war conflicts and the privatization of sovereignty will be analyzed, particularly the cases of mercenaries and militias. The interest of a comparative study between the DRC and Angola lies in a series of advantages

¹ Center for Asian and African Studies, Colegio de México. Mexico City, Mexico. E-mail: dmouzo@colmex.mx. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4688-0149>.

² From now on and in the rest of the article, the DRC abbreviation will be used for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, both for brevity and to continue differentiating it from the state of the Republic of the Congo.

for the broader analysis of this planetary capitalist restructuring, thanks to its distinctive characteristics, but within comparable neo-extractivist models. When considering how both Central African border states were affected by the two oil crises and devaluation of the dollar in the 1970s, with their oscillation in the international prices of raw materials, it will be possible to observe the regional tendencies in which they are inserted, as well as the local peculiarities that differentiate it. The recent Congolese and Angolan history is contextualized in an enormous appreciation of exportable raw materials, or commodities, particularly hydrocarbons and strategic minerals³, whose demand grew between 600 and 2,000% by the industrialized powers; however, new technologies and new less expensive sources have made it possible to make it enormously cheaper for the global North (Tardif 2014, 768-69). In this sense, responding to the particularities of the respective states, there is the reincorporation into the world economy of Angola, previously an exporter of corn and coffee (Ouriques and Nunes de Alvear 2017, 394) and of the DRC, previously an exporter of copper (Gentili 2012, 206) under new roles.

Approaches to neoliberalism and neoextractivism in Central Africa

David Harvey (2007) defined neoliberalism as a theory of political economy that conceives that maximum human well-being can only be achieved through a “liberalization” of individual entrepreneurship, which requires free exchange, free markets and private property. The role of the state would only be equivalent to sustaining or, if necessary, creating these pillars through its traditional mechanisms (armed forces and central bank), but it should not intervene in an already consolidated market. Neoliberal capitalism has developed unevenly across the globe, while neoliberalization since the 1970s has not occurred uniformly, qualitatively or quantitatively. Even more, that very logic of uneven geographical development would fuel neoliberalization through competition (Harvey 2007, 87). In this sense, it has traditionally been thought that *Africa*, as a geographical space, category and “imagined homogeneous space”, has been marginalized or completely outside of that planetary interconnection that neoliberal globalization has meant (Ferguson 2007, 6).

3 Within this terminology minerals such as gold, coltan-tantalite, tungsten and cassiterite-tin are gathered.

The foregoing would be well demonstrated by its invisibility in the bibliography on the matter, whether celebrating or criticizing this new pattern of accumulation; the problems do not seem to surface when talking about the “dangers” that cultural globalization would represent for Africa (Ferguson 2007, 34), but they do when it is framed in economic globalization, mainly because it does not seem to fit the narratives of both the defenders and detractors of neoliberal policies (Ferguson 2007, 25-26). In this sense, one of the great narratives typically vociferated by the defenders of neoliberalism is that the economic recipes of the international financial institutions (IFIs) were insufficient and that their “truncation” was a consequence of the African citizens themselves. Provisionally, we could say that the epistemological denial or invisibility of these connections cannot but have consequences, among others: the (re)creation of an imagined otherness, while globalization brings with it an “afterwards” that Africa is not and will never be part, and, linked to the above, that the opacity of the neoliberal reforms in the African space brings with it a denial of its already visible consequences. This would not only revive that image of an isolated continent, but could even enable the deepening of this type of policy.

Taking from previous and more recent contributions, neoliberal globalization would not have a tendency of convergence or homogeneous coverage of the globe under its logic, but rather a behavior of “jumps” from one point to another, leaving vast regions simply ignored. Thus, the fluid movements of capital do not cover the globe, but rather connect points with each other, in what Ferguson (2007, 38) calls *globe-hopping* behavior, and not *globe-covering*. Neoliberalization leads to, following Harvey’s line, the creation of competitive spaces and spatialities (Harvey 2007, 156), or paraphrasing Ferguson (2007, 13-14), to the creation of extractive enclaves, dedicated mainly to the exploitation of commodities, such as precious and strategic minerals and hydrocarbons. Hence the interest of an analysis of the regional trends of the extractive export economy in Central Africa, where Angola has played a leading role from 1980 onwards in its acceleration, but which will not imply an easily transferable “model”, but will require of an analysis of the regional

and local interrelationships that led to the specific implantation of neoliberal neo-extractivism, as well as the differences in other cases⁴.

This will be called “neo-extractivism” in the article, as an installation of extractive enclaves and particularly in its extreme figures (Svampa 2019, 69), thinking of the cases of the Latin American Southern Cone but connecting it with Central Africa, as part of the global South. This neo-extractivism will include an increase in parastatal violence, criminalization of socio-environmental resistance, an accelerated appropriation of resources for export, disintegration of the social fabric due to the accentuation of previous inequalities such as class and gender differences, distinctive spatialization with respect to territories non-extractive, and a proliferation of masculinized violence (Svampa 2019, 71-73).

Africa in neoliberal globalization, 1970-2020

The African continent has sustained an average growth rate of 5% since 2000, falling to 2.5% with the international crisis of 2008, but resuming and even increasing to more than 6%, comparable to the emerging countries of Asia (B. Kabunda 2016, 38). However, these positive indicators are concentrated solely in the GDP and have been achieved through a favorable situation for raw materials, but at the cost of a stagnation in productive diversification, the advance of neoliberal reforms, environmental destruction and the increase in inequality and social injustices, around the redistribution of income and in part due to the similar recipes of the IFIs, especially since the 1980s. It is not only the Western powers that have an unusual presence in the African continent and, even more, its insertion has not been the same in recent decades.

The 1990s and the new millennium brought with them the creation and reformulation of new institutions that facilitated the neoliberalization movements, trying to homogenize those previous tendencies. Firstly, the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, which changed the relationship of authority by establishing a tripartite system between that

4 In this sense, Ferguson mentions an “Angola model”, which contrasts with a previous “Zambia model”, and which respectively imply a change in the constitution of the African states in the face of the advance of neoliberal globalization. According to Ferguson, from 1980 onwards there would be an expansion of the characteristics of Angola throughout Central Africa. However, in this work it was decided not to literally use the name of a model centered around Angola, as it is not intended to demonize a state and its population, but to contribute to a comparative study (Ferguson 2007, 201-202).

organization, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). On the other hand, multiple African leaders, in an attempt to make their incorporation into “globalization” effective (or even deeper), promoted the conversion of the Organization of the African Union (OAU) into the African Union (AU) in 2001. In the same year, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) was adopted, with the objectives of reducing poverty and promoting the economy from the African leaders themselves.

Despite the redemptive aspects of these institutions, the transformation towards the AU meant the abandonment of an attempt at a Third World and Afrocentric perspective, while NEPAD has committed a complacent paternalism towards the global North. In this sense, there has been an internalization of the neoliberal guidelines, and particularly of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) – privatization, liberalization and foreign investment regime – that had been inserted with the debt crisis in 1980 (Benavides De La Vega 2007, 40-43). In this sense, neoliberal globalization will not be merely a new partition of Africa, but a capitalist reorganization that projects a reestablishment of the economic-political power of the elites, including those belonging to some African governments. For this purpose, these spare parts of regional and continental organizations in Africa will be used, by force of pressure from African powers, and in accordance with the guidelines of the G8 and “good governance”. On the other hand, one of the opacities derived from the traditional bibliography of neoliberalism and specifically when talking about Africa is the notion that there have not been great changes in its forms of exploitation and commercial partners. On the contrary, this section emphasizes these transformations within neoliberal globalization.

As a counterbalance to the US on the African continent and as a way to circumvent its pressures, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the appeal of its “pragmatic cooperation” have risen. Although the Chinese presence on the African continent has its origins in the founding of the PRC in 1949 and particularly in the Bandung Conference in 1955, supporting the non-aligned countries (Ouriques and Nunes de Alvear 2017, 388), after the 1990s liberalization undertaken by Deng Xiaoping revitalized the PRC’s competition with other powers for natural resources and markets in Africa (Castel 2006, 95-96). Chinese investments in the continent have increased from almost 500 million dollars in 2003 to more than 22.9 billion dollars in 2012 (Ouriques and Nunes de Alvear 2017, 390). The needs for oil supply and commercial transactions also promoted the introduction of India in the African continent, which had a spectacular increase in 1990-2010, although much less than the Chinese insertion (Kumar and Stanzel 2016).

Many have argued that the goal of the PRC, with its resource provisioning, export market expansion, and lending and investment projects, is to create a multipolar world order and diversify the monetary system (B. M. Kabunda 2008a, 7-8). Furthermore, the interests of the African states in establishing relations with China and India, for their part, are explained not only by the need for foreign currency, but also ideologically by the lack of a colonial past and the diplomatic support that these nations had in the African anti-colonial struggle.

Mainly interested in oil and strategic minerals, unlike with other trading partners, China does not seem to put trade barriers for ideological reasons to the African states with which it establishes relations (it does not require compliance with prerequisites of transparency, non-recognition of Taiwan or environmental respect). In this sense, some African governments that have been sanctioned and/or in conflict have been able to avoid blockades, obtaining diplomatic support, investments and arms supplies from China (Castel 2006, 97-98), which may have, as a consequence, financial support for authoritarian regimes, which would otherwise be affected by international blockades. It is not necessary to affirm that the reincorporation of Africa into the world market occurred in terms of the periphery (Ouriques and Nunes de Alvear 2017, 410), but it can be considered that it has constituted a fragile growth, based on exports with a minimum of added value and a volatile vulnerability due to price fluctuations, consolidating a deindustrialization already promoted by the aforementioned SAP (Kabunda 2016, 45). This has been a common denominator with other cases of the global South, which leads us to use the category of “neo-extractivism”, which will be the form of this neoliberal insertion by Africa, and particularly in the cases of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The privatization of sovereignty

Within this neoliberal globalization, a fundamental mechanism of capitalist accumulation will be the advance of the privatization of sovereignty, both by armed groups or militias, and the proliferation of mercenaries or military contractors. In turn, these changes will be related to transformations at the international level.

Firstly, after the attacks of September 11, 2001, from Washington there is simultaneously a change of categorization of political-social instability in Sub-Saharan Africa — as an international problem, part of the “war on

terror”, which required greater interventions by the US and the European Union — and a change in international economic aid — reduction of budget items and greater channeling of that aid in the form of “incentives” for foreign investment — (Reno 2005, 65-66). If the US pyrrhic victory in Somalia (1993) temporarily conditioned reluctance to direct military intervention, the US presence now consists more of a combination of interests — supply of raw materials/energy, geostrategy and security —, and therefore its criticism has focused on those African states with which it has had disputes, such as Sudan and Zimbabwe. Still, they have ignored respect for human rights and democracy in other cases. This change in the figures of the war after 2001 has also implied the proliferation of mercenaries. From a historical perspective, the use of mercenaries in the African continent in the Modern Age dates back to the colonial administration, but in recent history their participation in issues of internal and external sovereignty did not mean a deprivation of the participation of troops belonging to Armed Forces of Western Sovereign States.

However, four processes push back the participation of foreign powers and enable the proliferation of mercenaries or self-styled private military companies (PMC). The first instance was the signing of peace between Angola, Cuba and the Republic of South Africa in 1988, which led to the withdrawal of Cuban and Soviet troops from Angolan territory, and the second occurred with the abolition of South African apartheid in 1994 (Álvarez Cobelas 2001, 37). The others were the already mentioned US political-military disaster in Somalia during Operation Restore Hope (1993) and the genocide of more than 800,000 people, mostly Hutus and moderate Tutsis, in Rwanda (1994), which discouraged the unusual military intervention of non-Africans (Bessis 2004, 93). The ambiguous legislation of the figure of the mercenary/military contractor, as well as a neoliberal discourse that has wanted to attack them as indiscernible private entrepreneurs from the blue helmets (Álvarez Cobelas 2001, 49) has made their use possible not only in situations of armed conflict, but also to protect extractive enclaves and national parks (Ferguson 2007, 46-47).

In this sense, in the context of neo-extractivism, one of the favorite ways to reaffirm a differentiated spatialization has been through the use of privatized forces, and typically foreign or at least foreign to the exploited territory in question. In the African continent, the use of these mercenary forces and the payment for their services based on concessions in productive exploitation (especially in the mining and hydrocarbons sector) have proliferated (Levy Martínez 2010, 95), being the case of Angola a pioneer and paradigmatic in this regard (Ferguson 2007, 199-200). However, this has not been the only way in which the privatization of sovereignty has converged

with neo-extractivism, as in its extreme figures it intersects with the presence of criminal networks (Svampa 2019, 75).

In this sense, when there is no presence of foreign military contractors, the same plundering mechanisms can occur through militias or non-state armed groups, particularly in contexts of multiple governance and the imposition of arbitrary exactions. In a context of de facto regulatory plurality in the mines of eastern Congo, particularly in cases such as mining in South Kivu, there is what Marie Müller-Koné (2015) calls “*débrouillardise*”. That is, a series of informal practices in the context of small-scale artisanal mining and without concessions to industrialized private companies. There is not a single preponderance of non-state and illegal actors, but a coexistence of state institutions, community authorities and different types of military and paramilitary agents. Even more, the formalization of these practices can occur through public recognition by the state apparatus, while the military, officials and militias will use forms of harassment and coercion to impose tax extractions (Müller-Koné 2015, 157-59). The modus operandi of these is given: (1) through the control of the mines themselves and the collection of taxes from transporters and international buyers, and (2) through sporadic attacks on mining villages, as a form of demonstrating their ability to flog communities and coerce the government into negotiating with them (Tardif 2014, 783-84).

The Republic of Angola

The Republic of Angola covers an area of 1,246,700 km² on the western coast of southern Africa, and has borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Namibia, as well as access to the Atlantic Ocean. A unitary presidential republic with its capital in Luanda, Angola is divided into 18 provinces and has a population of over 30,175,000 people. It has oil reserves that have made it the second largest oil exporter in sub-Saharan Africa, after Nigeria (Levy Martínez 2010, 91), as well as diamond deposits, great biodiversity and more than 47 hydrographic basins (Marchetti 2016, 101).

Part of the Africa colonized by the Portuguese, Angola achieved its independence in the period 1961-1975, thanks to the armed struggle of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA, in Portuguese), of Marxist-Leninist roots and with the support of the USSR, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA, in Portuguese), with Maoist roots and supported by the PRC, and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA, in Portuguese), supported by the Congolese regime of Mobutu

Sese Seko and the US (Levy Martínez 2010, 86). The call for independence by a government of Portuguese officials in Luanda leads to internal combat between the armed groups: the FNLA is defeated, so UNITA (now backed by the US and apartheid South Africa) confronts the MPLA (with support from Cuba) in the period 1975-2002. The civil war implied the death of more than a million people and the displacement of more than four million inhabitants (Marchetti 2016, 100). The conflict subsides towards 1998 and seems to end with the 2002 armistice, which inaugurates the arrival of the MPLA to the government, the demilitarization and transformation of UNITA into a political party and the beginning of an internationally validated discourse of national normalization (Levy Martínez 2010, 81-82).

Following the lines drawn for the continent, in Angola and despite a double-digit annual GDP growth in the 2010s, the wealth derived from oil and diamond exploitation has been unequally distributed among the population, concentrating around a political class and military leaders, combining mechanisms of corruption and clientelism (Levy Martínez 2010, 92). It should be noted that, throughout this period, from 1975 and until his resignation in 2017, José Eduardo dos Santos ruled the country; his departure and his replacement by João Manuel Lourenço did not imply the loss of preeminence of the MPLA in the government.

Although Angola depended for years on the US as the main buyer to carry out this growth, by 2010 its role was diminishing (Ouriques and Nunes de Alvear 2017, 402), which is related not only to the intensification of fracking for domestic production towards 2012 (Marchetti 2016, 101), but also with the aforementioned Chinese insertion and the Angolan entry to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which give Angola greater negotiating capacity (Levy Martínez 2010, 94). All this is related to the recent changes in the continent already introduced in the previous section, as well as the organization of certain extractivist states under the aegis of regional organizations, which feedback their insertion into neoliberal globalization.

On the other hand, the Angolan case is one of the few where there have been direct investments from the PRC, particularly loans focused on infrastructural reconstruction after the consequences of the civil war (Maribel and Vélez 2011, 590); this has included roads, health centers, irrigation systems, education, telecommunications etc., being able to access credit that had been denied by the IFIs (Ouriques and Nunes de Alvear 2017, 408). In this, Angola has managed to disengage from external indebtedness with the IMF, among others (Levy Martínez 2010, 98).

Beyond the attempts by the national government to diversify the economy towards non-oil sectors (Marchetti 2016, 102), 80% of the Angolan GDP is still based on oil production, and specifically on the export of crude oil, as there is only one refinery in the country (Barciela 2019), which has brought with it extreme vulnerability to price crises such as those of 2008 (Ouriques and Nunes de Alvear 2017, 412) and again around 2014, due to an international supply of crude that exceeded demand (Marchetti 2016, 102).

Oil exploitation in Angola is concentrated on oil platforms (off-shore) far from the coast, and increasingly in deep water; these are worked by temporary wage earners brought from abroad and who live temporarily in gated communities, so that effectively the profit, production and labor of this exploitation does not touch Angolan soil (Ferguson 2005, 378). For all of the above, the case of Angola accounts for the insertion in neo-extractivism under certain characteristics born from the particularities of its oil exploitation and civil war. In this sense, it will be characterized by an intensive use of technology with specialized foreign workers, which implies a divorce of this exploitation from the rest of the economy and society. To consolidate this neo-extractivism, a foreignized and privatized military workforce has been systematically used. Thus, the case of Angola shows a state, based especially on private spheres, mainly on the more than 150 PMC present in the territory, which continue to be used especially in areas rich in diamonds and oil that are still in conflict, such as the province of Cabinda (Levy Martínez 2010, 89).

This phenomenon, which arises in the aforementioned broader context of reimplantation of mercenary forces on the continent, in Angola particularly responds to the 1975-2002 civil war, but goes beyond this period of conflict and is normalized by the state recognition of these forces. Thus, the hiring of the South African Executive Outcomes during the conflict between the MPLA and UNITA was done through the oil company Heritage Oil as an intermediary (Levy Martínez 2010, 93); the success of its military campaigns led the MPLA to entrust them with the training of the national army (Ferguson 2007, 200) and ensure their loyalties through oil and diamond exploitation concessions. At the same time, UNITA maintained illegal routes for these resources, during and after the civil war.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

There, as in the cases of the DRC, attempts have also been made to promote the creation of extractive enclaves, “patches” of extraction. Ferguson

states that “increasing technological sophistication and spatial isolation in mining enclaves have made mining [...] more and more similar to oil extraction” (2007, 378, our translation)⁵. However, what the American anthropologist points out as the actions of private military contractors, in the DRC is explained rather by complicity with illegal armed groups, while in the two Kivu alone there are approximately 130 illegal armed groups (Congo Research Group 2019).

As noted, in Angola a spatial differentiation coincides with an isolated geographical location of the exploited resources, effectively “escaping” in a double sense (Ferguson 2007, 198-200), which has deepened with the aforementioned devices of corruption, forces privatized navies and offshore companies. However, in the case of the DRC, neo-extractivism will be implanted in a differentiated way due to geographical particularities, armed conflicts, small-scale artisanal exploitation and the physiognomy of its extracted resources.

This has been a trend favored by the SAP, as these guidelines have promoted the creation of free zones of exploitation, with exemption from taxes and other advantages for private capital, excluding the majority of the population (Gentili 2012, 498). In this model, it has only been necessary to secure an exploitation space, some extractive enclaves typically reaffirmed by private security and access to the external market, thanks to telecommunications or air transport; they are operations that do not require the provision of national sovereignty or the presence of banking, financial and/or social security structures, but only the contractual legality issued by some eroded African states (Ferguson 2007, 207). This follows the aforementioned idea of capital as a “jumping-globe” (globalization), also proposed by Ferguson (2007), which feeds and feeds back on the weakening of state apparatuses. Contrary to what was announced discursively, in neoliberal globalization the IFIs have weakened the state from above (through international law and the international economy) and even from below (through the promotion of centrifugal cultural and religious movements), with the prejudice that state accumulation was inefficient and/or prone to corruption, and the private sector would be the only source of development and efficiency (Kabunda Badi 2008b, 79), in those spaces where productive capital has not been inserted and the state has regressed, NGOs take a greater role (Ferguson 2007, 379).

The insertion of the DRC in this model of neo-extractivism must be understood within the particularities of its spatial distribution and recent

5 In the original: “el incremento de la sofisticación tecnológica y aislamiento espacial en enclaves mineros han hecho de la minería [...] cada vez más y más parecida a la extracción petrolera” (Ferguson, 2007, 378).

history: a greater demographic density in the DRC occurs in the extreme southwest (where the capital Kinshasa and the province of Central Congo are located) and center-east part (where the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Maniema and Tanganyika are located) of the territory. Human agglutination in eastern Congo, in the border area with Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi, coincides with most of the distribution of resources, the DRC being rich in strategic minerals, particularly columbian tantalite or coltan, of which it has 80% of world reserves (Omer and Lugardo 2011, 337). A dictatorial, one-party and neo-patrimonial regime led by General Mobutu Sese Seko for more than thirty years is rising (Lugardo 2012, 68-69).

The decline of its system already began around the seventies, due to the fall in international prices of raw materials in 1973 and the attempt to recover the multiparty system, with the call for legislative elections in 1977 (Lugardo 2005, 690). It will be the combination of these factors with the regionalization of the Tutsi-Hutu conflict, after the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 (Lugardo 2012, 94-95), leading to the First Congo War (1996-1997), in which the ADFLC (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire), led by Laurent Kabila, rapidly advanced across the country and seized the capital of Kinshasa, overthrowing the Mobutist regime and anointing Kabila as president. Subsequently, the “Second Congolese War” or “African World War” (1998-2003) broke out, around the debts of the Congolese government with Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, which supported the campaigns of the ADFLC, the actions of the illegal armed groups on the borders and the interference of the latter in mining production.

With nine African nations involved, more than three million people killed in this period alone (Autesserre 2006, 1-2), and twenty million displaced, accumulating more deaths and the impossibility of education and training for minors (Omer and Lugardo 2011, 343), an armistice is reached with the Pretoria Accord. Laurent Kabila's assassination in 2001 and the subsequent power vacuum was immediately filled by his son, Joseph Kabila. The explosion of the borders of the DRC, Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda during these conflicts led to a proliferation of militias, mainly in the east, some of them led by once big-men intermediaries of the Mobutist regime (Lugardo 2012, 57-58). Furthermore, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (AFDRC) are nourished by the normalization of armed groups as traditional soldiers (Lugardo 2012, 189), who have continued to be poorly paid and trained, and have had senior managers with an enormous heterogeneity of training, making it difficult to professionalize and adopt a rights-based perspective (Baaz and Stern 2010).

In relation to this, due to the effect of the SAP, there has been a growing abandonment of national schemes and a greater acceptance of the coexistence between violence and mining production (Ferguson 2005, 379), exploiting the strategic minerals used for the manufacture of weapons, electronics and renewable technology. This production is mostly industrialized, but 90% of the Congolese workers employed in the area work on artisanal farms (Callaway 2018, 10).

Violence by non-state armed groups and associated criminal gangs is not exclusively concentrated in rural areas or mining towns, so there is no mechanical correlation between violence and the presence of minerals (Congo Research Group 2019). However, small artisanal exploitation for the extraction of cobalt and copper is associated with precarious working conditions (including child labor and sexual and gendered violence) as well as the actions of illegal armed groups (Perks 2011, 178-79). For its part, large-scale and industrialized extraction, including state-owned companies, lack transparency and are mostly made up of subcontracted labor (Callaway 2018, 4-5). It should be said that, due to the particularities of these minerals – among them, that they are transported in tons so that their extraction is viable – their monitoring is difficult; through the “Dodd-Frank Law”, promoted and sanctioned by the Obama administration in the United States in 2010, an attempt was made to regulate the supply of 3TG minerals, imposing the use of bags with approval labels and certificates of origin.

However, this did not take into account the possibilities of smuggling and falsification of security strips and rather established a *de facto* ban on all artisanal mining of these resources, collapsing regional economies dependent on it (Stoop, Verpoorten and Van Der Windt 2018, 78; Müller-Koné 2015, 45). Thus, it is not as simple as concentrating only on the regulation of artisanal mining work; both due to the intersection between both systems (purchase of minerals from artisan groups and their sale as part of industrial production, without making it transparent) (Callaway 2018, 12), as well as illegal export through other border states, as has happened with the outflow of gold of Congolese origin across the borders of Uganda and Rwanda (Global Witness 2017, 9-10). As an illustrative example of all of the above, Global Witness (2016) reported the insertion of the Chinese company Kun Hou Mining for the exploitation of gold in eastern Congo. This multinational installed a semi-industrial production in the town of Shabunda, and to ensure the gold deposits in the bed of the Ulindi River, it contracted and supplied weapons to a local armed group, while at the same time enabling illegal levies on the artisanal miners by those same militiamen. Still, benefiting from the lax Congolese tax legislation and the enormous surplus value derived from

parastatal coercion and precarious working conditions, the extracted gold was smuggled to some of the neighboring states, and there will be no large productive investments related to these.

Discussions between the experiences of the DRC and Angola

In the case of Angola, there is a geographical distance from offshore oil exploitation, foreign capital and workers, and mercenaries with regressive redistribution of surplus value, while in the DRC the exploitation is carried out in an artisanal way by local workers, but the coercion and illegal routes through Uganda-Rwanda-Burundi allow mining profits to escape, further entrenched by the presence of non-state armed groups. On the other hand, in Angola the institutionalization of mercenaries will take place after 2002, both their use as private security in neighborhoods of foreign workers and their incorporation and training in the Angolan Armed Forces. In the DRC, there will be the normalization of the militias, many of them controlled by big-men who are intermediaries of Mobutu, as well as the presence in the mining towns of the AFDRC, some of which have not professionalized or broken loyalties with respect to their former commanders in the militias.

Despite the clear differences in their schemes, it is understood that in both cases we are witnessing a neoliberal capitalist reorganization, that allows a neo-extractivist implantation, in accordance with its local particularities, and that obeys this notion of capital as a jumping-globe (globalization). In the DRC, a spatial and qualitative distance does not have to coincide. In other words, a geographical separation, such as the Angolan offshore oil platforms, and the use of human resources and foreign capital, including workers and security forces, which would clearly explain the societal separation of income. On the contrary, the underground strategic minerals that abound in eastern Congolese have been “separated” through a series of mechanisms: the presence of illegal armed groups, government approval, the complicity of foreign governments in the illegal export and the presence of foreign refining companies, which promote this societal separation of income from extractivism with respect to the state and the civilian population.

Conclusion

This comparison work tried to account for a series of regional trends and local particularities that are complemented by a neoliberal globalization and capitalist reorganization still in process. A necessary criticism was made of the traditional literature on neoliberalism in Africa, whose shortsightedness has prevented a reliable analysis of recent changes in the period 1970-2000, particularly on two fronts. Firstly, in how the Western and non-Western powers that have promoted African economies based on the mono-production of commodities for export have changed, especially the Chinese presence in Central Africa. Second, the multiple ways in which sovereignty has gradually been privatized, with the presence of mercenaries in Africa accelerating in recent decades, as well as the proliferation of non-state armed groups; both have been inserted not only in anti-colonial and civil wars, but also in the differentiated territorialization of extractive enclaves. It is understood here that these neoliberalization processes are not purely African phenomena, but can be understood through categories designed for other regions of the global South such as neo-extractivism, as well as that they can contribute to a better understanding of it.

Having made a necessary introduction to the recent histories of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the similarities of their insertion in a globalized world in a neoliberal key were emphasized, but also the particularities that have allowed international capital to operate these leaps and separation of usufruct of profits with respect to their respective states and civilian populations. All this enhanced by economic liberalization and tax relief, the normalization of paramilitary and military-foreign violence has paid for the differentiated spatialization of extractive enclaves as distinctive patches from the rest of society. Such normalization, including privatized violence, does not imply a single use of “legal” mechanisms by governments and capitals, but informal devices such as corruption and smuggling, especially in the DRC, have allowed the foreignization of surplus value, beyond those who actually work the extraction on the land. For all these reasons, a greater dialogue will be required between the analysis of the forms of neo-extractivist exploitation on the African continent, and to face the epistemological challenge of not considering them as totally distinctive phenomena due to their state borders. Even more so, and in the face of increasingly global-jumping capital, the contributions and feedback between studies from the rest of the global South can enrich our understanding of these processes that are still operating.

References

- Álvarez Cobelas, Juan. 2001. "Los Mercenarios, o Cómo África Sobrepasa La Modernidad." *Nova Africa*, no. 9: 33-54. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5179420>.
- Autesserre, Severine. 2006. "Local Violence, National Peace? Postwar 'Settlement' in the Eastern D.R. Congo (2003-2006)." *African Studies Review* 49 (3): 1-29. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/african-studies-review/article/local-violence-national-peace-post-war-settlement-in-the-eastern-dr-congo-20032006/8AEB7245D-2B584F3725A97610C6B440>.
- Baaz, Maria Eriksson, and Maria Stern. 2010. "The Complexity of Violence: Sida Working Paper on Gender Based Violence." <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/the-complexity-of-violence>.
- Barciela, Fernando. 2019. "Angola: Nadar En Petróleo Para Acabar Sin Gasolina ." *El País*, June 8, 2019. https://elpais.com/economia/2019/06/06/actualidad/1559836000_592103.html.
- Benavides De La Vega, Lourdes. 2007. *Actores Regionales y Subregionales En África Subsahariana*. Madrid: Fundación Carolina.
- Bessis, Sophie. 2004. "Las Nuevas Figuras de La Guerra En África: Ensayo de Tipología de Los Conflictos Africanos." *Nova Africa*, no. 14: 87-93. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5182795>.
- Callaway, Annie. 2018. "Powering Down Corruption: Tackling Transparency and Human Rights Risks from Congo's Cobalt Mines to Global Supply Chains - The Enough Project." 2018. <https://enoughproject.org/reports/powering-down-corruption>.
- Castel, Antoni. 2006. "China Redescubre África." *Nova Africa*, no. 19: 95-100. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5185701>.
- Congo Research Group. 2019. "Congo, Forgotten." www.congoresearch-group.org.
- Ferguson, James. 2005. "Seeing like an Oil Company: Space, Security, and Global Capital in Neoliberal Africa on JSTOR." *American Anthropologist*, 377-82. https://www.jstor-org.biblioteca-colmex.idm.oclc.org/stable/3567023?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.
- . 2007. *Global Shadows : Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Book. Durham, N.C: Durham, N.C. : Duke University Press.

- Gentili, Anna Maria. 2012. *El León y El Cazador : Historia Del África Subsahariana*. Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales - CLACSO. http://www.clacso.org.ar/libreria-latinoamericana/libro_detalle.php?id_libro=685.
- Global Witness. 2016. "River of Gold | Global Witness." <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/conflict-minerals/river-of-gold-drc/>.
- . 2017. "Time to Dig Deeper | Global Witness." <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/democratic-republic-congo/time-dig-deeper/>.
- Harvey, David. 2007. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kabunda, Badi. 2016. "África: Crecimiento Sin Desarrollo." *Voces En El Fénix*, no. 57: 77-86. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YEEq-3Jo-oHVjrs2mI9kTRdbAgR2Mdp6o/view>.
- . 2008a. "Presentación. China y África: ¿Colonialismo o Alternativa?" In *China En África. Alternativa a Los 50 Años de Descolonización*, 7-11. Madrid: Editorial Sodepaz. <https://silo.tips/download/china-en-africa-alternativa-a-los-50-aos-de-descolonizacion>.
- . 2008b. "África En La Globalización Neoliberal: Las Alternativas Africanas." *Theomai* (17): 77-87. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=12401706>.
- Kumar, Sunaina, and Angela Stanzel. 2016. "India and China: A Scramble for Africa?" *European Council on Foreign Relations*. https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_india_and_china_a_scramble_for_africa_7086/.
- Levy Martínez, Alberto. 2010. "Angola: Una Historia Moderna Signada Por Las Guerras." *Cuadernos de Marte*, no. 0: 81-106. <https://publicaciones.sociales.uba.ar/index.php/cuadernosdemarte/article/view/760/661>.
- Lugardo, Marco Antonio Reyes. 2005. "La Transición Política y La Nueva Constitución de La República Democrática Del Congo." *Estudios de Asia y África* 40 (3): 687-708. <https://estudiosdeasiayafrika.colmex.mx/index.php/ea/article/view/1768>.
- . 2012. "La República Democrática Del Congo: Orden Político y Autoridad En Contextos Electorales, Neopatrimoniales y de Economía de Guerra." Ciudad de México: Colmex. <https://www.repositorionalcti.mx/recurso/v979v329b>.

- Marchetti, Agustina. 2016. "Angola ¿resurgiendo de Las Cenizas de La Guerra?" *Voces En El Fénix*, no. 57: 98-105. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YEq3Jo-0HVjrs2mI9kTRdbAgR2Mdp6o/view>.
- Maribel, Perla, and Olguín Vélez. 2011. "El Compromiso de China Con El Desarrollo Del Tercer Mundo: El Caso de Angola." *Estudios de Asia y África* 46 (3): 589-649. <https://estudiosdeasiayafrika.colmex.mx/index.php/ea/article/view/2004>.
- Müller-Koné, Marie. 2015. "Débrouillardise: Certifying 'Conflict-Free' Minerals in a Context of Regulatory Pluralism in South Kivu, DR Congo*." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 53 (2): 145-68. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X15000178>.
- Omer, Buatu Batubenge, and Marco Antonio Reyes Lugardo. 2011. "Los Derechos de Los Infantes y El Saqueo de Recursos Minerales En La República Democrática Del Congo: La Internacionalización de La Criminalización Del Estado." *Estudios de Asia y África* 46 (2): 333-64. <https://estudiosdeasiayafrika.colmex.mx/index.php/ea/article/view/2030>.
- Ouriques, Ricardo, and Amanda Nunes de Alvear. 2017. "Las Relaciones Económicas Entre Angola y China (2000-2014) Economic Relations between Angola and China (2000-2014)." *Estudios de Asia y África* 52 (163): 387-416. <https://estudiosdeasiayafrika.colmex.mx/index.php/ea/article/view/2320>.
- Perks, Rachel. 2011. "Towards a Post-Conflict Transition: Women and Artisanal Mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo from Gendering the Field: Towards Sustainable Livelihoods for Mining Communities on JSTOR." In *Gendering the Field: Towards Sustainable Livelihoods for Mining Communities*, 177-96. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24h9g4.16?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.
- Reno, William. 2005. "Los Estados Débiles Africanos, Los Actores No Estatales y La Privatización de Las Relaciones Interestatales." *Nova Africa*, no. 16: 65-88. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5185681>.
- Stoop, Nik, Marijke Verpoorten, and Peter van der Windt. 2018. *More Legislation, More Violence? The Impact of Dodd-Frank in the DRC*. PLoS ONE 13 (8). <https://doi.org/10.1371/JOURNAL.PONE.0201783>.
- Svampa, Maristella. 2019. *Las Fronteras Del Neoextractivismo En América Latina - Conflictos Socioambientales, Giro Ecoterritorial y Nuevas Dependencias*. Guadalajara: CALAS. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Tardif, Eric. 2014. "Minerales Que Suscitan Pasiones: ¿el Inicio de La Pugna Por Lo Que Queda?" *Anuario Mexicano de Derecho Internacional* XIV: 765-800. www.juridicas.unam.mxhttp://biblio.juridicas.unam.mxwww.juridicas.unam.mxhttp://biblio.juridicas.unam.mx.

ABSTRACT

This article intends an approach to the formation of extractive enclaves in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, making a comparative study with the Republic of Angola, in order to account for the regional trends that make them similar, and the local particularities that distinguish their respective neoliberal insertions. The hypothesis of this work, taking the contributions of authors such as James Ferguson (2007), is that a paradigm has been installed since 1980 onwards in a large part of the African continent, which we call here "neo-extractivism", incorporating Maristella's model Svampa (2019), who thought about it for Latin America. While Ferguson focuses his analysis of neoliberalism in Africa on Angola, where he observes the installation of oil production qualitatively and spatially separated from the rest of society, and Svampa does so in relation to the concessions that both national-popular and neoliberal governments of the Latin American region have done to extractive companies, an additional nuance is proposed here. The Congolese case shows the imposition of a gap that separates the profits from exploitation from the state and its population, as in the Angolan case, but with a series of historical particularities that have combined the actions of militias, illegal routes, liberalization neoliberal and insertion of foreign capital. This syncretism has deprived the profits from strategic minerals from the local workers who exploit them and from the government in whose territory they lie underground. Both cases would be part of a broader capitalist reorganization that has been operating in the African continent from 1970 onwards, and that necessarily requires a comparative study, taking contributions from the analysis of the Latin American region, as part of the global South.

KEYWORDS

African economy. Strategic Minerals. Oil.

Received on December 14, 2021
Accepted on December 25, 2021
Translated by Igor Estima Sardo